

THE Outlook

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PENTECOST
and the
Spirit-filled Church

Pentecost and The Spirit-Filled Church

DARYL KATS

As we draw near to the dawning of the 21st century we hear much talk about the "Shape of the church in the 21st century." Seminars are offered which are intended to teach us how to be prepared for ministry in the 21st century. You can go into any Christian bookstore and find an increasing number of books addressing the necessary preparations for ministering in a new century.

It is absolutely necessary for the church to be prepared in every age. However, it seems that as we look to the future, we too easily forget the preparation that God has always provided, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it seems that the best way that the church could be prepared to minister in the 21st century, is to look back to the church of the first century as recorded in the book of Acts.

Jesus promised to equip this newborn church for a brand new kind of ministry. He did so by empowering them with the gift of the Holy Spirit. As we read the book of Acts we find the incredible accomplishments of the Spirit-filled church recorded. The church was alive, active and productive as the Spirit empowered them for service.

I recently heard a sermon on Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37. As I was reflecting on the passage and the message, the thought struck me, "How often don't our churches seem like that valley of dry bones? How often don't our congregations seem as responsive as a valley of dry bones?" Then my eyes were drawn to v.14 where the Lord states: "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live...." If the "breath" of God can make a valley of

dry bones come to life, if the Spirit of God can make a disobedient people come to life, can't we expect the same within the church today? Shouldn't we expect the same within the church today?

Unfortunately when one begins to talk about a "Spirit-filled" church today, thoughts usually are directed to a worship style. We envision people raising their hands, clapping and stomping, speaking in tongues, laying on of hands and people being "slain in the Spirit." We grow suspect that any talk concerning the Spirit's power is going to lead us to such extremes as the "Toronto blessing" and "Holy Laughter."

However, if we examine the "Spirit-filled" church of the first century we find that they weren't marked as much by worship methods as by mature ministry. In Acts chapter 2 verses 42-47 we receive a beautiful picture of the first century church. From this picture I believe we can formulate a blue-print for the church of the 21st century.

Luke describes this Spirit-filled church as having four central qualities. We might well call these the four *cornerstones* upon which the Spirit-filled church is to be built.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH IS A LEARNING CHURCH

First, the Spirit-filled church is a learning church. The very first evidence that Luke mentions of the

Spirit's presence in the church is that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). As Dr. John Stott describes this he says, "One might say that the Holy Spirit opened a school in Jerusalem that day. The apostles were the teachers, and the students were 3,000 pupils starting out in kindergarten."¹

But we notice something far different in these students than so many students today. Today it seems that often times the only reason that students are in school (or Sunday School) is because they have to be. These first century students were there because they wanted to be. They were "de-

voted" to learning. They had a deep hunger to know more about God and His ways. They sat at the feet of the apostles with an insatiable appetite for God's Word.

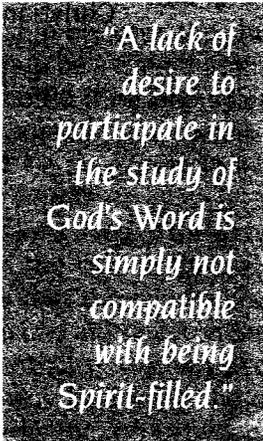
It seems that as we look at the church of today we are often struck, not by the devotion of the students, but by their apathy. Several years ago *The Banner* reported the results of a

study done in the Christian Reformed Church. That study revealed that for every one man that studies the Bible there are ten who are not interested. I doubt whether we would note any significant increase in that number if a similar survey were conducted today.

When Jesus gave the great and first commandment, He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your **mind**" (emphasis added). How can we love the Lord with all our mind if we seldom exercise our mind in serious study of God's Word?

Intellectual laziness is disobedience of the first and great commandment. It is also a sign of spiritual poverty.

A lack of desire to participate in the study of God's Word is simply not compatible with being Spirit-filled. The person who is Spirit-filled **will be** devoted to learning more about God's Word. If our excuses come easier than our Bible Study, we had better examine our spiritual vitality.



"A lack of desire to participate in the study of God's Word is simply not compatible with being Spirit-filled."

THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH IS A LOVING CHURCH

The *second cornerstone* of the Spirit-filled church is that it is a loving church. "They devoted themselves...to the fellowship." The word here for "fellowship" is the common Greek word, *koinonia*. The word is used in the New Testament for more than talking about sports and weather. Rather, it refers to the common life that those within the church shared.

There is the union that we share because God is in us. Our fellowship with God shapes our fellowship with one another. Paul often says that we are "in Christ." That union brings us into union with one another.

Therefore, we are going to be willing to share with one another. Luke describes the members of the church here as "selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need" (v. 45). No, Luke is not mandating a communal lifestyle for the church.

Rather, he is demonstrating the impact of the Spirit. Because of the Spirit, we no longer selfishly hold on to what is ours, but generously share with those in need.

However, research shows that the national average for Christian giving is 1.3% of our income. In fact, it has been found that Christians give only .2% more toward charitable causes than do non-Christians. What has happened to Spirit-induced generosity? Again quoting Dr. Stott, "Unrelieved suffering and poverty among Christians in this world is a standing rebuke to us who are more affluent."² We must demonstrate the presence of Christ in our lives, by our generous spirit.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH IS A WORSHIPING CHURCH

The *third cornerstone* of a Spirit-filled church is its worship. "They devoted

themselves...to breaking of bread and to prayer." Their devotion was shown in their learning, in their loving and in their worship.

The Greek text uses a definite article before both "bread" and "prayer." This would suggest a reference to the Lord's Supper on the one hand and public, corporate prayer on the other. The sharing of the sacraments and prayer was crucial to the health, life and out-reach of the first century church. They were excited and exuberant about worship. In fact, they worshiped at any and every opportunity that they had.

Gordon Kedde tells of a young Christian who once asked his pastor

why it was necessary to attend two worship services on Sunday. "After all," he objected, "the Bible doesn't say we have to have two services." The Pastor responded, "Well, I'll agree that you don't need to come twice on Sunday, provided you agree to do what the Bible says." "Okay! Fair

enough," the young man responded. "Well then," said the Pastor, "I'll see you on Monday morning...and Tuesday...and Wednesday...and we'll follow the apostolic pattern in Acts 2:46."³

No, Acts 2:46 wasn't meant to be a regulative pattern for the church of all ages, but it demonstrates that the Spirit-filled Christian thirsts after true worship, sound teaching and living fellowship. When you are filled with the Spirit you will not stay at home, or at the lake, or on the golf course on Sunday, morning or evening, wasting your opportunities for worship.

Why do so many today view worship as a rather hum-drum affair? Possibly we have lost some of the joy and reverence that was evident in this Spirit-filled Church. Luke describes these worshipers as having "glad and sincere hearts." The word translated "glad" can also be translated "exultation." These believers

knew that Jesus had died to save them from their sins. Therefore, they had plenty to be exultant about.

Every worship service should be a joyful celebration of the mighty acts of God through Jesus Christ. Yet so often we come to worship and look so grim and lifeless that you might think we had come to mourn the loss of our best friend rather than celebrate the fact that we have been made friends with God. We often see people singing songs of praise with a frown on their faces. Or they barely move their lips at all when a hymn is being sung. That should not be. The Spirit-filled person is full of joy and their worship shows it.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH IS AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

The *final cornerstone* that is presented to us in this passage is that the Spirit-filled church is an evangelistic church. You simply cannot separate verse 42 from verse 47 in this passage. If you were to pull verse 42 out of its context and make it the blueprint of the church, you would find that you have built an introverted church. Yes, the church needs to learn, to love, and to worship, but these are all to equip us for witness. Unfortunately many of our churches are quite strong and healthy in the area of Bible teaching, fellowship and worship, but quite weak in the area of evangelism. That tends to focus our attention in upon ourselves. The results of introversion in the church are, as described by C. John Miller, "the quiet acceptance of churchly dulness as normal, and numerical stagnation or decline is inevitable."⁴

Why did the first century church simply explode? Why were converts counted by the thousands rather than by ones or twos? Because the church was devoted to evangelism. Why do so many churches today seem to decline over the years, rather than increase? Because we are more concerned with internal matters, than with outreach. We have,

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in large part, ignored Christ's command to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19). Oh yes, we perhaps send a few dollars for mission work over there, but we ignore the mission field to which we are called right here.

Part of our failure in this area, may be due to the fact that we have forgotten something of which the first century church was well aware. It is not up to us to make the church grow. We do not have to know the right gospel presentation, or evangelism program to produce converts. Rather, we must trust in the right Lord. Acts 2:47 says, "And the **Lord** added to their number daily those who were being saved" (emphasis added). You see, it wasn't the apostles' abilities in evangelism, but their availability to be used by the Lord that produced the dramatic growth in the early church. Again, quoting C. John Miller, "Church growth that is not inspired by faith in Christ's power to transform lives is dangerous."⁵ To see growth in our churches, we must make ourselves available to Christ *daily* to reach those who are lost.

In order to build a Spirit-filled church, we need the cornerstones of learning, of love, of worship and of witness. The Spirit has been poured out upon the church; it is our responsibility not to quench the Spirit's fire. We must allow Him His freedom to work in and through us. When we do, our churches will manifest the marks of the Spirit's presence, Biblical teaching and learning, loving fellowship, living worship and ongoing, outgoing evangelism.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 John Stott, *The Spirit, the Church and the World* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), p. 82.
- 2 *Ibid*, p. 84.
- 3 Gordon Kedde, *You Are My Witnesses* (Darlington, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1993), p. 44.
- 4 C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), p. 29.
- 5 *Ibid*, p. 18.

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The Church and The World

D. G. HART AND JOHN R. MUETHER

Question: *What do you believe concerning the "holy catholic church" of Christ?*

Answer: *That the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a Church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am and forever shall remain, a living member thereof* (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 54).

What is the relationship between the church and the world in worship? Should worship be a time that makes the church accessible to the world, or should it be one where the church displays her otherworldliness? Should worship be a means to attract the unchurched to the gospel, or should it be an expression of the church's identity as aliens and strangers in the world?

The answer to these questions used to be fairly easy. J. Gresham Machen, who battled worldliness in the church through his whole life, had little trouble defending the idea that the church should be separate from the world. In a sermon he preached at Princeton Seminary in 1925 on Mt. 5:13 ("You are the salt of the earth..."), Machen declared that these words of Christ "established at the very beginning the distinctness and separateness of the Church." If the distinction between the church and the world was ever lost, Machen warned, "the power of the Church is gone. The Church then becomes like salt that has lost its savor, and is fit only to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men."

The antithesis that Machen recognized as basic to the Bible's teaching about the church prompted him to oppose all the concessions that liberal Protestants were making to the wisdom of the world. In an effort to retain the truth of Christianity in the face of scientific discoveries that made the gospel incredible to college-educated people, liberal Protestantism had reduced Christianity to the safe and reassuring truths of the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount. But the effort to retain the church's credibility had resulted in a worldly church, like salt that had lost its savor. Machen believed that if the church were faithful to the Great Commission she could not let the wisdom of the world obscure both the power and foolishness of the cross.

Conservative Presbyterian and Reformed folk used to believe with Machen that the antithesis between the church and the world was a good thing. But is that still the case today? With liberalism no longer the threat that it was in the 1920s, do we still need to avoid worldliness? After all, we would never want to be mistaken for fundamentalists. Is worldliness still a temptation? Or might certain forms of worldliness be useful for the church to reach out to the world?

"But the effort to retain the church's credibility had resulted in a worldly church, like salt that had lost its savor."

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Q&A 54 from the *Heidelberg Catechism* is a good beginning for understanding the separateness of the church. It pictures God as the actor in salvation, who is gathering a people for Himself from the ends of the earth. The church is a people that are called out of the world and called into fellowship with their God.

The very word for church, *ekklesia* in the Greek, means "called out," and it describes our *relocation*: we are out of the world and into God's presence.

This Greek word is the translation of the Hebrew word, *qahal*, which means "assembly." But more is intended than a mere gathering of people. Israel was the Old Testament assembly of the people of God. In the Exodus, God had taken a chosen people, a gathered people, out of the world (Egypt) and brought them to Himself at Mount Sinai. Israel was an assembly at Sinai because the people were gathered in the presence of God. In Deut. 4:10: "Assemble the people to me, that I may let them fear my words so that they may learn to fear me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children." To assemble the people of God is to have them stand before the Lord.

In the New Testament, the church is now the assembly of God's people. The author of Hebrews draws the parallel between the worship of the church and the assembly of the Israelites at Sinai in 12:18ff:

For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.

Just as Israel was called out of Egypt to Sinai, so the church is the gathering of God's people, out of the world and into His presence. The church at worship is therefore a church that is separate from the world, because it is God who separates the church, in order to gather with Him, to be in His presence.

To be a church, an *ekklesia*, the church must be separate. It cannot

gather in the presence of God if it is still in the world. For this reason Paul describes the separateness of the church in the strongest of language:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteous-

ness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? Just as God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

WHAT IS THE WORLD?

Israel had Egypt and Machen had liberalism. What is the world from which we must separate in order to worship God? The Bible describes the world in three

senses. It can refer simply to the created order, as in Acts 17:24. It can refer also to the nations of the earth, the human race, the world that God will judge (Rom. 3:6). David Wells reminds us that it is inappropriate for the church to be otherworldly in these

two senses of the term. We are to be good stewards of God's creation, and we are to show love for our neighbors by taking the gospel *into the world*, to the whole human race, to the ends of the earth. The Bible clearly teaches that separation from the world in these ways is forbidden. Jesus prays to His father in John 17:15, 18, that we not be taken from the world, because He has sent us into the world.

Scripture goes on to refer to the world in a third sense, the world as fallen humanity in rebellion against God. In Wells' words this is "the collective expression of every society's refusal to bow before God, to receive His truth, to obey His commandments, or to believe in His Christ." The "world" in this sense is also that way of life that fallen humanity substitutes for God's holy ways. It is the world as an idol, as a rival to God's Word, "their appetites, the way that they order their life, their priorities, their behavior, what they really *want*, and what they will do to get it." Returning to Christ's high priestly prayer in John 17, we see that this is the world that Christ was not a part of (17:4), nor are we to be a part of. And it was the world for which Christ refused to pray: "I do not ask on behalf of the world" (17:9).

It is in this sense of the word that the church must cultivate its otherworldliness. Christians are called to be exiles and an alien people (1 Pet. 1:1), and we are to live as "aliens and strangers" (1 Pet. 2:11),

because God has provided for us a better country, a heavenly home (Heb. 11:16). In this sense the church and the world are to have nothing to do with each other. The church is *contra mundum*, against the world. We are to hate the world and the things of the world (1 Jn. 2:15).

"Machen observed that 'the real threat to the church has always come from within, not without.'"



HOLINESS V. WORLDLINESS

In his sermon on the "Separateness of the Church," Machen observed that "the real threat to the church has always come from within, not without." This internal threat is deadly precisely because it denies the separateness of the church by gradually merging the church with the world under the guise of peace. An "all embracing paganism" results, Machen warned, when the church forsakes its call to holiness and pursues worldliness.

Christians recite in the *Apostles' Creed* that they believe "in the *holy Catholic church*." What does the holiness of the church mean? I Peter 2:9 links holiness with the idea of gathering: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." To be holy, in other words, is to be called and gathered by the Holy One as His treasured possession. Scripture describes this holiness both in an *objective* or ceremonial sense (such as the tabernacle and the priests, who were holy because they were set apart for the worship of God) and in a *subjective* or ethical sense. To be holy then, means that we are not worldly, because we are set apart from the world. As Paul instructs in Rom. 12:2, "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

But what exactly is worldliness? For many Christians, worldliness refers to certain forms of amusement such as playing cards, drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco or going to movies. Others may think of worldliness as sexual immorality—adultery and divorce, for example. R. B. Kuiper, however, warned that worldliness was not so easily identified. "Few Christians seem to realize," he wrote, "that a church may take a strong stand against certain flagrant sins of the world and yet be decid-

edly worldly." He added that there "are churches which pride themselves on their firm stand against worldliness and yet want to be great as the world counts greatness. They think in terms of costly stone edifices rather than lively stones that are built up as a spiritual house (I Pet. 2:5). They strive after statistical rather than spiritual prosperity. That also is worldliness."

Kuiper's point is that to think like the world is to be guilty of worldliness. It is not enough to be devoted to the church. If we measure the work of the church in worldly terms (such as material wealth or numerical size or programs for all ages), then the church has become like the world. Scripture commands us to see with the eyes of the Spirit, not the eyes of the flesh. This is partly what the apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote in 2 Cor. 4:18 that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." And this truth prompted J. Gresham Machen to say to the graduates of Westminster Seminary in 1931:

You, as ministers of Christ, are called to deal with the unseen things. You are stewards of the mysteries of God. You alone can lead men, by the proclamation of God's Word, out of the crash and jazz and noise and rattle and smoke of this weary age into the green pastures and beside the still waters; you alone, as ministers of reconciliation, can give what the world with all its boasting and pride can never give—the infinite sweetness of the communion of the redeemed soul with the living God.

The church is as different from the world as green pastures and still waters are from the cacophony of a weary age. The church's ways are not the world's ways. And that is be-

cause God has called the church to be holy as He is holy. He has gathered the church as His assembly. The church is set apart to serve God.

THE CHURCH AGAINST THE WORLD

The Biblical distinction that has been drawn so far between holiness and worldliness means that the church must be *antithetical* to the world. The church is at war with the world, and it has the duty to fight worldliness, a duty that we find throughout redemptive history.

With the first promise of a redeemer in Gen. 3:15, God announced that all of history, from that point forward, would be a cosmic battle between two camps: the seed of the woman (the church) against the seed of the serpent (the world). The battle in view here is of an absolute antithesis, between those chosen for life and those dead in sin, between the children of light and the children of darkness.

When Israel crossed the Jordan, the conquest was the cry of holy war, and Israel was to annihilate her enemies. The holy people of God were

forbidden to live in peaceful coexistence with their redeemer's enemies. The New Testament describes this antithesis as spiritual warfare, a battle against the "spiritual forces of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12). In this warfare the world would crucify Christ and

persecute His church, as Jesus Himself predicted in Jn. 15:19-20: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you...If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Because of this antithesis between the church and the world, R. B. Kuiper concluded that "to be the opposite of the world is not only necessary for the well-being of the church but is essential to its very being. If the church should cease being antitheti-

"Is the church today willing to accept the terms of the antithesis laid down by Christ?"

cal to the world, it would no longer be the church." Is the church today willing to accept the terms of the antithesis laid down by Christ? Are we prepared for enmity with the world? Are we prepared to combat the temptation to conform to the world? Are we prepared to renounce the ways of the city of man and follow the laws of the city of God?

Again, we are not denying the love that Christians must show to their neighbors. The point is to underscore the fundamental difference between the church and the world, between the ways of God's people and the ways of God's enemies. The church that is faithful to her holy calling will look and act differently from the world.

UNAPOLOGETIC WORSHIP

What does all of this have to do with worship? Perhaps the connection is not immediately obvious. If the church is at war with the world, the wisdom of her gospel will appear foolish to those that are perishing in their sins (1 Cor. 1:18-25). The contrast between the church and world will be most evident when the church is at worship. She will be commended the way Paul commended the Thesalonians who "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). The very act of worship, of assembling in the presence of God, therefore, is simultaneously the church's renunciation of the world. Worship is a subversive and countercultural act of an alien people who, forsaking the world, listen to the voice of her master saying, "Follow Me."

True worship, therefore, will be odd and perhaps even weird to the watching world. But this oddness is essential to the church's faithfulness and witness. For if the gospel is foolishness, it is foolish only to those who are perishing. The church may use a human tongue as its language of worship, it may use worldly time to determine when to meet for worship, it may use electricity drawn from state-run utilities during its worship. But

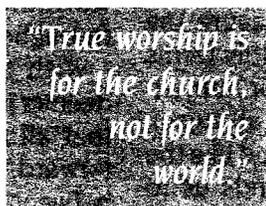
when the church assembles for worship she is not at all like the world. She invokes the name of Christ. She prays and sings to a God who cannot be seen. She hears words said by a man commissioned by Christ that become, by the work of the Holy Spirit, the power of God unto salvation. She eats a holy meal whose portions are tiny, but which, by the blessing of Christ, nourishes God's people for eternal life. In all these ways the church at worship is different from the world. All of these elements of worship look weak and foolish to those outside the house of God. But to the church they contain the power of God.

For this reason, the church will worship God unapologetically. She must not cater to those bound to ridicule her ways as foolish. Christian worship is a bold political act. It subverts the world's values by assigning glory and praise to the One whom the world despises. And as weak as the church at worship might appear, the truth is that the powers of this world are no match for the power of God who is present among His people when they gather to sing praise, pray and hear His word. Moreover the church

must reject the claim that worship is old-fashioned, irrelevant, and isolated from the "real world." For believers, the church at worship is the real world. The gathering of the saints in the holy of holies is the eschatological foretaste of the new heavens and the new earth.

The world is predisposed to misunderstand the church. We should not expect unbelievers to be comfortable in services of worship that are alien to the world. "User-friendly" or "seeker-sensitive" worship is not an option for the people of God. In fact, worship that demonstrates the separateness of the church is what Machen called "merciful unkindness," because it testifies to the world of the hope that is within us. If the world mocks us, so be it. True worship is for the church, not for the world.

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"True worship is for the church, not for the world."

Church councils are encouraged to make use of qualified students from Mid-America Reformed Seminary for ministerial and pastoral service in the churches this summer. Churches without pastors are especially encouraged to take note of this invitation. Contact:

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Revenge of the Children

CAL THOMAS

We have heard predictable explanations for the tragic killings of four children and a teacher by children in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Some say it's violence on television and in films. While today's graphic "entertainment" violence is far worse than the cowboys, vaporizing aliens and monsters I grew up watching, that alone seems an incomplete excuse.

Others say it's guns. But the boys accused in the killings stole guns from relatives who bought them legally for hunting. ABC's Rebecca Chase slandered all Southerners when she suggested that the Jonesboro shootings, along with shootings by children in Pearl, Mississippi, and Paducah, Kentucky, indicated the region breeds violence because of lax gun laws and too many available weapons. What, then, explains drive-by shootings in Los Angeles, or kids shooting kids in Northern cities because they want their victims' expensive jackets or designer shoes?

Former talk show host Phil Donahue once said to me: "The problem with you conservatives is that you have simple answers to complex problems." I replied: "The problem with you liberals is that you've ignored the simple answers and that's why the problems have become complex."

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado, Boulder, has developed "blueprints" for 10 violence-prevention programs. They include "Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies," "Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care," "Bullying Prevention Program," "Quantum Opportunities," "Multisystemic Training" and "Prenatal and Infancy Home Visitation by Nurses." All of these may have some merit, but they sound like complex solutions to a simple problem.

A few years ago, Mother Teresa told the audience at the National Prayer Breakfast that abortion was the principal cause of other types of violence, showing a declining respect for human life. Some time ago, Dr. Laura Schlessinger said on her national radio program that many children have absorbed the lessons they've been taught by adults: They are unwanted and a burden.

These explanations seem to contain the seeds for a lot of youth violence. The abortion of 30 million (and

counting) unborn children stems from a materialistic culture that regards wealth, comfort and the right to be free of any "burden" or "inconvenience" as life's supreme objective. Too many children are dumped into day care so that busy, career-oriented parents can pursue life styles they believe will bring them happiness. Behavior problems at day care or in school are dealt with by prescribing Ritalin. Childhood depression and misbehavior are increasingly treated with medication. Pressure increases on the Food and Drug Administration to approve drugs for children that are now reserved for adults. Why are we surprised when so many kids turn to illegal substances, considering they have been drugged since childhood?



Too many parents anesthetize their stress with legal and illegal drugs. Too many are divorcing. And too many children have no roots, much less a family tree.

Five years ago, Cox News Service's Rowland Nethaway observed in an article: "Adults have always complained about their youth, but this is different. There have always been wild and rebellious kids who would go off the track and do something wrong. *But they knew where the track was and what was wrong.* Many of today's youth don't seem to know right from wrong. Children are robbing, maiming and killing on whims, with no pity and no remorse."

Two professional women friends of mine have had enough. They're quitting high-paying, broadcast media jobs to go home to their husbands and children. Maybe it's time for more of us to ask what profit there is in the accumulation of material things that will someday be sold at an auction, or a career that can end in an instant when the boss calls you in on a Friday afternoon and fires you.

When children start killing, it is an extreme cry for help, love and attention, and for the presence of parents in the home. They need to be loved in a stable environment. When such homes were the rule in America, we had less unruliness.

It's a simple explanation, actually. Those who have ignored it, now have a complex problem.

Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (ACE)

Recently, the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, a broad coalition of Christian leaders, released an "Appeal to Fellow Evangelicals" to the Christian community in response to "The Gift of Salvation," a joint Evangelical-Roman Catholic statement of the Gospel sponsored by Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship and Roman Catholic theologian, John Richard Neuhaus. The Alliance issued its appeal out of concern that this statement of unity of faith promotes confusion concerning the nature and importance of the evangelical understanding of the gospel. Such concern focuses on the nature and centrality of justification.

The Alliance consists of Baptist, Independent, Presbyterian, Reformed, Episcopal and Lutheran leaders, including Council members James M. Boice, R.C. Sproul, Michael Horton, Robert Godfrey, John Armstrong, Gene Veith, J.A.O. Preus, Rosemary Jensen, John Hannah and Alistair Begg. The letter was released following a series of meetings, conversations and letters with several of the writers of "The Gift of Salvation" after it appeared in the December 8, 1997 issue of Christianity Today.

While affirming the importance of ecumenical dialogue, an important aspect of the group's own identity, the Alliance nevertheless argues that "The Gift of Salvation" raises serious questions. It purports to affirm unity in matters of salvation while leaving differences over the nature of justification, purgatory, merit, indulgences and related matters unsettled. Most ambiguous, the Alliance asserts, is the affirmation of the crucial doctrine of justification by faith, while leaving room for both the historic Protestant view of **imputed** righteousness and the Roman Catholic teaching of **infused** righteousness. Far from a minute theological issue, this distinction determines the meaning of justification by faith and marks the difference between two radically differing religious systems.

Imputed righteousness means that the believer is clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness and thus declared just in God's sight immediately upon trusting Christ; under Rome's teaching of **infused** righteousness, final justification is merited by human cooperation and attained after purgatory, when the actual righteousness of Christ is manifested in the life of the believer. Dr. James M. Boice, chairman of the Alliance, urges, "If the parties can be said to agree on the gospel while these differences remain, the only conclusion is that justification by the imputed righteousness and merit of Christ alone is not essential to the gospel."

Warning against reactionary impulses, the Alliance urges further conversations on these matters and hopes this will afford an opportunity for greater interest in a discussion of the actual content of Christian teaching. The group offers its appeal not as an attack on individuals, nor as a call for division, but as a resource for churches and individuals who are confused over the recent debates. "It's actually an opportunity to attain greater clarity on the 'first things' by which the church stands or falls," said Dr. Boice. "We want to contribute to an open discussion of the essence of the gospel."

The "Appeal to Fellow Evangelicals" is available now and may be received by contacting the Alliance office at 215/546-3696, and can be seen on its web site at remembrancer.com/ace.

(For more information and interviews with members of the Alliance Council, contact Diana Frazier at 215/546-3696, ext. 17.)

APPEAL TO FELLOW EVANGELICALS

In the first week of October 1997, a coalition of individual Roman Catholics and Evangelical Protestants issued a joint statement of their common understanding of the Christian gospel titled "The Gift of Salvation." It was an earnest attempt to state the message of salvation in language acceptable to heirs of the Protestant Reformation and to answer some of the objections that were raised to an earlier document known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" produced by many of the same people. On the surface, this new statement seems greatly improved, and in some respects it is. However, we are profoundly distressed by its assertions and omissions, which leave it seriously flawed. We understand it to be expressed in terms that are consistent with historic Roman Catholic theology, while failing adequately to express the essential Protestant understanding of the gospel, and we plead with our fellow evangelicals not to be misled by this new initiative but instead to hold firm to the doctrine of "justification by grace alone because of Christ alone through faith alone," which is the biblical Gospel.

Some Recent History

The first of these two documents, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," was a call to the Christian world to form a united front against the destructive influences of secular culture in such areas as ethics, statism, and the relativization of truth. In the context of this call to co-belligerency in the common sphere of cultural life, which we heartily endorse, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" affirmed a unity of faith among Roman Catholics and Evangelicals. Included in this common faith was an affirmation that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ.

Many Christians were unsettled by that affirmation chiefly because of the historic controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics regarding the doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*). Pleas were made to the signatories to provide greater clarity to this matter.

The second document attempts to do this. Unlike the first effort, "The Gift of Salvation" tries to clarify the unity of faith that was asserted earlier. It emphasizes the grace of God in salvation, the atonement of Christ, and that the gift of justification is received through faith.

But there is nothing new in this language from a Roman Catholic perspective. Rome has always maintained that salvation is based upon grace, upon the work of Christ and upon faith. The Council of Trent called faith the initiation (*initium*), foundation (*fundamentum*) and root (*radix*) of justification. "The Gift of Salvation" clearly acknowledges that justification is central to the Scriptural account of salvation.

What is striking about this document is the joint affirmation by the signatories that "we understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*)." This statement would seem to indicate that the co-signers agree in affirming the biblical and Reformation doctrine of *sola fide*. If such is the case, we rejoice. However, although it is said that certain affirmations are "in agreement with" *sola fide*, *sola fide* itself is not stated.

"The Gift of Salvation" says that:

1. Justification is received through faith,
2. Justification is not earned by good works or merits of our own,
3. Justification is entirely God's gift,
4. In justification God declares us to be his friends on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone, and
5. Faith is not mere intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, issuing in a changed life.

Each of these points agrees with *sola fide*. Yet separately and together they fall short of both the biblical and Reformation doctrine of *sola fide*, which is our concern.

Imputed or Infused Righteousness

Why do they fall short? Central and essential to the biblical doctrine of justification and to the Reformation doctrine of *sola fide* is the concept of the "imputation" of the righteous-

ness of Christ to the believer. Historically Rome has always contended that the basis of justification is the righteousness of Christ, but it is a righteousness that is "infused" into the believer rather than being "imputed" to him. This means that the believer must co-operate with and assent to that gracious work of God, and only to the extent that Christ's righteousness "inheres" in the believer will God declare the person justified.

Protestants disagree, pointing to the critical difference between "infused" righteousness and "imputed" righteousness. *Sola fide* affirms that we are justified on the basis of Christ's righteousness *for us*, which is accomplished by Christ's own perfect active obedience *apart* from us, not on the basis of Christ's righteousness *in us*. Thus, the good news of the Gospel is that we do not have to wait for righteousness to be accomplished in us before God counts us justified in his sight. He declares us to be just on the basis of Christ's imputed righteousness.

Without the imputation of righteousness the Gospel is not good news because we can never know if we are standing before God in a justified and therefore saved state. We will have to wait for some ultimate, but by no means guaranteed, salvation. The Gospel is not good news if believers may face thousands of years in purgatory before they come at last to heaven.

Toward the end of "The Gift of Salvation" the signers acknowledge that there are questions that require further and urgent exploration. Among these are purgatory, indulgences, merit and the language of imputed righteousness. But if the matter of imputed righteousness remains on the table for further discussion, not to mention purgatory, the matter of indulgences, and the need for human merit of some kind, *the Reformation doctrine of justification is not being affirmed in this document, whatever it may claim*. Thus, the document is dangerously ambiguous.

The historic controversy over imputed versus infused righteousness is a vital, essential matter that posits irreconcilable views of justification. The difference between being

justified by inherent righteousness (no matter how acquired) and being justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone does not admit to compromise. Nor do we view it as a matter that provokes a "needlessly divisive dispute," which "The Gift of Salvation" strongly implies it does. We see it as the *heart of the Gospel*, without which the Gospel is no true Gospel at all.

The signatories have been careful to declare that they are not speaking *for* their respective communities but *from* and *to* them. But it must also be recognized that they are speaking *about* their communities. We want no one in those communities to be misled into thinking that what is affirmed in "The Gift of Salvation" is the historic doctrine of *sola fide*.

The Problem of Ambiguity

In the discussion that followed the release of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" one of the participants in the drafting of the document repeatedly said that the parties to the declaration agreed to the *words* of the document but understood their *meaning* differently. When this occurs we maintain that the "agreement" is not really agreement and the declaration of unity is at best misleading and at worse fraudulent.

Attempts to bring harmony via ambiguous formulas were attempted in the past, most notably at the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541. On this occasion Rome switched from declaring *sola fide* a "novelty" to arguing that it was always the position of the church. Nevertheless, the "agreement" at Ratisbon quickly unraveled over the issue of imputed versus infused righteousness.

At Ratisbon the difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant doctrines seemed to resolve itself into this one point, and even on this, both sides had some views in common. It seemed that there was no radical or irreconcilable difference between them. Yet when they came to explain what they meant by their choice of words it became obvious that they were contending for two opposite and irreconcilable methods of justification: one by an inherent, the other by an imputed righteousness; one by the personal

obedience of the believer, the other by the vicarious obedience of Christ; one by the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit *in us*, the other by Christ's finished work *for us*.

Ratisbon demonstrated that there can be no honest compromise between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant doctrines of justification. Therefore, any agreement made on the basis of mutual concession can only be made by using ambiguous expressions and can amount to nothing more than a meaningless truce, sure to be broken by either party as soon as the subject is brought again into serious discussion.

The true legacy of Ratisbon was not unity but the anathemas of the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Seven months of deliberation were devoted to the doctrine of justification in the sixth session, and the end result was to pronounce anathemas on Protestant teaching. Sadly, the Canons and Decrees of Trent still form the clearest expression of the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification, as evidenced by the recent *Catholic Catechism*. The efforts of some recent Roman Catholic theologians to distance themselves from Trent, and dialogues with representatives of other communions have nevertheless not altered official Roman Catholic teaching.

The irony is that while "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" expressed concern over the relativization of truth in our day, it has led (in "The Gift of Salvation") to a relativizing of the most important truth of all, namely, the Gospel itself. At least some of the Roman Catholic signatories of these two documents have declared their continuing commitment to the teaching of the Council of Trent, as they should if they are truly Roman Catholics.

Faith Alone

"The Gift of Salvation" declares that "faith is not merely intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, involving the mind, the will, and the affections, issuing in a changed life." We agree that faith is not *merely* intellectual assent, and that saving faith includes the whole person and that it issues in a changed life. But this formula fails to address the ac-

tual controversy about saving faith. The Reformers believed that we are justified by faith alone because only faith receives and rests upon the imputed righteousness of Christ alone and appropriates his righteousness as the sole ground of our acceptance by God. True faith is immediately effectual in securing justification. Though faith works by love and produces the fruits of righteousness, its justifying efficacy is due solely to its embracing Christ.

Saving faith, according to the Bible, is not only a *necessary* condition but is a *sufficient* condition for justification. Rome declares that a person can have such faith *without* being justified if a person commits a mortal sin. Such sin is deemed mortal because it kills the grace of justification, even if faith remains intact. Thus, Rome teaches that one can have faith without justification, which is a clear and persistent denial of *sola fide*.

The Call to Evangelize

We are also distressed by the way "The Gift of Salvation" speaks about evangelism. The document says, "We commit ourselves to evangelizing everyone. We must share the fullness of God's saving truth with all, including members of our several communities. Evangelicals must speak the gospel to Catholics and Catholics to Evangelicals." On the surface this sounds like a statement Evangelicals should endorse. But it is another case of ambiguity, one which tends to undermine evangelical missionary efforts in dominantly Roman Catholic countries, and elsewhere.

"Evangelizing" here does not mean preaching the gospel with a view to converting those who hear, because to preach the gospel to Roman Catholics would mean proclaiming it to those who are already within the church and therefore already in the process (in Roman Catholic theology there can be nothing else) of being saved.

True heirs of the Reformation insist that evangelizing means preaching the Gospel of Christ's all-sufficient atoning work to lost people, in the churches as well as outside of them, so they might repent of their sin, trust Christ alone for their sal-

vation and not perish in God's judgment.

Evangelicals and Catholics Together

Sadly the publication of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" and now "The Gift of Salvation" has provoked a severe controversy within the ranks of professing Evangelicals. It has divided Evangelicals from Evangelicals. To the degree it has done this, it has disrupted much of the unity once enjoyed by Evangelicals and has revealed that the unity we thought we had was not as deep as we believed.

Many of us have been engaged in ministry for years and have had a policy of co-operating with Evangelicals of many different communions and persuasions. We are deeply committed to the cause of Evangelical unity. We believe that one of the great strengths of historic Evangelicalism has been the ability to set aside non-essential differences as we work together for a common mission. But the heart and soul of that unity has been and must remain our unswerving commitment to Christ and his Gospel. We believe that indeed it is the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. Unity apart from the Gospel is not biblical unity. In these troubled times we dare not compromise the Gospel in the slightest degree.

We celebrate not only the common Gospel we share, but we honor the communion of saints, particularly those who for the sake of the Gospel in all ages have endured persecution, suffered want and deprivation, and have given their lives for the sake of and in defense of the Gospel. Our times require the same commitment.

We believe that there is value in dialogue with Roman Catholics and other groups, but we protest against declaring that Evangelicals and Roman Catholics share a common faith and mission as long as crucial issues related to justification, such as imputation, "...the normative status of justification in relation to all Christian doctrine...[and] diverse understandings of merit, reward, purgatory, and indulgences, Marian devotion and the assistance of the saints in the life of salvation, and the pos-

INDEX

Volume XLVII (1997)

By Rev. Jerome Julien

AUTHORS

- ADMIRAAL, JAMES
Christian Reformed Synod 1997 6:10
- ARMSTRONG, JOHN
Two Essentials for Pastoral Labor, The 1:5; 2:5
- ARRICK, CATHY
Baggage, Blame and Burnout 7:3
- BEACH, J. MARK
Inside the Mind of User-Friendly Evangelism 4:3
User-Friendly Evangelism and Reformed Evangelism
Today 5:9
- BELZ, JOEL
What Ever Happened to Truth? 9:10
- BLAUW, RICHARD
Truths About the Holy Spirit 5:7
- CASE, JUSTIN
State of Preaching Today, The 10:4
- CLINTON, TIMOTHY
Impact of Television on Our Children, The 8:5
- COX, GARY
Catching Glimpse of Christian Genocide 8:10
Christians Must Fight to Preserve Culture 7:15
Effects of Prayer are Evident 9:14
God Wants Me Happy, Doesn't He? 1:8
"Inside Out" Change of Self, An 10:13
Today's TV is Nothing but Legal Voyeurism 3:7
Too Many People Say They are Too Busy 2:8
- DAVIS, D. CLAIR
Christ's Coming - Good News or Bad? 11:8
- DE JONG, NORMAN
How Old is the Earth? 3:10
Who Will Teach "Ref Doc"? 2:12
- DENNISON, WILLIAM
Christ Our Starting Point 3:13
- DOBSON, JAMES
Spooked by the Zeitgeist: Don't Give in to Feminist
Pressure to Rewrite the Scriptures 9:9
- DRESCHER, JOHN M.
Parable of the Fishless Fisherman, The 10:7
- DUFF, DONALD
Letter from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the
Christian Reformed Church 1:11
- GODFREY, W. ROBERT
"Erasmian Impulse," The 1:20; 3:18
Evita and Our Culture 4:19
Liberalism: Attractions and Dangers 5:6
Music, Song and Worship: A Brief Overview 10:14
Reformed Dream, A 8:17
Study of Worship, A 7:10
- GROENENDYK, JAN
Is it the Lord's Day? 2:3
Teaching Values with Proverbs and Plagues 6:9
- GRUDEM, WAYNE
NIV Controversy: Participants Sign Landmark
Agreement 9:4
- HART, DARYL G.
J. Gresham Machen and the Purpose of Reformed
Theological Education 7:13
J. Gresham Machen and the Controversy over
Presbyterian Foreign Missions 8:11
J. Gresham Machen and the Cost of Faithfulness 5:3
J. Gresham Machen and the Reformation of the
Church 9:15
Machen and the Menace of Modernism 6:16
Worship Fitting for Sound Doctrine 4:8
- HEGEMAN, NEAL
Holy Spirit and Morality, The 10:8
Holy Spirit and Morality, The 9:12
Holy Spirit and True Religion, The 8:7
Holy Spirit's Preparation for the Coming of
Christ, The 11:15
In Times of Revival: Beginning to Know the
Spirit of Revival 5:13
- JOHNSON, THOMAS
Virgin Birth, The 11:6
- JONES, PETER
Spirit Wars in the Third Millennium 6:3
- KING, PHYLLIS J.
Sliding Down the Slope 10:12
- MACHEN, J. GRESHAM
Changing Scene and the Unchanging Word, The 8:14
- MC ATEE, BRET
Evangelism Revisited 1:3
- MONSMA, ELAINE
Lessons from Haggai 3:15
- OLASKY, MARVIN
Calvin's Antidote: Humanity's Arrogance Meets the
Majesty of God 4:15
- PERESZLENYI, E.A.
Hungarian Reformed Church After the "Black Death"
of Communism, The 2:13
- PIERSMA, JOHN
Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church:
Femme Fatale, The 9:3
- SHEPHERD, NORMAN
Ringin' Call to Repentance, A 3:5
- SITTEMA, JOHN
Biblical Foundations for the Ministry of
Mercy 6:23; 7:21
Building Men of God 1:19; 2:15
Elder and Bible Knowledge, The 4:17
"Heart Words" 6:24
Keeping Perspective at Christmas 11:9
Ministry of Walking Around, The 9:19

Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church: Femme Fatale, The, J. Piersma	9:3	Ministry of Walking Around, The, J. R. Sittema	9:19
Former Abortionist Writes "About Your Choice" for Others in the Abortion Industry	3:22	Mr. T. Vee Goes to Court, L. Vanden Heuvel	8:3
Gay "Marriage" and the Hawaii Courts, C. Thomas ...	1:10	Music in the Church, L. Vanden Heuvel	1:9; 2:10; 3:8; 4:10; 6:18
God Wants Me Happy, Doesn't He?, G. Cox	1:8	Music, Song and Worship: A Brief Overview, W. R. Godfrey	10:14
Goodbye, Joe Camel: Hello, More TV Ratings, C. Thomas	8:6	Music which Nurtures Worship of God, C. Vander Meyden	9:11
"Greater Scripture Availability" Goal of Merging Ministries	2:20	New Jersey Christmas Display is Ruled Unconstitutional	3:23
Guidelines for Translation of Gender Related Language in Scripture	9:8	NIV Controversy: Participants Sign Landmark Agreement, W. Grudem	9:4
Hawaii Judge Legalizes Gay Marriages; Decision on Hold Pending Appeal	2:23	Of All Men Most Miserable?, H. Vanden Heuvel	3:3
"Heart Words," J. R. Sittema	6:24	On Confidentiality, J. R. Sittema	10:16
Hermeneutic of "Literalism": Evaluating Dispensationalism, The, C. P. Venema	4:20; 5:20	Overflowing Thanksgiving, T. Vanden Heuvel	10:2
Hierarchy in the CRC, J. Tuininga	11:23	Parable of the Fishless Fisherman, The, J. M. Drescher	10:7
Hold Your Applause, W. Smith	2:10	Recent Archaeological Finds Give Tantalizing Glimpses of Bible Truths	2:22
Holy Spirit and Morality, The, N. Hegeman	9:12; 10:8	Reformed Dream, A, W. R. Godfrey	8:17
Holy Spirit and True Religion, The, N. Hegeman	8:7	Religious Freedom Waning in Russia says Expert	3:23
Holy Spirit's Preparation for the Coming of Christ, The, N. Hegeman	11:15	Ringling Call to Repentance, A, N. Shepherd	3:5
How Old is the Earth?, N. De Jong	3:10	Sliding Down the Slope, P. J. King	10:12
Hungarian Reformed Church after the "Black Death" of Communism, The, E. A. Pereszlenyi	2:13	Spirit Wars in the Third Millennium, P. Jones	6:3
Hypnotic Eye, The, H. C. Trover	8:3	Spooked by the Zeitgeist: Don't Give in to Feminist Pressure to Rewrite the Scriptures, J. Dobson	9:9
Impact of Television on Our Children, The, T. Clinton	8:5	State of Preaching Today, The, J. Case	10:4
"Inside Out" Change of Self, An, G. Cox	10:13	Study of Worship, A, W. R. Godfrey	7:10
Inside the Mind of User-Friendly Evangelism, J. M. Beach	4:3	Supreme Court Seems Unimpressed with Arguments for Assisted Suicide	3:22
In Times of Revival: Beginning to Know the Spirit of Revival, N. Hegeman	5:13	Teach with Clarity, J. R. Sittema	8:18
Is it the Lord's Day?, J. Groenendyk	2:3	Teaching Values with Proverbs and Plagues, J. Groenendyk	6:9
Israel and the Church, C. P. Venema	3:16	Today's TV is Nothing but Legal Voyeurism, G. Cox	3:7
Israel and the Church: Evaluating Dispensationalism, C. P. Venema	2:17	Too Many People Say They are Too Busy, G. Cox	2:8
J. Gresham Machen and the Controversy over Presbyterian Foreign Missions, D. G. Hart	8:11	Toronto Blessing, The, R. S. Ward	4:12
J. Gresham Machen and the Cost of Faithfulness, D. G. Hart	5:3	Truths about the Holy Spirit, R. Blauw	5:7
J. Gresham Machen and the Purpose of Reformed Theological Education, D. G. Hart	7:13	Two Essentials for Pastoral Labor, The J. Armstrong	1:5; 2:5
J. Gresham Machen and the Reformation of the Church, D. G. Hart	9:15	Unity and Schism in the Church, C. P. Venema	1:14
Jesus Christ - The Light of the World, L. Vanden Heuvel	11:3	User-Friendly Evangelism and Reformed Evangelism Today, J. M Beach	5:9
Keeping Perspective at Christmas, J. R. Sittema	11:9	Virgin Birth, The, T. Johnson	11:6
Killing Us Softly with their Song, C. Thomas	3:9	What About Revelation 20?: The Believers Reign with Christ, C. P. Venema	10:18
Lessons from Haggai, E. Monsma	3:15	What About Revelation 20?: The Binding of Satan, C. P. Venema	9:20
Letter from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the Christian Reformed Church, D. Duff	1:11	What About Revelation 20?: The Pre-millennialist Case, C. P. Venema	7:18
Liberalism: Attractions and Dangers, W. R. Godfrey ..	5:6	What About Revelation 20?: The Relation of the Visions of Revelation 19 & 20, C. P. Venema	8:20
Machen and the Menace of Modernism, D. G. Hart ...	6:16	What Ever Happened to Truth?, J. Belz	9:10
Many Churches Evade Responsibility for the Poor, C. Thomas	2:8	Who is Selwa Roosevelt?, C. Thomas	4:16
		Who Will Teach "Ref Doc"?, N. De Jong	2:12
		Wisconsin School Choice Program Ruled Unconstitutional by Judge	3:23

World's Largest New Age Festival is Target of Christian Outreach	2:21
Worship Fitting for Sound Doctrine, D. G. Hart	4:8

SUBJECTS

ABORTION

Abortion Lies, C. Thomas	5:12
Former Abortionist Writes "About Your Choice" for Others in the Abortion Industry	3:22
Killing Us Softly with their Song, C. Thomas	3:9
Who is Selwa Roosevelt?, C. Thomas	4:16

ADULTERY

Adultery: The Next Moral Domino to Fall, C. Thomas	7:12
---	------

ARCHAEOLOGY

Recent Archaeological Finds Give Tantalizing Glimpses of Bible Truths	2:22
--	------

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Supreme Court Seems Unimpressed with Arguments for Assisted Suicide	3:22
--	------

AUDIO SCRIPTURE MINISTRIES

"Greater Scripture Availability" Goal of Merging Ministries	2:20
--	------

BIBLE

Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church: Femme Fatale, The, J. H. Piersma	9:3
Guidelines for Translation of Gender Related Language in Scripture	9:8
NIV Controversy: Participants Sign Landmark Agreement, W. Grudem	9:4
Spooked by the Zeitgeist: Don't Give in to Feminist Pressure to Rewrite the Scriptures, J. Dobson	9:9
What Ever Happened to Truth?, J. Belz	9:10

BIBLE, INTERPRETATION OF

"Erasmian Impulse", The, W. R. Godfrey	1:20; 3:18
Hermeneutic of "Literalism": Evaluating Dispensationalism, The, C. P. Venema	5:20

CALVIN, JOHN

Calvin's Antidote: Humanity's Arrogance Meets the Majesty of God, M. Olasky	4:15
--	------

CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Toronto Blessing, The, R. S. Ward	4:12
---	------

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Church and World	7:23
Who will Teach "Ref Doc"?, N. De Jong	2:12

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Baggage, Blame and Burnout, C. Arrick	7:3
Christians Must Fight to Preserve Culture, G. Cox	7:15
Church and World	10:22
Closing the Gap, C. Thomas	11:14
Diana's Death and Missed Opportunities, C. Thomas	10:11
God Wants Me Happy, Doesn't He?, G. Cox	1:8
"Heart Words," J. R. Sittema	6:24
Holy Spirit and Morality, The, N. Hegeman .	9:12; 10:8
Holy Spirit and True Religion, The	8:7

Holy Spirit's Preparation for the Coming of Christ, The, N. Hegeman	11:15
Impact of Television on Our Children, The, T. Clinton	8:5
"Inside Out" Change of Self, An, G. Cox	10:13
Mr. T. Vee Goes to Court, L. Vanden Heuvel	8:3
In Times of Revival: Beginning to Know the Spirit of Revival, N. Hegeman	5:13
Teaching Values with Proverbs and Plagues, J. Groenendyk	6:9
Today's TV is Nothing but Legal Voyeurism, G. Cox	3:7
Too Many People Say They are Too Busy, G. Cox ..	2:8

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Beware of the Small Print!, C. P. Venema	6:12
Car 54, CRC Elders, and Theological Classes, K. Vander Pol	5:18
Changing Scene and the Unchanging Word, The, J. G. Machen	8:14
Church and World	7:23
Classis California South Endorses Classes Grouped by Theological Affinity Instead of Geography ...	3:20
Hierarchy in the CRC, J. Tuininga	11:23
Letter from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the Christian Reformed Church, D. Duff	1:11

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH SYNOD

Christian Reformed Synod 1997, J. Admiraal	6:10
--	------

CHRISTMAS

Christ's Coming - Good News or Bad?, D. C. Davis	11:8
Jesus Christ - The Light of the World, L. Vanden Heuvel	11:3
Keeping Perspective at Christmas, J. R. Sittema	11:9
New Jersey Christmas Display is Ruled Unconstitutional	3:23

CHURCH

Unity and Schism in the Church, C. P. Venema	1:14
--	------

CHURCH - CHINA

Chinese Lions vs. Pastor Lamb, The, C. Thomas	9:18
---	------

CHURCH - ENGLAND

Britain may be Losing its Christian Identity	3:21
--	------

CHURCH - HUNGARY

Hungarian Reformed Church after the "Black Death" of Communism, The, E. A. Pereszlenyi	2:13
---	------

CHURCH MUSIC

Music in the Church, L. Vanden Heuvel	1:9; 2:10; 3:8; 4:10; 6:18
Music, Song and Worship: A Brief Overview, W. R. Godfrey	10:14
Music which Nurtures Worship of God, C. Vander Meyden	9:11

CHURCH ORDER/POLICY

Beware of the Small Print!, C. P. Venema	6:12
Hierarchy in the CRC, J. Tuininga	11:23

CHURCH - RUSSIA

Religious Freedom Waning in Russia Says Expert	3:23
---	------

CHURCH UNITY

Unity and Schism in the Church, C. P. Venema 1:14

CREATION

How Old is the Earth?, N. De Jong 3:10

DEACONS

Biblical Foundations for the Ministry of Mercy,
J. R. Sittema 6:23; 7:21
Many Churches Evade Responsibility for the Poor,
C. Thomas 2:8

DISPENSATIONALISM

Hermeneutic of "Literalism": Evaluating
Dispensationalism, The, C. P. Venema 4:20; 5:20
Israel and the Church, C. P. Venema 3:16
Israel and the Church: Evaluating
Dispensationalism, C. P. Venema 2:17

EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Doctrines of the Fall and Salvation in Eastern
Orthodox Theology, The, D. Van Drunen 5:15
Eastern Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation, The
D. Van Drunen 6:20
Eastern Orthodoxy: How Should We Speak About
Salvation, D. Van Drunen 8:15
Eastern Orthodoxy: The What and How of
Salvation, D. Van Drunen 7:16

ECUMENISM

Reformed Dream, A, W. R. Godfrey 8:17

EDUCATION

Teach with Clarity, J. R. Sittema 8:18
Wisconsin School Choice Program Ruled
Unconstitutional by Judge 3:23

ELDERS

Car 54, CRC Elders, and Theological Classes,
K. Vander Pol 5:18
Elder and Bible Knowledge, The, J. R. Sittema 4:17
Ministry of Walking Around, The, J. R. Sittema 9:19
On Confidentiality, J. R. Sittema 10:16

ELDERS AND DEACONS

Building Men of God, J. R. Sittema 1:19; 2:15

EUTHANASIA

Killing Us Softly with their Song, C. Thomas 3:9
Sliding Down the Slope, P. J. King 10:12

EVANGELISM

Evangelism Revisited, B. Mc Atee 1:3
Inside the Mind of User-Friendly Evangelism,
J. M. Beach 4:3
Parable of the Fishless Fisherman, The,
J. M. Drescher 10:7
User-Friendly Evangelism and Reformed Evangelism
Today, J. M. Beach 5:9

FEMINISM

Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church:
Femme Fatale, The, J. H. Piersma 9:3

"GAY RIGHTS"

Gay "Marriage" and the Hawaii Courts,
C. Thomas 1:10
Hawaii Judge Legalizes Gay Marriages; Decision
on Hold Pending Appeal 2:23

GENDER SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church:
Femme Fatale, The, J. H. Piersma 9:3
Guidelines for Translation of Gender Related
Language in Scripture 9:8
NIV Controversy: Participants Sign Landmark
Agreement, W. Grudem 9:4
Spooked by the Zeitgeist: Don't Give in to Feminist
Pressure to Rewrite the Scriptures, J. Dobson 9:9

HERMENEUTICS - See BIBLE, INTERPRETATION OF HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit and Morality, The, N. Hegeman . 9:12; 10:8
Holy Spirit and True Religion, The, N. Hegeman 8:7
Holy Spirit's Preparation for the Coming of
Christ, The, N. Hegeman 11:15
In Times of Revival: Beginning to Know the Spirit
of Revival, N. Hegeman 5:13
Truths About the Holy Spirit, R. Blauw 5:7

HOMOSEXUALITY

Gay "Marriage" and the Hawaii Courts, C. Thomas 1:10
Hawaii Judge Legalizes Gay Marriages; Decision
on Hold Pending Appeal 2:23

ISRAEL

Israel and the Church, C. P. Venema 3:16
Israel and the Church: Evaluating Dispensationalism,
C. P. Venema 2:17

JESUS CHRIST

Christ Our Starting Point, W. Dennison 3:13

JESUS CHRIST - BIRTH

Christ's Coming - Good News or Bad?,
D. C. Davis 11:8
Jesus Christ - The Light of the World,
L. Vanden Heuvel 11:3
Keeping Perspective at Christmas, J. R. Sittema 11:9
Virgin birth, The, T. Johnson 11:6

JESUS CHRIST - RESURRECTION

Of All Men Most Miserable?, H. Vanden Heuvel 3:3

LAST THINGS

Evaluating Post-millennialism, C. P. Venema 11:18
Hermeneutic of "Literalism": Evaluating
Dispensationalism, The, C. P. Venema 4:20; 5:20
Israel and the Church, C. P. Venema 3:16
Israel and the Church: Evaluating Dispensationalism,
C. P. Venema 2:17
What About Revelation 20?: The Believers Reign
with Christ, C. P. Venema 10:18
What About Revelation 20?: The Binding of Satan,
C. P. Venema 9:20
What About Revelation 20?: The Pre-millennialist
Case, C. P. Venema 7:18
What About Revelation 20?: The Relation of the
Visions of Revelation 19 & 20, C. P. Venema ... 8:20

LIBERALISM

Liberalism: Attractions and Dangers,
W. R. Godfrey 5:6
Machen and the Menace of Modernism, D. G. Hart 6:16

LORD'S DAY - see SABBATH

MACHEN, J. GRESHAM

- J. Gresham Machen and the Controversy over Presbyterian Foreign Missions, D. G. Hart 8:11
- J. Gresham Machen and the Cost of Faithfulness, D. G. Hart 5:3
- J. Gresham Machen and the Purpose of Reformed Theological Education, D. G. Hart 7:13
- J. Gresham Machen and the Reformation of the Church, D. G. Hart 9:15
- Liberalism: Attractions and Dangers, W. R. Godfrey 5:6
- Machen and the Menace of Modernism, D. G. Hart 6:16

MARRIAGE

- Adultery: The Next Moral Domino to Fall, C. Thomas 7:12

MEDITATIONS

- Lessons from Haggai, E. Monsma 3:15
- Virgin Birth, The, T. Johnson 11:6
- Overflowing Thanksgiving, T. Vanden Heuvel 10:2

MILLENNIUM - See LAST THINGS

MISSIONS

- Bibles are in High Demand in Cuba 3:19

NEW AGE MOVEMENT

- Spirit Wars in the Third Millennium, P. Jones 6:3
- World's Largest New Age Festival is Target of Christian Outreach 2:21

NIV (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

- Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church: Femme Fatale, The, J. H. Piersma 9:3
- NIV Controversy: Participants Sign Landmark Agreement, W. Grudem 9:4

ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- Changing Scene and the Unchanging Word, The, J. G. Machen 8:14
- Church and World 7:23
- J. Gresham Machen and the Cost of Faithfulness, D. G. Hart 5:3
- J. Gresham Machen and the Reformation of the Church, D. G. Hart 9:15
- Letter from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the Christian Reformed Church, D. Duff 1:11

PASTORAL WORK

- Two Essentials for Pastoral Labor, The, J. Armstrong 1:5; 2:5

PENTECOST - See HOLY SPIRIT

PERSECUTION

- Catching Glimpse of Christian Genocide, G. Cox ... 8:10

POLITICS - CHRISTIAN VIEW OF

- Calvin's Antidote: Humanity's Arrogance Meets the Majesty of God, M. Olasky 4:15

PRAYER

- Effects of Prayer are Evident, G. Cox 9:14

PREACHING

- Ringling Call to Repentance, A. N. Shepherd 3:5
- State of Preaching Today, The, J. Case 10:4

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

- J. Gresham Machen and the Controversy over Presbyterian Foreign Missions, D. G. Hart 8:11
- J. Gresham Machen and the Cost of Faithfulness, D. G. Hart 5:3
- J. Gresham Machen and the Reformation of the Church, D. G. Hart 9:15
- Machen and the Menace of Modernism, D. G. Hart 6:16

PROMISE KEEPERS

- Closing the Gap, C. Thomas 11:14

REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

- Hungarian Reformed Church after the "Black Death" of Communism, The, E. A. Pereszlenyi 2:13

REFORMED CHURCHES IN AMERICA

- Reformed Dream, A, W. R. Godfrey 8:17

REFORMED ECUMENISM

- Reformed Dream, A, W. R. Godfrey 8:17

REPENTANCE

- Ringling call to Repentance, A. N. Shepherd 3:5

REVIVAL

- Holy Spirit and Morality, The, N. Hegeman . 9:12; 10:8
- Holy Spirit and True Religion, The, N. Hegeman 8:7
- Holy Spirit's Preparation for the Coming of Christ, The, N. Hegeman 11:15
- In Times of Revival: Beginning to Know the Spirit of Revival, N. Hegeman 5:13

RUSSIA

- Religious Freedom Waning in Russia says Expert .. 3:23

SABBATH

- Is it the Lord's Day?, J. Groenendyk 2:3

SCHISM, SEPARATION

- Unity and Schism in the Church, C. P. Venema 1:14

SCRIPTURE - AUTHORITY

- "Erasmian Impulse," The, W. R. Godfrey 1:20; 3:18

TEACHING

- Teach with Clarity, J. R. Sittema 8:18

TELEVISION

- Goodbye, Joe Camel: Hello, More TV Ratings, C. Thomas 8:6
- Hypnotic Eye, The, H. C. Trover 8:3
- Impact of Television on Our Children, The, T. Clinton 8:5
- Mr. T. Vee Goes to Court, L. Vanden Heuvel 8:3
- Today's TV is Nothing but Legal Voyeurism, G. Cox 3:7

THANKSGIVING DAY

- Overflowing Thanksgiving, T. Vanden Heuvel 10:2

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- J. Gresham Machen and the Purpose of Reformed Theological Education, D. G. Hart 7:13

TORONTO BLESSING

- Toronto Blessing, The, R. S. Ward 4:12

UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN N. AMERICA

- Aaron's Oil and Mountain Dew, D. Vander Meulen 6:22

Ecumenical and Church Order Concerns Highlight 2nd URC Synod, D. Vander Meulen	11:23
VIRGIN BIRTH	
Virgin Birth, The, T. Johnson	11:6
WORSHIP	
Applause in Worship, J. Stappert	2:9
Evita and Our Culture, W. R. Godfrey	4:19
Hold Your Applause, W. Smith	2:10
Music in the Church, L. Vanden Heuvel	1:9; 2:10; 3:8; 4:10; 6:18
Music, Song and Worship: A Brief Overview, W. R. Godfrey	10:14
Music which Nurtures Worship of God, C. Vander Meyden	9:11
Study of Worship, A, W. R. Godfrey	7:10
Worship Fitting for Sound Doctrine, D. G. Hart	4:8

BOOK REVIEWS

Charnock, Stephen: Truth and Life	11:22
Edgar, William: Reasons of the Heart: Recovering Christian Persuasion	11:21
Fawcett, Arthur: Cambuslang Revival, The	3:24

Harding, Susan: Beginning with John's Gospel	11:22
Horton, Michael: In the Face of God (S. Van Eck)	4:22
Jacomb, Thomas: Romans 8 (verses 1-4)	1:24
Kreeft, Peter: Ecumenical Jihad: Ecumenism and the Culture War (B. M. Madany)	11:11
Sproul, R. C.: Grace Unknown: The Heart of Reformed Theology	11:21
Spurgeon, C. H.: Revival Year Sermons	3:24
Tyler, Bennet and Bonar, Andrew: Life and Labours of Asahel Nettleton, The	1:24
Young, Edward J.: The Way Everlasting: A Study in Psalm 139	11:22

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Isaiah 7:14	11:6
Haggai 2:23	3:15
II Corinthians 4:15	10:2
Titus 2	4:8
Revelation 20	7:18; 8:20; 9:20; 10:18

sibility of salvation for those who have not been evangelized" ("The Gift of Salvation"), remain unresolved.

We are concerned for the flock of Jesus that it may not be confused or misled by ambiguous views of the gospel. We are concerned about the missionary enterprise of Evangelicals as they bring the gospel to the nations. We are concerned for the task of evangelism, being convinced that without the evangel there is no authentic evangelism. We agree with the Reformers that justification by faith alone is the article by which the church stands or falls and is indeed the article by which we stand or fall.

We stand together on these truths. We call on all true Evangelicals to stand with us.

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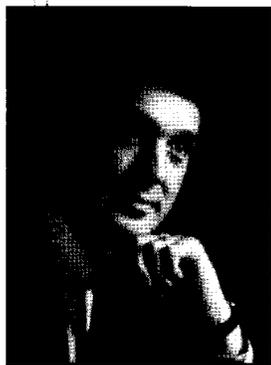
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Characters are Developed, Not Born

GARY COX

We are in the fight of our lives. Daily you can tune in to the skirmishes as they unfold on CNN or CNBC. You can watch the debates on C SPAN. You can hear the crack or ideological canon fire on "Crossfire," and you can almost see the soul of America shriveling up like cellophane on hot coals.

No less than the future direction of this land is at stake. We have jettisoned the moral and philosophical ballast that has kept this ship of state righted and we are now floundering badly. Case in point is an embattled president.

You see, what a man does or refrains from doing behind closed doors reveals what he is in his heart. When Joseph of Genesis fame refused to be seduced by Potiphar's wife, he spoke volumes about the kind of person he was and thus how he would eventually rule as the prime minister of Egypt. His character was evidence of the religious, philosophical and moral underpinnings that were the tracks upon which his life, both public and private, would traverse.

When a leader has to reach deep inside to make that difficult decision that may mean his ruin if things don't go well (or make less money), what will move him to make the tough call versus the expedient one? It will be the bedrock principles by which he has lived his life. He won't change in mid-stream unless there is some transformation such as a spiritual rebirth in Christ.

For instance, George Washington Carver, a former slave was a devout Christian and a man of insatiable curiosity. He wanted to know all that he could know about all that His Father in heaven had created.

He tells the story of the time when he asked God to reveal to him the wonders of the universe. He said, "God told me that was just too much for me to comprehend, so I asked Him if he would reveal to me the wonders of this world, but that too was beyond me. So I said, "Lord, what about the peanut? Would you show me all the wonders of just the peanut. Surely I could grasp that with my peanut brain."

God answered Carver's prayer for he discovered more than 300 uses for the peanut, including face powder, printers ink and a milk substitute. Then it happened. His brilliance and success became known to Henry Ford who offered him a position with the Ford Motor Co., making 10 times what he made as a teacher at the all-black Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. He made less than \$10,000 at Tuskegee but would earn in excess of \$100,000 with Ford, and that was at a time when you could keep most of what you earned.

Washington turned the offer down — not once, but twice. Why? Because he believed God had given him a higher calling in the education of African-American youth, and to accept Mr. Ford's offer would be a demotion!

Oh, that we had men like George Washington Carver in Washington. Oh, that we had a nation that would value such men, but alas, the polls tell us that the president's unfaithfulness and violation of his marital vows is his business alone. I beg to differ because his private decisions mold the character out of which his public policies are born. Men and women of character are not born—they are developed, one decision at a time.

When we cease to value leaders with strong character based on the moral laws of God (i.e., the Ten Commandments) then we cease to be a nation that will stand strong when things like sacrifice, courage, selflessness and moral fiber are needed in the time of crisis.

Rev. Cox is senior minister of Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church, (PCA).



The Means and Message for Reformation and Revival (XI)

NEAL HEGEMAN

In the Patmos model of revival and reformation all the outer garments of Judaism and institutional Christianity had been removed. Five essentials were there. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. There was a *Christian, the Spirit of Christ, the Word, the lampstands and the Lord's Day.* (This is not a model for a new reductionistic fundamentalism, but rather a reflection of what Jesus says in Matthew 18:20: "For, where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.") There are Christians, assembled in worship, seeking the true God, (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and receiving the Word of God.

THE MINIMUM MEANS FOR REVIVAL AND REFORMATION

There was a Christian

Revival and reformation start with people. It has to start with the first person. In times of revival, God uses the particular few in order to reach many others. One Jesus, 12 disciples, and the Spirit came upon 12 apostles. One Peter preached and 3,000 people came into the church. One Paul, apostle to the Gentiles. Now, one John, the only remaining apostle. One Augustine to bring the church back to her Trinitarian basis. One Luther in Germany. One Calvin in France. One Knox for Scotland. Two Wesley brothers. One Jonathan Edwards. One Whitefield ... and on and on we go.

In times of revival, God uses the particular few in order to reach many others.

We recognize that God will often use officebearers, such as the special offices of apostle, to do His work. John was an apostle. Included in his call was the task of writing part of the New Testament. He was given a special revelation (which will not be repeated for now it is inscripturated). This was to be written down and given to the messengers of the church to preach.

Now, your involvement in revival and reformation focuses on *you*. Our hearts can be warmed by historical accounts of great revival and reforma-

tion, but what about you? The warming of the emotions and sentiments do not constitute a basis for revival or reformation.

You too are called to be a Spirit-anointed office bearer. Being a Christian is an office, a function under the unction of the Spirit of Christ. The Hebrew name for the Greek "Christ" means "anointed one." This is an official title, a title which points to the vocation of being a Christian.

The office of all believers includes being prophet, priest and king. The leadership offices of the church are for the brothers who are called to such a task, but the office of all believers is for all Christians. We will soon see that Christ as our prophet, priest and king, calls us to respond to Him.¹

In times of revival there is an increased awareness of the Christian's vocation as prophet, priest and king. God's people will be anointed by the Spirit of proclamation, intercession and dominion over sin.

There was the Holy Spirit

The apostle John did not experience regeneration on Patmos. Rather, he was being prepared for a special task. Being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day is part of the ongoing sanctifying and preparing work of the Spirit.

How does God prepare His people for revival and reformation? The English Puritan, Richard Sibbs spoke of four personal means (to be distinguished from communal means of preaching, discipline and the sacraments). From his study of Scripture he concluded that the Spirit prepares His people in repentance, in prayer, in drawing them into fellowship with other Christians and in Bible study.² These are normative activities for the Christian in communion with the local congregation in worshiping God. In times of revival, the Spirit of God multiplies such activities in extraordinary ways.

There was the Context of Worship on the Lord's Day.

Notice that at Pentecost and now on Patmos, the Spirit was received on the Lord's Day, while

God's people were in prayer. That is not coincidence. Worship is God working with His people at a communal level.

We come into worship in order to meet with God. This is true worship. God speaks to us through His Word and we speak to God through personal and corporate prayer, and our praises. The God whom we meet in worship is the God of revival.

In times of revival, Biblical worship is restored. So it was after the Exodus, during the time of the judges, after the exile, during the ministry of Jesus, at Pentecost, on Patmos, during the Reformation, with Puritans, and in mission movements such as the growth of the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

God's people begin the week with communal worship (the Lord's Day) and continue to serve Him throughout the week. Evening services are not a rarity but frequent. Converts and covenant members are instructed. Leaders are trained. Services are rendered. *In times of revival, spending time in worship with the Lord on His day will be restored.*

There was the Word

The vision which John the apostle received was special. The apostles were chosen by Jesus; they were eye witnesses of Jesus; they were to set up the early church; and they were to finish writing the New Testament (II Peter 3:16). For that purpose they received special revelations which are written down, inscripturated in the Bible. This vision is one of the last we receive in Scripture. It now remains permanently in the Church.

In times of revivals many claim to receive visions of Jesus. The children at the Airport Fellowship saw a Lion, Jesus, standing in front of a store saying: "Come and buy." Benny Hin says that Jesus came into his room at night and He was dressed in a robe and with sandals.

Are we allowed to ask a few questions? Why would Jesus dress that way in modern day North America? How can you be sure you saw the real Jesus? Did He speak King James English or New International Version English (this would go a long way in settling our Bible version debates). What was His view on women as pastors, homosexual orientation, papal authority and mariology? What constitutes a claim to a vision: subjectivity or the objectivity of Scriptures?

For this reason God has given us a permanent, inscripturated vision of Jesus so we can be sure, so we will not be led astray by the imaginations of man and deception of the evil one.

There was a Lampstand

The lampstands were the congregations who were faithful to the testimony of Jesus and the

Word both in belief and practice. The churches were the recipients of God's Word. God's Word was preached there. When John heard the voice of the Lord he looked and saw the lampstands. Jesus was walking among the lampstands. He spoke in the context of the churches. He received the prayers of God's people in the context of the churches. Christ interacted with Christians in the congregation.

The lampstand is a bearer of light. The gospel light is sustained by the High Priest, Jesus Christ.

In times of revival there will be a multiplication of churches and increase of gospel preaching and obedience. This was the experience of the CRC in the Dominican Republic and other mission movements: authentic church growth accompanied by true gospel light.

THE MESSAGE OF REVIVAL AND REFORMATION

Jesus Himself appeared. That is the essence of God's Word. Jesus reveals it, shows who He is and how we can be reconciled to the Father.

We see Jesus, as God, as Son of man, as prophet, priest and king.

Jesus is God

Jesus Christ is God. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. He is eternal. For this claim Jesus died (Mt. 26). Yet He does not change His being. He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father, always eternal.

Only the eternal God can instruct us about eternal matters, of life and death, of heaven and hell, of salvation and sanctification.

Christian revival exalts the deity of Christ.

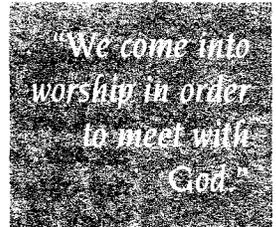
Jesus is the Son of Man

Jesus was crucified because He claimed to be the Son of Man who would come again on the clouds in glory (Mt. 26). The Jews and Romans sought to destroy Jesus and His claims. The same Jesus will return. He does not change. Eternity cannot be wiped out.

Some say that all roads of world religion lead to God. What will the Hindu, Buddhist, New Ager, Jew and all who have rejected the Son of Man say when they appear before Him? We will all appear before the Son of Man, the only authentic representative of mankind. *In times of revival there will be an urgency to evangelize all in preparation for the day of judgment.*

Jesus is the Chief Prophet

As prophet He speaks the Word. His voice is as a trumpet. Have you heard what a trumpet sounds



like? It is high and sharp. It pierces the air. In the Old Testament days the trumpet was used to announce the beginning of a religious feast such as the Sabbath, the coming of someone very important or to call soldiers into battle. It could mean all three.

"As the pulpit goes so go the churches."

The Word of God is like a trumpet; it is communally sounded forth on the Lords' Day. It calls attention to the greatest personality who exists, God, who is revealed to us in Christ. It calls us into spiritual conflict with the forces of darkness and evil.

A sword comes from His mouth. This sword is a weapon. This is the living Word the preachers preach. According to Ephesians 6:17 the Word is not only the sword of Jesus but the sword of the Spirit. The Word is to sound forth from our pulpits in preaching.

The sword of Christ is exercised in congregational preaching. John Calvin says:

Preaching ought not to be lifeless, but lively, that if an unbeliever be present, he may so effectually be arrested and convinced as to give glory to God. Paul speaks of a lively power and energy with which men ought to speak, who would approve themselves as good and faithful servants of God. The Spirit of God ought to sound forth by their voices so as to work with mighty energy. He directs that we be not slothful in God's business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord with holy zeal and fire.

John Greener says:

The pulpit is the altar where the fire falls on Mount Carmel. The pulpit is the heart beat of the gospel proclamation. As the pulpit goes so go the churches...As the pulpit goes so goes the hearts of men in our generation...The pulpit is the front line of the spiritual battle that is waged in every generation and in every culture.

Martyn Lloyd Jones says:

What is it that always heralds the dawn of a Reformation or a Revival? It is renewed preaching...A revival of true preaching has always heralded these great movements in the history of the church...As that is true in the beginning as described by the book of Acts, it was also after the Protestant Reformation. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Latimer, Ridley...all these men were great preachers. In the seventeenth century, you had exactly the same thing—great Puritan preachers and others. And in the

eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield, the Wesley's, Lowlands and Harris were all great preachers.³

In our spiritual battle, we must be under the protection and direction of the sword of Christ, the Word of God. The sword is used to defend against Satan. As Martin Luther so ably states in his hymn:

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure, one little Word shall fell him.

The sword is used to convict sinners in the congregations. The sins of idolatry, immorality, the breaking of the first four commandments and the violations of the last six commandments are arrested by the sword of Christ through the preached and applied Word in the congregation.

Does Christ speak to sins of God's people on Sunday morning and evening? If not, you have not been under the sword of the Spirit. Yes, the Word is to comfort to console, to praise and pray; but it is also to convict (John 16:8-11). The converted need to be convicted. We need daily repentance and daily obedience. That is why Jesus addresses the congregation rather than the world with His message

Jesus is the High Priest

As priest He wears the priestly garments. He is the intercessor, the sacrificer, the way before the Father. He dwells in the new temple, among the lampstands of congregations. Notice that Jesus is spiritually present among the congregations. As priest He hears our prayers and confessions. He continually prays and intercedes for us.

Continual intercession by Christ is necessary. Can you live one moment of your Christian life without prayer? Can you live on your own? Jesus said that if we bear witness to Him on earth He will bear witness for us before the Father.

Robert Murray McCheyne says:

If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me.

It is said that for over 100 years, starting in 1720, the Moravians kept a prayer vigil going, 24 hours a day. Does this mean that all Christian churches should do that? Legalistic prayer, praying because someone tells you to do it, will stay within the cold heart from which it comes. Spiritual prayer, (when we ask God to break our hearts and cause

us to pray) will be effectual. What a blessing it is when God's people pray continually! Wherever there is great revival and reformation there is prayer. Prayer does not cause revival and reformation. Prayer is a fruit of revival and reformation.

Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 116:

Why do Christians pray? Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. And also because God gives His grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking Him for them.

Prayerlessness is sin. Did Adam and Eve consult with God, communicate with God, express their communion with God through praying in times of temptation?

Prayerlessness is sin. Samuel said about the sinful covenant people: "Should I sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you..." (I Sam. 12:23).

"Pray always..." (Eph. 6:18).

"Continue in prayer..." (Col. 4:2).

"Pray without ceasing..." (I Thess. 5:17).

E.M. Bounds says:

A prayerless ministry is the undertaker for all God's truth and for God's Church.

Prayer involves Jesus in the conflict against sin, worldliness and Satan.

John Bunyan says:

Prayer is a shield to the soul, a delight to God, and a scourge to Satan.

Samuel Chadwick says:

The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless study, prayerless work, prayerless religion; he laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.

Sidlow Baxter says:

Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers.

We know the High Priest is active today. He is moving among the lighted lampstands, the true church. Prayer to the only Intercessor is a sure sign of the true Church. No prayer, or prayer to other intercessors, is a sign of the false church.

The church is waning in Europe, even in Canada, and decline is moving worldwide. There are churches who have the name of true churches, be it Reformed, Presbyterian, Orthodox, Conservative. Are they alight with the gospel of living to

Christ and dying to sin, of seeking continual intercession, of proclaiming and practicing the Word in and out of season?

Jesus is the King of Kings

As king of kings, He walks in the furnace of tribulation and rules over the earth. The fires of persecution were licking at the feet of the Son of God. "Wherefore do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.'

Christians were killed or thrown before wild animals to be devoured for one reason: for saying that "Jesus is Lord," rather than "Caesar is Lord."

Polycarp, when asked to confess that Caesar is Lord said:

Eighty and six years have I served him, and he has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?

Persecution is happening now. How many hundreds of thousands of Christians have died in Russia before, during and after World War II. We are speaking of millions.

In the Huarorani territory of Ecuador, early 1956, the pilot of a low-flying search plane making its way along the Curaray River spotted one of the five missing missionaries' bodies lying face down in the water.

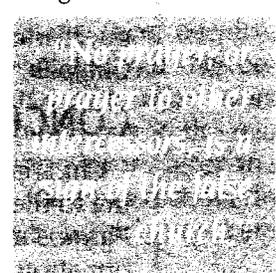
Recently, under the regime of Adi Admin, thousands of Christians were slaughtered. He remains alive today, protected by a Muslim government. Muslims continue to execute Christian pastors in Iran and other countries of the world. Children of Christians in the Sudan are sold as slaves and prostitutes. Need we speak of the slaughter of Rwandan peoples, right in the church, where they fled for refuge?

Modern day martyrs are also to be found among Reformed believers. In Chiapas, Mexico, members of the National Presbyterian Church continue to be forced out of their homes and even martyred.

We are to remember those being persecuted, as if we were in prison with them. Richard Wurmbrand estimates that one third of the world's Christians live under persecuting conditions.

Yet, the fires of persecution cannot stop the advancement of the gospel. Jesus continues to rule.

In the Orient, even as Communist Chinese authorities seek to purge the church, it continues to grow by the millions.



Among the Auca Indians, the son of the man who murdered five missionaries became a missionary himself, and the wife of one of the deceased missionaries attended the ordination service.

Even though the peace keepers of Canada and the United Nations do not dare to enter Rwanda, missionaries like Dr. Timothy and Dorothy Monsma work with church leaders and help out orphanages.

The Roman Catholic liberationists the Zapatista guerrillas, continue to oppress Christians in Chiapas, yet the church continues to grow.

CONCLUSION

Christians, we are an insignificant few according to the statistics of this land. We see from the Patmos model of revival and reformation that God starts with one Christian at a time. He uses the means of grace, centered around His Word, at the personal as well as the communal level. God continues to work according to His creation, redemption and eternal plan. He sends His Spirit to accomplish His work in and through us as office-bearers, as prophets, priests and servants of the King. Christ is the significant One. He is the prime actor in redemption. Through Him alone we come to the Father and receive the Spirit. He is the Chief Prophet, the High Priest, and the King of Kings. All our attention must be on the things above, on Christ, and not on the things below. May Christ be exalted!

As we return to our congregations, may we truly be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, hearing the Word of God, as Christ continues to speak to His people through the Word. May we be in prayer and be found faithful under the rule of Christ.

Then true revival and true reformation will take place.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 12.
2. Stephen Beck, "The Role of Preparation," (Ligonier Ministries of Canada 1996), audio tape.
3. Martin Lloyd Jones, *Preachers and Preaching* (London: Lowe and Brydone 1981).

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Concomitants of the Second Advent: The Final Judgment (I)

CORNELIS P. VENEMA

Many of us are probably familiar with the saying, "there is nothing more certain than death and taxes." Not only does this saying reveal an almost universal distaste for paying taxes, but it also reveals a grudging recognition that life, at least life in this body, eventually comes to an end. Though people are adept at finding ways to avoid the reality of death — in the United States, the industry dedicated to keeping people looking young takes in billions every year — no one can ultimately deny its certainty. Though taxes can be avoided by legal or illegal means, death cannot be! The evidence for this truth is compelling, inescapable and universal.

However, there is another reality no less certain than death. And that is the reality of the *final judgment*. The writer of Hebrews, speaking of the second coming of Christ, remarks:

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once *and after this comes judgment*, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly wait Him (9:27, emphasis mine).

The final judgment is, like the resurrection of the body, an end-time event which will accompany the return of Christ at the close of this present period of history. Consequently, when Christians affirm their faith in the *Apostles' Creed*, they speak not only of the resurrection of the body but also of the return of Christ from heaven "to judge the living and the dead."

Now that we have considered the first concomitant of Christ's second advent, the resurrection of the body, I would like in this article to take up a number of questions that relate to the Bible's teaching about the final judgment. In a subsequent article, I will address myself directly to a question that is often disputed, namely, whether this judgment will include the granting of differing rewards to the righteous, depending upon their good works.

THE TIMING AND NUMBER OF FINAL JUDGMENT(S)

Among the first questions that arise regarding the final judgment are the questions of its time and the number of judgments that will occur. Historic and dispensational pre-millennialists speak of several judgments which are distinguishable according to their time, place and subjects. Though there is a great deal of diversity of opinion among representatives of these views, the most common dispensationalist position speaks of four distinct judgments: the judgment of believers at the rapture; the judgment of Israel at the close of the seven year period of tribulation; the judgment of the nations; and the "great white throne judgment" at the close of the millennial age (Rev. 20:11-15).¹ The first three of these judgments precede, and the last follows, the millennium. These distinct judgments are a necessary part of the pre-millennialist conception of

the future. For instance, because pre-millennialism distinguishes between the resurrection of believers before the millennium and the resurrection of unbelievers after the millennium, at least two distinct (in time and in subjects) judgments are necessary.

A complete answer to these questions would require a review of a number of points that I have made in preceding articles. In those articles, I have given a variety of arguments against the pre-millennialist position, whether in its historic or dispensational expression. Once it is admitted that the return of Christ will occur at the end of the age and after the millennium of Revelation

"Though taxes can be avoided by legal or illegal means, death cannot be!"

20, no occasion or need remains for claiming that there will be more than one judgment. Furthermore, once it is acknowledged that the final judgment will occur after the resurrection of the body and in close association with it, then it

seems quite clear that the final judgment will be a single event in which all are judged, believer and unbeliever alike, Jew as well as Gentile. Just as we have seen that the resurrection will be an event at the end of the age which embraces believer and unbeliever alike (John 5:25-29), so the final judgment will include all. As the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that *each one* may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (emphasis mine). When Christ describes the

final judgment in Matthew 25, all the nations and peoples are said to be judged together and a separation is pronounced between the "sheep" and the "goats" (Matt. 25:31-46).²

Though it is evident that the final judgment will occur as a single event after the resurrection, it is not as clear from Scripture whether it will precede or follow the transformation of the creation at the end of the age. Some passages seem to suggest that the judgment will take place before the recreation of the heavens and earth (e.g., 2 Pet. 3:7). However, in other passages the final judgment is simply linked with the end of the present age (e.g.: Matt. 13:40-43; Matt. 25:31-32; 2 Thess. 1:7-10), but without any indication that it will occur prior to the renewal of all things. In Revelation 20:12, it is suggested that the judgment will immediately follow the general resurrection:

And I saw the dead, the great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

In the sequence of visions in Revelation 20, the great white throne judgment is followed by a series of visions which describe the new heavens and earth. Admittedly, as we have had occasion to see before, the visions of Revelation are not arranged in a neat chronological order. The placement of the visions of the new heavens and earth *after* that of the great white throne judgment, however, does suggest that this may be the sequence of events to be expected at the end of the age: first, the resurrection, second, the final judgment, and third, the transformation of the creation.³

A question that sometimes surfaces in this connection, one to

which the Scriptures do not give a direct answer, has to do with the duration of the final judgment. Will the final judgment be a quick and relatively short event, or will it take place over a more extended period of time?⁴ On several occasions, the Bible speaks of the final judgment as a *day* of judgment (compare Matt. 7:22; 11:22; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:12; Rom. 5). This language, however, should not be pressed to mean a literal period of one day. It may only be a way of referring to the peculiar period which will be marked off for the purpose of judgment. Just as the Scriptures speak of this as the "day" of salvation (compare Heb. 3:7-19), a

day is coming when all will be judged for what they have done in the body, whether good or bad.

THE JUDGMENT'S NECESSITY AND PURPOSE

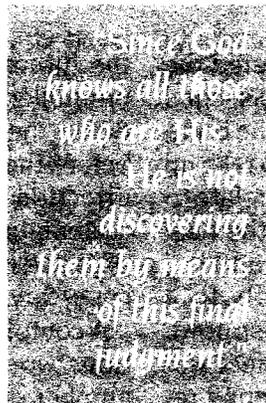
One question regarding the final judgment is prompted by our consideration earlier of what we termed the "intermediate state." Since the intermediate state involves a provisional circumstance of **blessedness** for believers and of **distress** for unbelievers, it would seem that the final judgment serves no **useful purpose** for those who have **died prior** to Christ's return. Though it **may be necessary** for those who are **living at** Christ's return that they **be judged** and pronouncement of **weal or woe** be made regarding them, this is not the case for those who have **already entered** by way of death into a **provisional state** that anticipates what the judgment will declare concerning them. What **necessity for or purpose** is served by the final judgment of those who have **already been determined** to be saved or lost?

The problem with this question is that it treats the final judgment too much in terms of our ordinary un-

derstanding of what takes place in a human trial court with its process of reaching and pronouncing a verdict. However, the final judgment is a work of God, particularly, as we shall see, a work of Christ who has been appointed as Judge. As a work of God, it cannot be understood as a process so much of *investigation* to determine the guilt or innocence of those judged, as an occasion to *pronounce and execute with divine authority* the sentence that God alone can pass with perfect justice upon all who are judged. Since God knows all those who are His — indeed, He knows them from eternity (compare Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29) — He is not *discovering* them by means of this final judgment. Rather, He is *revealing* His power and glory as the One who alone has the prerogative to judge His creatures and to declare their final destiny. In pronouncing and executing this judgment, God not only declares openly the final state of every person but dispenses His judgment and reward in a way that confirms His righteousness.

The descriptions of the final judgment found in Scripture and the confessions confirm this to be its purpose and necessity. A good example of this emphasis upon the final judgment as the occasion for God to manifest His glory in His work of judgment is found in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter XXXIII, ii:

The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.



WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE?

One prominent and clear teaching of Scripture respecting the final judgment is that Christ will be the Judge. Among those prerogatives that characterize the exaltation and rule of Christ at the right hand of the Father is the prerogative to carry out the final judgment. In keeping with this biblical emphasis, the *Apostles' Creed* speaks of the return of Christ as a coming "to judge the living and the dead." The great work in which Christ will be engaged at His coming is the work of judgment, vindicating His people and the cause of the gospel, condemning all their and His enemies.

It belongs to Christ's glory and office as King that He is granted the authority to carry out the final judgment (compare Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9,10). In John 5:22-23, we read, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." Later, in the same chapter, Christ closely associates the resurrection of the just and the unjust with His "authority to execute judgment" (v. 27). At the close of his sermon on Mars hill, the apostle Paul declares that God "has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). The apostle Paul also speaks of the day of judgment as one on which all must appear "before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Similarly, in the familiar description of the final judgment given in Matthew 25, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of the time "when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him" to sit on "His glorious throne" (v. 31; compare 2 Thess. 1:7-10). In these and other passages, it is unmistak-

ably clear that the One who will judge and sit upon the throne of judgment is Christ Himself.

The significance of this truth is captured well in the *Heidelberg Catechism's* answer to the question, "What comfort is it to you that Christ shall come to judge the living and the dead?" "That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head I look for the very same Person who before has offered Himself for my sake to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me, to come as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me with all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory."⁵

Though the coming of Christ in glory and power to judge the living and the dead is a fearful prospect for the wicked and unbelieving, it is an unspeakable comfort to those who have believed in Him and devoted themselves to His service. In the day of Christ's coming and judgment, the unbelieving and impenitent will be condemned. But the people of God will receive from the Judge, who is also their Savior who was previously judged in their place, their vindication and rest.

Before taking up the next question regarding the final judgment, there is a wrinkle on the question of who will be the Judge that invites comment. In some of the biblical descriptions of the final judgment, it is suggested that believers and even the angels who serve the Lord will have a role to play in it. In 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, the apostle Paul, in the context of his rebuke to the Corinthians not to take fellow believers to court, reminds them that "the saints will judge the world" (v. 2). The vision of Revelation 20 also speaks of the "judgment" that is given to those who reign with Christ during the millennium (v. 4). Similar descriptions of believers sharing

in the work of judgment are found in other passages as well (compare Ps. 145:5-9; Matt. 19:28). What are we to make of these passages? What role do the saints and the angels play in Christ's work of judgment?

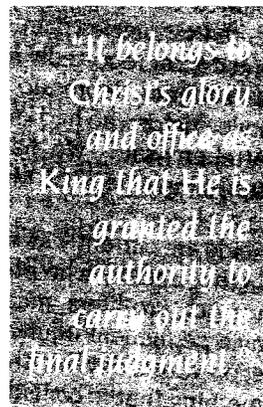
It is difficult to say exactly what the nature of the saints' participation in the final judgment will be. Certainly, because Christ is the Mediator and Head of His people, they share fully in whatever honor or glory belongs to Him. On the principle that believers are co-heirs with Christ of all things (1 Cor. 3:21-23), it follows that they have some part in His work of judgment. What that part might be exactly remains unclear. Nothing that they do could be done independently of the work of Christ. Nor could it be said to add something otherwise lacking in the work of Christ. Perhaps it is best, therefore, to note simply that they share in the victory and glory that belong to Christ in His activity as the Judge at His coming. As to the involvement of the angels, it is best to restrict it

to the kinds of things often mentioned in the biblical descriptions of the final judgment: their ministry is auxiliary and subordinate to that of Christ. To the angels is assigned the work of gathering the peoples together for the judgment and executing the judgment that is pronounced (compare e.g.:

Matt. 13:41-2; 24:31; 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7).

FOOTNOTES

1. *The New Scofield Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), notes on Matt. 25:32 and Rev. 20:12.
2. The confessions of the Reformation typically speak of the final judgment as a single event at the close of the age which includes all people who have ever lived. See: *Belgic Confession*, Article XXXVII; *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 19; *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter XXXIII; and *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Questions 88-90.
3. However, the sequence given in the *Belgic Confession*, Article XXXVII, seems to be that the final judgment will follow the transformation or renewal of all things.



4. The Jehovah's Witnesses' publication, *Let God Be True* (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1952), p. 286, teaches that the final judgment will encompass the first one thousand years of the new world. There is no biblical basis for this teaching. Neither is there any basis for a related Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching that the final judgment will be based only upon those works done during the millennium.

5. It is interesting that this language, echoing the teaching of Scripture, affirms the fulfillment of what is expressed in the so-called "imprecatory" Psalms. These Psalms include prayers that the enemies of the Lord and His people be vanquished and punished for their sins (e.g. Psalm 137). Though some object to these psalms and their prayers for the punishment of God's enemies — even suggesting that they

express an "Old Testament" spirit allegedly at odds with the spirit of the New Testament — it is evident that what they plead for from the Lord will be fulfilled in the context of the final judgment.

Dr. Venema teaches Doctrinal Studies at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, IN.

NORTHWEST DEATHS: Legalized Assisted Suicide Claims Two

An elderly Oregon woman who suffered from breast cancer took a prescription dose of barbituates recently, mixed the drugs with syrup, and washed down the concoction with a glass of brandy. She then drifted off to sleep.

And never woke up.

"I am looking forward to it," said the woman, reportedly a grandmother in her mid-80's, in a tape recording made two days before her suicide. "I will be relieved of all the stress I have."

The unidentified woman's death was initially believed to be the first under Oregon's new doctor-assisted suicide law, but the (Portland) Oregonian revealed that she was actually the second patient to die under the state's Measure 16. Few details about the earlier death were available.

Measure 16, reaffirmed by voters last fall, made Oregon the first state to allow its doctors to prescribe deadly drugs for the terminally ill.

"It is tragic that two patients have killed themselves with the legal assistance of a doctor," said Gayle Atteberry, executive director of Oregon Right to Life. Atteberry said she was troubled that the woman's statement referred to her death as relieving stress rather than agonizing pain. In addition, both the woman's regular physician and a second doctor reportedly refused to write the lethal prescription, fearing that she was suffering depression.

"She went to a Kevorkian-style doctor who had known her just a few days before he wrote the prescription," Atteberry said. "We had known that this type of scenario would and could happen, simply because Measure 16 does nothing to ensure that it won't."

Opponents of assisted-suicide are currently awaiting a final ruling from the US Justice Department as to whether doctors who prescribe lethal drugs are violating the Controlled Substance Act. Pro-lifers, meanwhile, are continuing with a lawsuit in hopes of obtaining a permanent injunction against the law.

"It's a sad thing when Oregon voters devalue the lives of those who are terminally ill and allow them something that is considered a crime for the rest of the states," said attorney Richard Coleson, a co-counsel in the lawsuit.

Reprinted from Citizen (*Focus on the Family "Issues Alert"*), April 1, 1998.

Goodman said that by 1992, about 70 to 80 percent of lottery sales could be attributed to only 15 to 20 percent of lottery players. He claimed that states aggressively advertise to draw in the less frequent participants—a practice that fuels such billboard ads as one in a poor Illinois neighborhood that read, "This could be your ticket out."

Yet both Goodman and Michael Jones, former director of the Illinois lottery, advocated lottery regulation over elimination. "There is no conflict in having government regulate gaming," Jones testified. He said states should advertise in order to maximize participation in lotteries.

Meanwhile, a recent survey of 1,100 homeless men and women distributed in Boston recently, showed that 18 % cite gambling as a cause of their homelessness. The study, conducted by the International Union of Gospel Missions, also revealed that 70 percent of homeless people say gambling or playing the lottery is an obstacle to their putting their lives back together.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for May 20-21 in Chicago to study internet gambling.

Reprinted from Citizen (*Focus on the Family "Issues Alert"*), March 17, 1998.

HEDGING THEIR BETS: Commission Hears Lottery Testimony

Members of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission heard some sharp criticism of state lotteries at a recent meeting in Boston, but several of those same critics stopped short of calling for an end to the state-sponsored practice.

"We need to understand that this is a national addiction with significant social consequences, because lotteries are about more than money," said Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger. "And for each wonderful story of a winner, there are thousands of untold stories about losers."

Rather than providing real hope, lotteries are promoting the illusion of economic improvement," Robert Goodman, executive director of the United States Gambling Research Institute, told commission members, who include Focus on the Family President Dr. James Dobson.

Goodman said states have increasingly shifted from regulating the gambling industry to promoting it, and have failed to recognize that lotteries are a form of taxation. Without this regulation, he said that state lottery agencies have been left to take on a life of their own without input from the legislature or the public.

International Institute for Christian Studies [IICS] THOMAS JOHNSON

Outlook readers probably all sensed God's hand at work in 1989 when the Communist governments of Eastern Europe began to collapse. One after the other they toppled like dominoes in a row. It seemed to me that God was both judging the system of communism and offering the people who had lived in darkness a new opportunity to repent and believe in Christ. And the Church responded by beginning to send missionaries.

The International Institute for Christian Studies [IICS] had begun its work a few years before communism fell. Since 1986 we had been at work placing Christian worldview scholars in secular universities in Africa. And with the opening of the Iron Curtain there came a flood of invitations from across the former communist block. Just about everywhere there seemed to be a demand for English speaking Christian scholars to offer an alternative to the Marxist worldview that had failed. And much of this demand for Christian scholars came to the doorstep of IICS because, as far as we know, we are the only Christian agency devoted exclusively to placing highly trained Christian professors in secular colleges and universities. For several years the demand for our Professors has been many times greater than our ability to recruit qualified professors and arrange funding for them.

IICS sent our family to Minsk, Belarus (former USSR) where I spent 2½ years teaching in a new university started by a group of anticommunist dissident scholars. During that time I taught numerous classes and also presented Christian perspective papers at academic conferences, arranged the translation of a couple Christian academic books into Russian, and we held a home Bible Study. It was an intense, exciting time.

After completing our term in Minsk, IICS reassigned us to Prague,

Czech Republic (former Czechoslovakia) where there is a good school for our children. (The lack of a school for our kids was a major problem in Belarus.) In September, 1996 I began teaching at Anglo-American College [AAC] in Prague. This college was started about 5 years ago by some American and British business people. It is growing very rapidly (about 400 students right now) because so many students want an English language college education. My colleague, Dr. Richard Smith, and I have been able to teach a variety of Bible and Christian worldview classes. This fall I am scheduled to teach "Business Ethics" and "Philosophy of Religion."

We have had very interesting responses from our students. One wrote, "I found out that I have always understood religion in a far too narrow sense and that this has probably closed my eyes to religion. Religion, with all of its connections to world view and meaning of life, seems to be so important and fruitful that I wonder how I could have neglected it so far." A number of my students have written, "Even though I am an atheist, I enjoyed reading the Bible because..." and then different reasons followed.

Though we are discovering a few Christians in our classes, our experience largely follows the national statistics, that 80% of Czechs call themselves atheist or agnostic. But their atheism or agnosticism is often not a firm, committed atheism or agnosticism. Many seem eager to at least learn about Christianity. Our experience in the college classroom again seems to be parallel to the polls of Czech parents that say that 88% want their children to know about the faith of the Church, 62% want their children to know the Bible, 48% want their children to hold Christian moral principles, 22% want their children to believe in God, 14% to go to church, and 9% to pray at home. I think it is worth our time,

effort and money to fulfill those wants in the college classroom. And while we present information about the Christian faith in a winsome manner, we trust that God will be calling people to salvation.

Because of the open door God has provided, we are forming a plan to start an entire "Department of Christian Studies and Social Ethics" at AAC in Prague. With four or five professors we want to offer a wide variety of classes that will provide information about the Bible and the Christian faith, teach Christian ethics, help those who are becoming Christians, give extra teaching for Christians, and even give basic training for students preparing for leadership in the new churches. This is a big project that will take a lot of time and work, but it really looks worthwhile.

What we need from our fellow Christians is, first, prayer. John Calvin taught us that prayer is the way of appropriating God's blessing. Without prayer we just spin our wheels, but when God's people pray, great things can happen. We also need encouragement; sometimes we get tired and discouraged. And as I mentioned, two of our greatest obstacles are sending qualified professors who can go, and arranging sufficient funding. I think *Outlook* readers can help here.

This past year has been filled with surprise and crises for us. The other two families we expected to work with us both had to return to the States because of cancer. But these crises may have helped our long range planning. And I think we are positioned for significant work in the coming years.

Paul observed (Rom. 10:14): "How can they hear without someone to preach to them? How can they preach unless they are sent?" To which we might add, "Who will do the sending if not you?"

Dr. Thomas K. Johnson is a graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary and is an ordained minister in the PCA. Dr. Johnson can be contacted at the IICS Prague Project, P.O. Box 12147, Overland Park, KS 66282-2147.

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Review of *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* by Dr. Gerard Van Groningen, 2 Volumes, published by WIPF and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR 97401. Reviewed by **Thomas C. Vanden Heuvel.**

Dr. Gerard Van Groningen is a pastor, missionary and professor of Old Testament, currently teaching at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. What intrigued and inspired him were the words of Jesus in Luke 24:27, 44, that Moses, the Psalms and the prophets spoke of Him. This was also what Jesus said to the wayfarers to Emmaus as He began from Moses telling how the Old Testament witnessed to Him.

These two volumes are a Reformed, covenantal answer to the question of how the Old Testament testifies to Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

The Messianic concept came by revelation. It did not arise from pagan, political and religious settings of near eastern cultures as some liberal Old Testament scholars contend.

These two volumes deserve a wide dissemination. They are especially attractive to preachers and teachers who hold a high view of Scripture. Here we see the unity of the Bible. As a little poem says: The Old is in the New explained, the New is in the Old contained.

God revealed the Messianic concept

and progressively unfolded it. It is absolutely essential in preaching Old Testament passages to see the Messianic Line through it all.

No one can properly preach on the Old Testament without an understanding of the unfolding of God's Messianic concept. We see it especially in Isaiah 53 and other obvious passages, but it is present throughout. These two volumes are a very helpful resource in opening up the riches of the Old Testament Messianic concept.

Van Groningen points out the erroneous presuppositions, incorrect methods of exegesis and misuse of historical facts by critical scholars.

At the very heart of the Messianic message were the promises of Yahweh to Abraham and Jacob's descendants that a Ruler would arise among 'his brothers' and that he would redeem, shepherd, restore and establish forever these descendants. This promise was made in terms of the life situations existent at the time and of the situations in which it was repeated, explained, expanded and applied by the various

prophetic spokesmen Yahweh called and equipped to speak for Him (p.491).

The author does a great service to the English speaking Reformed community with this superb study of the Old Testament and its Messianic concept.

These volumes present excellent material both for the scholar and the Christian layman who want to understand the Old Testament more clearly.

These volumes are the fruit of many years of preaching and seminary teaching. I can imagine how blessed the students are who sat at the feet of Dr. Van Groningen as he laid out the Messianic concept in the Old Testament passages studied. These insights give fresh and truly inspiring understanding of the Old Testament.

To see how the Old Testament is fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord is what Jesus explained to the two wayfarers on the way to Emmaus on that first Easter afternoon. They heard it from Christ Himself and said: "Did not our hearts burn within us as He opened to us the Scriptures?"

What we desperately need in our pulpits and pews today is burning hearts. These volumes will help greatly to that end.