

1989

1989: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text

ACU Press

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**CHRIST AND CULTURE:
The Problem of Secularism**

CHRIST AND CULTURE: The Problem of Secularism

being the



Abilene Christian University
Annual Bible Lectures

1989

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PREFACE

The lectures and Biblical Forum presentations contained in this volume are those which are given at the 71st Annual Bible Lectureship at Abilene Christian University on the theme: "Christ and Culture: The Problem of Secularism."

Secularism is choking the church. Christians must live in both this world and the spiritual world. Many are finding their lives following the pattern of the third seed in Jesus' Parable of the Sower, that seed planted among the thorns. The thorns represent "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches." How the allures of this world distract us from our eternal goals. We must learn to live in the world without ingesting its values.

The primary purpose of the Annual Bible Lectureship is to further the cause of Christ in the world. The Lectureship Committee seeks each year to bring outstanding men and women of God to the campus to speak on the most relevant and helpful subjects facing the people of God. It is hoped that these lectures will be helpful not only to those who were able to attend in person, but also, through this volume, to thousands of others for years to come.

CARL BRECHEEN
Lectureship Director

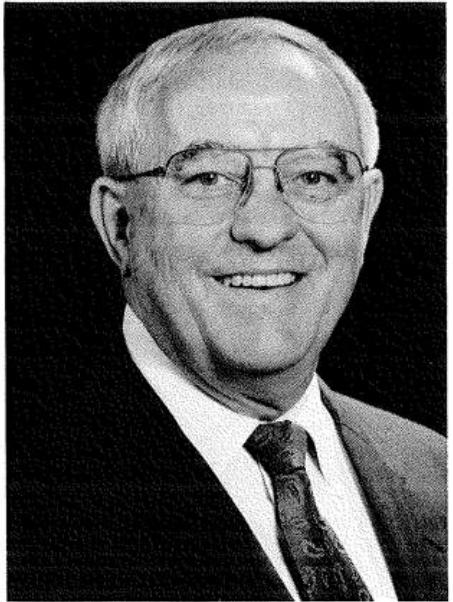
**THEME
SPEECHES**

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Be Not Conformed To This World

Dr. William J. Teague

The swirling air gave the dust a cloud-like life of its own, billowing and swelling like the great storms which swept off the sea, caressing the mountains and thundering through the valleys. But **this** was the cloud of a **great army** marching toward its destiny. The army had **no weapons**, yet they would bring down the empire. They had no chain of command or legions or centurions. They were just **people** — men, women, and the children who followed them. It was an army that didn't know it was an army, yet it heard a mission call that demanded response. Their leader — an **unlikely soldier**, much less a **king** — brought a message of **fulfillment** and a promise of **peace**, a message standing in **contrast**, sometimes **defiance**, of the established religion and those who had encrusted the doctrine with man's traditions.

The people of this army held the historical view that told the faithful the Messiah would be a **mighty warrior and strong leader, like David**. He would **slay** Goliath and vanquish the Philistines. He would be the **champion** of the Law. Yet when they came face to face with him they had to **choose between the messiah of their minds**— the one created in the limited scope of the human view — or the **Messiah that came** — the one whose message was **simple and powerful**. “**Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself.**” The message was unexpected. It was not a worldly or a religious message. It was a **new message**

demanding a faith that lives and breathes and **pays no homage to the measure of the world.** The new message **demanding revolution.** The disciples heard the extraordinary message. And they didn't get it.

Two thousand years have passed. The choice remains.

When Paul wrote his letter to the church in Rome, he focused on people, families and citizens of the kingdom to be. His love for them was passionate, his words shaped by the urgency and importance of Christ's message. It is that same passionate love and urgent sense of Christ's mission that the Holy Spirit, who inspired Paul's writing, feels for you and me today. The message of Jesus Christ is **new.** It is **revolutionary. It demands change.** It is a message that reunites man with his creator. It is a message of such **magnitude, such hope, such peace, such fulfillment,** such victory over death, that, when believed, will put **fire in our eyes and passion in our lives and power in our soul.** When others see us they will be surprised and wonder what it is. They will marvel at our **new view.** Then *they* will have to choose, because in *our* passion they will come face to face with the living, breathing Jesus Christ.

But Where Is The Fire?

When you looked at the person two seats over last Sunday, did you see **passion?** Did you see **fire?** Did you see a life full of **revolution** and the "**new wine**" of Jesus? Did you see a changed life, a "**new**" life? Or instead of passion, did you see **pressure?** Did you see a life **pressed on one hand by a spirit searching after righteousness and torn at the other by failing relationships** and a world which laughs at the foolishness of religion?

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this

world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

The disciples **wanted Jesus** to be a **patch** for the **old wineskins**. Jesus offered new wineskins. *Be not conformed. Be transformed* — a powerful call to **newness** - is the uncompromised message of Romans 12. Jesus calls us to **be recognizably distinctive** from those who follow the world's self directed life view. He calls us **out of the world's grasp**, and yet calls us to take his **new message into the marketplace**. He asks, we think, the impossible. **He leads us in** the excellent way. And now *we* must choose. Will there be fire in our eyes and hearts? Will there be the passion that called Paul? Or will there be the numbing mediocrity that is the fruit of old wineskins?

Transformation is a response of the individual. It is a call to newness accomplished one person at a time. Jesus does not call us to be a giant homogenous body moving mindlessly through the world as a great gathering of sweetness and contentment, piously thanking him that we are not like the outsider.

No, Jesus calls us to **THINK**, to separate ourselves from the world, to stand with him in honest relationship with others, to be responsive. The call of transportation requires that one reject conceit, be sober in judgment, and perform according to his personal faith. *Pride* is the ultimate weapon of Satan. It is a "wall of separation" that comes disguised as success and power and religion. *Rejection of pride* is essential to a new mind and a new heart. We can **be** and **do** nothing we ought when pride

drives us. Pride is death.

Transformation is life. It is not a mystical event of unearthly dimensions. It is a commitment to love. That was the earthly and eternal commitment of Christ. It is the great command of the Creator. It is the call for which Paul was transformed:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Don't be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Don't be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the sight of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written "It is mine to avenge, I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:14-21

What man cannot do, Christ can. Christ transforms us and calls us to His body, and through His body, the church. That is the power of newness in Christ Jesus, a newness that requires us to be like Him and let Jesus live in us.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Galatians 2:20

Newness means going into the streets, feeding people who are hungry, giving shelter to the homeless, water to the thirsty. It means standing for *all* men, friend and foe. It means forgiving seventy times seven. It means laying aside the petty for the perfect. It is a transformation that means shame if we always avoid the company of sinners and never witness His Truth and His newness. It is a newness that requires encouragement and edification of our Christian brother, even though his **talents** may differ from ours. *We have Good News*. It is fire and passion and power that we will quench if we do not earnestly seek to share it with all men. That is the mission of Christ's church, His body. So the question stands — Where is the fire?

The Battle

We like patterns. That is human. Patterns make it **comfortable**. They show us how to **walk, talk, eat, dress, think, choose, do, live and die**. We believe when some pattern is bold enough, it must be true. Someone said, "50 million Frenchmen can't be wrong." Yes, they can! So can two hundred million Americans, and so can the four billion inhabitants of this planet.

The conflict rages between God and the world, the principality of the deceiver. (It is important to remember that Satan is a liar and a thief.) He deceives, at one level, by making attractive the patterns of a selfish world, patterns which we too often allow to creep into Christ's church. The world's pattern for personal behavior, definitions of good and bad, right and wrong, success and failure, all stand counter to the newness of Christ's message. And there is no mixing of the two. There is only the choosing

of one or the other.

The perspective of the Apostles was so determined by the patterns of centuries of expectation that they were unwilling to give up the old in order to embrace the new. They never fully caught the real truth. The conflict was real in their lives every day as they often fought as diligently for the old wineskins to pour out transformation on all men. Yet while the battle raged daily, there was fire in their souls, passion in their hearts, and, in the end, victory in their lives.

The patterns of the world that test the fire of newness are all around us. Many of us — we most often lay this on our young people — believe when we are told we must look fashionable, act fashionable, and be with fashionable people. Rather than come out of the world, social acceptance demands that we disappear into the mass. Our young people still have wide suspicion of the generation just older. Where do they “learn” that the hedonistic life view is the only opportunity for fun? Why is rule-breaking fashionable? Is disobedience, disrespect, and disaffection the birthright of a culture that prizes the businessman who skirts the edges of ethics and law to promote self-gain?

We can see champions of the world’s patterns and we see false passion and commitment born of false pride. The Deceiver has persuaded us that we see joy and happiness and contentment and success. We look in the doors of our meeting places and in the lives of Christians and what do we see? Where is the **life** and the **victory**? Are we alive and overcome with the power and excitement and urgent sense of Christ’s mission?

We arrive late (habitually) because this appointment isn’t as important as a wedding or funeral. “The church in

motion” describes the myriads who are too busy to worship — counting the collection, committee meetings, elders interviews, meal preparation, communion vessels to be cleaned — *some are* needed, but many are not. Our assembly is scattered — we esteem the seat location to be more vital than being near someone we don’t really love.

Some wag once said of Los Angeles that it is a collection of four million people in search of a city. We might be said to be a people in search of a *new thrust* in worship. People of all ages are gravitating to congregations where there is **inspiration as well as information**. **Older people** seek comfort and reconfirmation and usefulness and worth. **Younger people** seek excitement, variety, identity, and worth. People have tasted the power and the passion of the newness of Christ in their own lives, and they long for that passion to be reflected in the congregations and worship and study they share as Christ’s body.

Congregationally, we have given so much time and service to our method and our housekeeping that we have allowed the trivial to override the power and spirit of God and the worship he seeks from our lives. When the method is Biblical, we must give even more time to the content. *We have too often sought conformity to the lowest common denominator so that we offend no one and return our one talent of silver to our master unscathed.*

New Testament conversions came because they went everywhere preaching the Word. Philip had time and opportunity to preach Jesus to the Ethiopian. He shared the newness of Jesus. He did not emphasize the inerrancy of the Bible, or the evils of rock music, or even the values of daily Bible reading, monogamous marriage, and regular

church attendance — all important, but they are not the central and saving message. **Christ is the message!** Philip preached the Word. The Word was an enthusiasm for the new. The message was that the Lord has come. Jesus was new in concept and response. And the result in the life of the Ethiopian was immediate. *And He is new today.* That is the power of the Lord's church in 1989 as it was in 89 A.D. and as it shall be in 4089. The Deceiver wants me to believe Jesus is old news — yesterday's headline — and now I forget Jesus and concentrate on the trivial.

The Church Transformed

The life of the church depends on the **freshness** and **fire** and **passion** of lives confronted by the newness of Jesus. Again we find in Romans 12 a remarkable key to new lives in today's world.

**Serve with diligence,
love without pretense,
hate what is wrong,
stand up for good,
honor each other,
be industrious,
be enthusiastic,
be glad about God's plan for you and me
be patient in trouble,
be prayerful,
help others,
invite guests into your home,
don't curse when mistreated,
rather pray for God to bless those
who mistreat you,**

**be happy with those who are happy,
share sorrow
work together in happiness
do not act proud and big,
do not think you know it all,
never repay evil for evil,
don't quarrel with anyone,
be at peace with everyone as much as possible,
never avenge yourself (leave that to God),
feed your enemy who is hungry or thirsty,
never let evil get the upper hand,
conquer evil by doing good,
obey the government unless it puts you in conflict
with God,
pay taxes and debts owed to others,
love your neighbor as yourself,**

Certainly **none** of these is worn out from **overuse** or tarnished from honest overapplication. These are the **patterns for newness in Christ**, as fresh and extraordinary today as they were when we laid them at the feet of his disciples.

Perhaps no gift of the transformed life is more important — and more misunderstood — than **abundance**. The transformed Christian is promised an **abundant life** (not worldly wealth). We like to jump on the promise in 2 Corinthians 9:11 as a sure sign that God will award financial success to the generous: “You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion. . . .” But God’s abundance is not the petty, limited abundance the world seeks. God’s is the abundance of life. I believe the widow who struggled and gave all she had lived abundantly. Don’t you think the Macedonian churches Paul

described in 2 Corinthians 8 — “Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty well-ed up in rich generosity” — had an abundant life? God’s abundance has *nothing to do with* wealth. God’s abundance is as far beyond the world’s pattern as the farthest star is from the street lamp on the corner. The abundant life is God’s pleasure for the transformed life in Christ, and because that gift falls on transformed Christians, it falls on the church.

One of the critical challenges facing Christians today is how well we transform the life of our churches so the Christian “body” explodes with the fire, excitement, passion, and abundance of the *new and living Christ*, as new and living today as he was two thousand years ago. Churches must refuse to sit on the outskirts of community life securely buttressed against the world. We must be the lifeblood of our communities.

Changing Communities

Changing communities, like the poor, will always be with us. Perhaps the changing of communities is God’s will. Just as the persecution that came upon the church in Jerusalem forced the church to do some things that it had been reluctant to perform, perhaps our reluctance to go *into* a community that is dying will be *overcome* by having a community die around us so that we will be there to serve.

Imagine the excitement of being given a major physical facility in a built-up area of Bangkok or Rome. We would rush to accept the offer. Yet, we opine the change in communities in the South and the Southwest even where we have debt-free physical plants. We rush to sell our

building — sometimes to a group in religious error that perceives an opportunity for life where we see only decay. How can a white church serve a black community, or a rich church serve a deteriorating neighborhood? That is a worldly and vain question. In Christ, there is no black or white or rich or poor. Changing communities give us the opportunity to bloom where we are planted, to serve new people, to transform lives. Not to my personal credit, I have been involved in “upgrading” the church rather than serving the people around me. **No congregation rich with the freshness and newness of Christ should ever die! We must be prepared for change.** Look at the doctrinal harm that has been done by our flight from challenge. Forgive me, Lord, for saying “the church can’t grow in this environment.” Jesus had more right to tell God that about Jerusalem than I have about any city on this planet.

The Graying of the Church

In Eastern cultures **the elderly are venerated**. In the West the elderly are too often **ignored**. The graying of our fellowship offers an exciting opportunity to glean from the wisdom of men and women who have grown in and with the church. It offers a unique age-mix that *must* be a blessing and not a barrier. Those young in years can discover a newness in Christ that those older have experienced many times over. Just as it is futile and wrong for the younger to distrust and discount the vitality and wisdom of the older, it is equally wrong for the graying generation to stand against all change and growth without seeking new knowledge and understanding. Our age-mix may be the hidden blessing that will bring churches of Christ into the 21st century in an explosion of restoration

and transformation. Let's not embrace the bankrupt philosophy of the 1960s — that old is bad and dangerous.

Physical Plants

We should remember our slogan — we do Bible things in Bible ways. We should remember our affirmation that our money belongs to God.

The newness of Christ requires us to use our facilities to demonstrate our love for the greater community of God's world. We have given money to God and built splendid facilities. Are we using our very fine kitchens to prepare meals for the hungry? Are we using our ample parking lots as a park-and-ride location to serve our community? Are the classrooms available for uses other than the three times a week we gather? Are the phones available to achieve community good? Could AA meetings be held in our facilities? Are other groups welcome? Would a "relief center" be possible or needed in our location?

When our buildings sit idle and empty for all but two or three times a week, we give credence to the assertion that the building, not the people, is the church. When we begin to use our buildings more, we provide many more opportunities for the involvement of our members.

Reaching Out

If we want people **in** our buildings, we have to get **out** of our buildings. Jesus did not call Zacchaeus down from the tree and invite him to the nearest synagogue. He said, "I'm coming to *your* house today." We have let the world's priorities creep into ours, and through the years we have systematically, and probably unwittingly, deper-

sonalized our service. We have replaced the living room and the back yard with space at the building. We have discouraged house-to-house fellowship and substituted group sessions at a neutral site. Do you remember opening the Word and sharing the Good news with a friend, weeping with conviction and laughing with joy? We have toyed with the edge of organizing the passion and fire out of sharing the Word of God and the spirit of Christ's words. We have replaced the urgency of the mission with the convenience of the facility. However, one does not have to exist exclusive of the other. What we do in and with our buildings can be the wonderful extension of the individual walk, each reflecting the glory of God and the newness of Christ.

Worship

Worship is not something we do for one hour once or twice a week. Our *lives* are our worship to God. Our time of congregational worship on Sunday morning is critical to the purpose of encouraging and edifying the family. It is also the most **visible** and should be the **most impressive and exciting and dynamic public congregational demonstration of our love for Almighty God**. We should never forget that some of our most important "visitors" are our own children. We quibble and nitpick about how to organize the worship hour. We argue about the vagueries of method. How can we bring anything to our assembly except our best — our best time, our best preparation, our best commitment to our fellows, our perfect adoration of the Creator? Every time we meet together in worship, we proclaim to God and the world our view of newness in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper

We gather to break the bread and drink the cup. It is rarely explained, and if so, usually not well. What a powerful blessing to an outsider to see the body of Christ united in the supper *and* to have the opportunity to understand its significance. A simple sheet of paper with the story of the Lord's Supper and scriptures which amplify its meaning can deepen understanding and participation for new Christians and old. The supper provides an extraordinary opportunity to talk about Christ. We must not be content with merely performing the mechanics and uttering the safe and "tested" prayers. We must give them the attention we would if we were breaking bread with Christ himself — because we are!

Singing

The gift of singing is as precious as the rarest flower. It speaks where sermons fail. It crosses barriers of language, race, and culture. It buoyed the Christian martyrs who fell to Caesar's lions; it quiets the child and expresses feelings to God in totally unique ways.

As I travel extensively over the nation, I am detecting a widespread dissatisfaction with the singing in many of our congregations. We have too often given up the passion of music in search of proper method, fearing that "new" is evil. We have very few new songs. We never stop to think that the great songs of Brother Teddlie and Brother Sanderson were once *new* songs. Who in this generation will join these great spiritual writers? The young people in the church today are great singers. They enjoy singing; they do it well. Recently I listened to 10,000 teens sing en-

thusiastically and with spiritual depth for 20 minutes — only one of the songs was in the books we customarily use.

Jesus walked into the synagogue and read scripture. He read, as did many, with understanding and conviction. The role of public scripture reading today is often perfunctory. Its role is diminished, sometimes assigned to someone at the last minute whose handling of it suggests his congregational reading may be his first. Of all the things we do, the *safest* and, perhaps, the most productive could be the reading of scripture. It's God's word, not our thoughts.

Bible Study

Many of the things we do are imitations of methods pioneered by others in religious organizations and public schools. The graded Bible class system is a case in point. Pre-printed, pre-packaged, sanitized, and convenientized curriculums offer the opportunity for minimum preparation and more than minimal results. Why not have more family groupings? Call out the best teachers and elders, study the Lord, study obedience, grace, eternity. Are we so effective in our present methodology that we dare not experiment? How often do you run across something that is being done well scripturally but in a different way? People learn in different ways. The educational model we have adopted may not be the most effective way to pass on our faith to the next generation. We must have more opportunities to be in the Word, to study and learn, to become intimate with the newness of Christ.

Preaching

Jesus was a preacher and teacher. The power of the proclaimed message of hope is irrefutable. Its significance demands that our preaching not fall victim to quantity and over-analysis and over-exegesis and patterns of convenience. The **message** is simple and specific and carries the power of the risen Lord. We have talked about Philip. He came to the Ethiopian and began where he was and taught him Jesus — not man's doctrine, not social principles — but Jesus.

How many sermons do you have in your file on Jesus? Do they number 100? Could you preach nothing but Jesus for one year or two?

Services Per Week

There is nothing magical or scriptural about three meetings a week. Early Christians met together daily. Why can we not have *more meetings*? Why can we not meet for **different purposes meeting different needs**? These needs can include the body — deeper study, prayer groups, support groups, meetings to address, in an ongoing venue, things like Christian ethics applied in the marketplace, Christian response to family finances, child-raising, crisis, learning how to share the Good News by sharing it with each other. Support groups: Open-heart surgery, cancer, death, drug-using children, alcoholism, unemployed, divorce, etc. (in fact, such groups exist — sometimes informally — but not very often within our programs.) And what are the possibilities for meetings which reach out to the community and create opportunities for relationship where we can bear witness to the newness and relevance of Jesus' message?

Our Guests

We may not be pleased to proclaim it publicly, but the truth is that nothing frightens us quite as much as trying to get an “outsider” to worship service. It is rife with opportunity for awkward embarrassment, a compulsion to defend everything we do and say, and the fear that the “outsider” will judge us harshly for our zeal. Perhaps deep down our fear is that we know what the visitor is likely to find the first time he visits our congregation.

1. He may be called upon to pull into an uninviting and unattended parking lot (even some supermarkets have personnel outside to assist shoppers).
2. In the lobby, probably not designed for lobbying, the mission often seems to be getting a hand shaken, a card signed, a tag on, and the guest inside.
3. Once inside, the visitor often experiences a service that fits the pattern of members arriving late, greeters serving with the spirit of having been drafted for the job, announcements that emphasize our shortcomings rather than our victories.
4. Left alone in a noisy assembly, the guest may then be forced to stand and confess his status as a visitor.
5. At the end of the assembly, as the members seek friends and family, the visitor is often left alone to find the nearest exit.

Can we not greet visitors in the parking lot, having provided special parking places near the building entrance? We should never leave guests unattended. After providing written information about *who* we are and *why* we do what we do, we should invite them to sit with *us* during the assembly. We must challenge our visitor-recognition

programs to see if they can be improved. For example, why can I not stand and introduce visitors rather than place the burden and embarrassment on them? And can we not learn to *seek* out the visitor as eagerly as we seek out each other; and instead of just inviting them back at some vague future time, why not make a specific appointment? Offer to meet them on *their* turf (office or home or where their children play). Provide a gift of a Bible or information or some of your time. Let the elders of the congregation know about the people you meet and the needs in their lives. You and others in the congregation might be able to respond to these opportunities. Can we not make time spent in our assembly the *best* thing that happens to someone that week? We must do more than merely affirm that visitors are welcome guests.

The Mission

The “bottom line” is this. We have talked about method. We must always remember its role is *only* to serve the mission. When it *becomes* the mission or *displaces* the mission, it becomes the weapon of Satan. If we are to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment and know the extraordinary newness of his message, a message that is as new and vital and powerful today as it was when the dusty hills of Judea were Jesus’ pulpit, and if we are to share that message with a world gone mad in lustful pursuit of its own ends, then we must work *smarter*, work *longer*, and *sacrifice* more than we ever have. “What do ye more than others?” We must have fire in our hearts, passion in our souls, and the perfect love of Christ shining from our eyes. The pattern of our lives, the pattern of our worship, the pattern of our sharing with each other and with those

in the world must be the pattern of Jesus. There is no room for compromise.

We must be a people of unequalled and unquestioned courage. Our courage must find heroism in humility. Our courage will find victory in love.

Each person — in this time, in this day — will come face to face with Christ and choose. He will choose the old or the new. He will choose conformity with the pattern of the world — which is defeat and death — or transformation with the Lord — victory and abundant life.

And the world must see — in our words, in our actions, in our assemblies, in everything we are — that *we* have chosen the newness of Jesus Christ, that we are in the world, but we are not of the world; that we, like Christ, are willing to mount the cross and suffer the anguish of the driven nails, not for ourselves, but for them. They must feel the *heat* of *our fire*, the *tremor* of our passion, and they must sense the integrity of *our joy*. They must see that we have, like Paul, become something wondrous and new and different. They must *see* our transformation. They must see that we are, indeed, becoming like Jesus.

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Challenging The Spirit Of Individualism

Ken R. Durham

It is not good for the man to be alone.

Genesis 2:18

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. . .

Philippians 2:4-5

On public radio's wonderful program, "Prairie Home Companion," one of the regular fictitious advertisers was a fellow identified only as Bob. Bob announced that he had founded a new religion and named it after himself—"Bobism"—and invited listeners to visit his world headquarters, the Central Bobist Temple in Rapid City, South Dakota. He and his wife Judy, the group's co-founder, had considered naming their new faith after her, but as Bob explained, that name was already taken.

"Prairie Home Companion's" creator, Garrison Keillor, was surely satirizing the contemporary American epidemic of individualism. But his satire was closer to fact than to fiction, as attested by the authors of the recent sociological study, *Habits of the Heart*:

One person we interviewed has actually named her religion (she calls it her "faith") after herself.

. . . Sheila Larson is a young nurse who . . . describes her faith as “Sheilaism.” “I believe in God. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It’s Sheilaism. Just my own little voice.”¹

The Spirit of Individualism

Since its beginnings in reaction against oppressive European monarchies and churches, America has been the land of rugged individualism. The heroic pioneer, setting out against overwhelming odds to conquer an untamed wilderness, has long been one of the favorite symbols of our proud national spirit—Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone, Teddy Roosevelt, Neil Armstrong. In our fiction the hero rides into town, fights for the right, puts the bad guys in their place, and rides off into the sunset. Who was that masked man? Why, that was the Lone Ranger.²

But in the last 25 years, the American quest for greater personal freedom, self-fulfillment, and individual identity has been more intense than at any other time in our history. The pervasive influence of individualism—the view that my rights as an individual are the highest good, that what is right for *me* is the primary basis for my decisions and actions—can be heard in a host of popular clichés: “I did it my way,” “Do your own thing,” “Whatever turns you on,” “Different strokes for different folks,” “I’ve gotta be me,” and “I need to find myself.”

The term “individualism” was first popularized by the French journalist Alexis de Tocqueville over 150 years ago in his book, *Democracy in America*, a record of his obser-

vations on American culture. Tocqueville was greatly impressed by nineteenth-century America, but expressed his fears that the culture's central emphasis on the individual would lead to an ominous personal isolation: "Each man is forever thrown back on himself alone, and there is danger that he may be *shut up in the solitude of his own heart*" (emphasis mine).³

One hundred and fifty years later, a group of sociologists led by Robert Bellah published their observations on American culture under the title, *Habits of the Heart* (Tocqueville's phrase), and sounded an even stronger note of warning: "We are concerned that this individualism may have grown cancerous."⁴

When Individualism Grows Malignant

Scripture clearly affirms the importance of the individual. Each man and woman is a unique creation made in the Father's image, and thus we are each uniquely valuable, uniquely beautiful, uniquely gifted by him (Ephesians 4:7). God in Christ became an individual human being (John 1:14). No one was a greater champion of the individual rights and dignity of man than Jesus Christ. Faith is a deeply personal matter. To be Jesus' disciple is to make a personal life-commitment to his Lordship. No one can repent, or confess, or be baptized *for* us. And ultimately, our accountability before God the Judge in the final day will be individual: "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

But when accepted as the primary truth of life, individualism becomes a malignant spirit—just a glorified synonym for selfishness. And how we have glorified

selfishness.

Listen to the profoundly selfish tone and appeal of so much product advertising, as it beckons, "Buy this, and watch your friends and neighbors turn green with envy." Recently I received an invitation in the mail to subscribe to a magazine called *Goodlife*, assuring me that this was a "privately circulated lifestyle magazine for affluent readers." In other words, I could (for an exorbitant subscription fee) receive a magazine that would not be available to just any riffraff.

Few public voices these days seems to be raised in protest against the Machiavellian lie that selfishness is not only quite practical, it is downright admirable. In the recent film on big business, "Wall Street," a power broker preaches his fundamental conviction: "Greed is good! Greed is right! Greed works!"

More than ever before, university students are choosing careers not for their potential contribution to society, but for their earning power. The question of the hour for many of our best and brightest is not, "Is my area of study useful, or noble, or good?" but "Is my degree marketable?" One former university president, comparing the campus Hippies of the sixties with the campus Yuppies of the eighties, said, "At least the Hippies believed in something besides themselves."

Nowhere has the ethic of selfishness wrought more tragic consequences than in the Sexual Revolution of the past three decades. The grim jury is in on the Sexual Revolution: more fractured families, more infidelity, more abortions, more loneliness, more AIDS. Selfish sex, in any culture, whether extramarital or intramarital, always means the same sad exchange: "having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality"

(Ephesians 4:19).

Working Out Our Own Salvation

With individualism so deeply embedded in our national psyche, it should not surprise us to see its powerful leaven at work in American religious attitudes. In the 1978 Gallup report, *The Unchurched American*, 81 percent of those surveyed agreed with this statement: "An individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any churches or synagogues." (Seventy-six percent of the churchgoers agreed.) Can a person be a "good" Christian or Jew without attending church or synagogue? Seventy-eight percent of the overall population surveyed said, "Yes," and 70 percent of the churchgoers said, "Yes." Indicators such as these have led some to conclude that the greatest enemy of the church in our time is not secularism, but do-it-yourself religion, not atheism but "Sheilaism."⁵

Religious individualism in America is not new. Thomas Paine ("My mind is my church"), Thomas Jefferson ("I am a sect myself"), James Madison, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham Lincoln—all espoused very personalized and individualistic religious beliefs. In their tradition today, Ronald Reagan professes a strong personal faith but seldom attends any church services.

Something that is new, an historically-unprecedented religious phenomenon, has appeared in our lifetime: the Electronic Church—the ultimate in private religion. Without having to leave the privacy and comfort of our homes, we can join Oral in his prayer tower, Jimmy on the campaign trail, or Jim and Tammy Faye at their theme park.

The spirit of religious individualism is everywhere. Roman Catholics have never felt more free to disagree openly with their church's doctrines on issues such as birth control, abortion, divorce, and the infallibility of the pope. Mainstream Protestantism has for some time placed a heavy emphasis on the themes, think for yourself, decide for yourself, seek out your own personal relationship with Christ. Are we becoming a nation of religious Lone Rangers? Many of the indicators say yes.

My individual response to the call of Jesus and my personal relationship with him are indispensable. But so is my relationship with his people: "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into *one body*" (1 Corinthians 12:13). We cannot preach, "Work out *your own* salvation" (Philippians 2:12), to the exclusion of, "To God be glory *in the church*" (Ephesians 3:21).

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

From cover to cover, from Eden to the Holy City in John's revelation, our scriptures teach us that our lives are meant to be lived in community—caring, just, productive, mutually-supportive community. Our Old Testament fathers and mothers of faith understood better than we the strength and beauty of corporate identity. The Jews first saw the forest—the people of Israel—then the tree—the individual Israelite.

An old Jewish midrash-story provides us with a familiar figure of speech. Three men are out in a boat far from shore. They begin to argue about their individual space in the boat; each claims he's not getting his share. Finally, they divide the boat into three equal sections. Then one of the men begins to drill a hole in the bottom of the boat,

arguing that he can do whatever he pleases with his section. The other two protest, “But we’re all in the same boat!”

The lessons of corporate identity are taught early in God’s Word. The Creator looked over his magnificent new world and, for the first time, pronounced something “not good.” Human isolation. “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). And so he created for the man an *ezer* (Hebrew)—a “help meet,” a fit helper, a completer, a companion who could listen when he needed to speak and speak when he needed to listen. This world was not truly “good” until the possibility of relationship existed.

In the story of Cain and Abel, the *responsibility* of relationship is dramatically underscored. God comes to history’s first murderer and asks, “Where is your brother?” And Cain replies indifferently, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9).

With these words, malignant individualism steps onto the stage of human history. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” And Joseph is sold into slavery. And the priest and Levite walk by on the other side. And Kitty Genovese is killed in Queens, N.Y., as 38 of her neighbors look on and turn away.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” The answer was so obvious that the Lord God would not condescend to offer it to Cain. Yes! Emphatically, definitely, unequivocally yes. The ethics of the Kingdom of God are founded upon that “Yes”—mercy, benevolence, hospitality, peacemaking, servanthood, evangelism.

There is an ironic postscript to Cain’s story. God’s punishment for his callous individualism was a lifetime of

isolation: to be “a restless wanderer on the earth” (Genesis 4:12).

The Old Testament continues to build on the theme of corporate identity and mutual responsibility. God calls Abraham so he might make covenant with a people of his own (Genesis 17:1-8). The story of Achan—whose personal sin of hoarding enemy treasures brought suffering on not only his family but all of Israel—is a classic example of the connectedness of individual and community (Joshua 7). The prophets pronounce their angriest judgment on those who allow personal prosperity to blind them to the needs of their brothers: “Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, . . . I will turn your religious feasts into mourning” (Amos 8:4,10).

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” Yes! And Joseph throws his arms around his brothers in gracious forgiveness. Yes! And the Good Samaritan stops. Yes! And God’s only Son—“made like his brothers in every way” (Hebrews 2:17)—gives himself to be killed on Calvary for my sin and yours.

Where Do I Go to Find Myself?

One of the most provocative and misunderstood notions of our time is the often-expressed need of people to “find themselves.” Perhaps it is simply the modern equivalent of the ancient Greek wisdom, “Know thyself”: to conduct an honest, personal inventory of your abilities, goals, and values. The idea of finding yourself has a decidedly-spiritual ring to it; you seek to find only that which is *lost*.

The human search for purpose, meaning, and identity is

a noble and valid search. Jesus challenged his followers to be searchers: Ask! Seek! Knock! (Matthew 7:7). God is the rewarder of the diligent searcher (Hebrews 13:6). Against the backdrop of a culture that has us looking for “self” in all the wrong places, may I suggest three of the very best places to find ourselves.

I Will Find Myself in My Story.

How we love stories. Since childhood, our pulses quicken when we hear one coming: “Once upon a time. . .” We all satisfy the human appetite for a story somehow: movies, novels, soap operas, gossip, the evening news. A few years ago a friend gave my daughter a storybook unlike any of the many others she had. Computer magic has inserted her name throughout the story. From then on, Jenny would ask often, “Daddy, read me *my* story tonight.” We grownups are not any different. We not only love stories, we particularly love *our* stories.

But there is one story above and beyond all stories that tells us who we are.

[It is] living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God. Our Story. Where God enables us to find ourselves by cutting through our every pretense and rationalization and self-deception to show us who we really are.

Notice the context of this familiar passage from Hebrews. The “word of God” here is not a \$75 leather-

bound study Bible, but a story of belief and unbelief. “Their example of disobedience” (4:11) is the story of faithless Israel in the desert (3:7-4:11), not dusty history but a “living and active” picture of God’s will for his people in every age.

This living word is my Story, a mirror held up to my life. Like the Queen in “Snow White,” I may not always like what the mirror reveals, but the mirror will always tell me the truth.

The people of Israel understood corporate identity because they knew how to tell their Story. For three millennia it has been told at the Passover table. Picture young Jesus listening intently as Joseph recounted the old Exodus story of deliverance: “*We* were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought *us* out of Egypt with a mighty hand” (Deuteronomy 6:21).

We Christians tell our children Bible stories, but do they know that these stories are their very own? “We’d been there at Mary’s house for hours, praying for Peter’s life, when suddenly there was a knock at the door. . .” (Acts 12). “Sometimes on a lonely day, I read the letter Paul wrote us, and remember that nothing in this whole universe can separate us from God’s love” (Romans 8). Perhaps many of us do not communicate the Story as our own because we left behind some of our wondrous possession of it when we graduated from those wonderful Sunday School rooms with the sandboxes and flannelgraph boards.

Of course the most important chapter of the Story is the one we retell each Lord’s Day. Like the Jews at Passover, we gather around a table. And something—a scripture, a song, a prayer—triggers a scene from the Story: a dirty

towel, a broken loaf, an anguished prayer, a betrayal kiss, an angry mob, a thorny crown, a deadly cross, an undying love.

And in the retelling of the Story we are reminded that we are connected—you and I and the resurrected Lord. “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation (*koinonia*) in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread that we break a participation (*koinonia*) in the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16). And once again, we have found ourselves.

We challenge the emptiness of individualism every time we expose our hearts to the double-edged sword of God’s word, every time we tell a Bible story and make it our own, every time we eat the bread and drink the cup and proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26).

We find ourselves when we rediscover our Story.

I Will Find Myself in My People

The late twentieth century has become the age of high mobility, of corporation “gypsies” and dashing commuters. The traditional family of Mom, Dad, and the kids is more and more a rarity. America has become, in Vance Packard’s phrase, “a nation of strangers.” Thus Alex Haley tapped a mother-lode of human yearning with his book and series, “Roots,” sending countless Americans scurrying to libraries and county clerk’s offices in search of their family histories.

We find ourselves in our people. On those magic nights by the fireplace when Granddad began to reminisce about the family lore, you became aware that you were less an island, entire of yourself, and more part of a great conti-

ment: your people. Fred Craddock, the fine homiletics professor, tells of an Indian educator who as a child spent an entire day with an old squaw. She immersed the boy in the stories, songs, and rituals of his people, the Kiowa Indians. Looking back to that day, he said, “I left her house a Kiowa.”

This is precisely the strategy the writer of Hebrews is employing with us. He calls to mind the great men and women of faith—Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Rahab—as if to say, “Here is your heritage! This is your legacy of courage and faithfulness! These are your people!” Then he turns to us, the readers:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let *us* throw off everything that hinders. . . , let *us* run with perseverance the race. . . . Let *us* fix our eyes on Jesus. . .

Hebrews 12:1-2

But who are my people in the present tense? My people are the Church of Jesus Christ. Here is my corporate identity. As vital as my connection to my story and my people of the past is my connection to my people today. I will find myself at church. I will find myself when I begin to act on the truth that in Christ “each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:5).

We are *yokefellows*, you and I, to use a word-picture of Paul’s from Philippians (4:3; it also could be the proper name “Syzygus”). Fifty-five times in the Old Testament the word “yoke” occurs, never in a positive sense; often it is a symbol of oppression and slavery. But Jesus, ever the provocateur, the category-buster, comes offering a yoke (Matthew 11:28-30)! “Trade in your yoke of weariness

and slavery for my yoke of productivity and freedom," he invites.

Now in Him we found ourselves, yoked to one another—by our common need of forgiveness, our common mission, our common love, our common Lord. But have we grasped the profound truth of what it means to be “members” one of another? The Greek word *melos*—“member”—does not mean a name on a church roll, any more than *koinonia*—“fellowship”—means a potluck dinner. I can be a “member” of the PTA, the football boosters, or the Fruit-of-the-Month Club. But a *melos* is a limb organically connected to and dependent upon the body for its very function and life. (The term today that comes closest to capturing the Biblical sense is the terrible word “dismember.”)

Paul could not have chosen a term for Christians that more graphically implies our connectedness, that makes a greater fiction of the notion of church-less Christianity. We are attached! And so it is that we weep with the weeping, rejoice with the rejoicing, bear along with the burdened. We are like the man who said, “I dropped a rock on my big toe, and my whole body stayed up all night to keep my sore toe company.”

On his program “Newsbreak,” Charles Osgood reported a remarkable story of two elderly women in a New Jersey retirement home. One was white, the other black. Both had been partially disabled by strokes: one was paralyzed on her right side, the other on her left. Knowing of their common love of the piano, a wise therapist one day sat them down on the same piano bench. One played with her good right hand, the other with her good left hand, and together they began to play Chopin.

The Christ who built his Church knows that we are more productive, more human, more Christian—together—than we ever could be individually. “We are each of us angels with only one wing,” wrote Luciano de Crescenzo, “And we can only fly embracing one another.”

We find ourselves in our people, the Church.

I Will Find Myself Only When I Lose Myself

Columnist James Reston has suggested that in the selfish preoccupations of our age—self-interest, self-reliance, self-esteem—we are rewriting the Lord’s Prayer to read: “Hallowed be my name, My kingdom come, My will be done.”

The last word on “finding ourselves” comes from Jesus:

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me *will find it*. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?

Matthew 16:25-26

Life’s great paradox: Life lost is life found. That is, life lost in Christ is life found in Christ. Ultimately it comes down to this: God gives you life; he gives you your “self.” His will is that you steward that self properly—care for it, develop and discipline it, and yes, love it. But when you hoard yourself, self-love will sour into greed, arrogance, narcissism—malignant individualism. And you will surely and eternally lose yourself.

This truth is cosmic truth. It is true of health: health fussily safeguarded becomes hypochondria, but health expended in energy may grow. It is true

of harvest: the seed must die to live. It is true of friendship: a man enjoys no friends until he becomes a friend. It is true of a nation: its good is found only as it forgets its good to serve the world. It is true of a church: it dies if it seeks its own power, and lives if it proclaims the gospel.⁶

We find ourselves in self-denial. Not the denial of our intellect, or our artistic talents, or our personal qualities of loveliness and strength. The Father gave us those gifts; let us spend those boldly in his service! But the center of the universe—the center of *my* personal universe—I must deny to myself. That belongs to the Lord of Universe alone.

The brave, rugged pioneer will always be one of our national symbols. So be it. But long before Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone, there was a Pioneer who transcended them all:

. . . the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2

The story of this trailblazer is the heart of our Story, the heart of our gospel, the heart of our joy. He did not come to lead us into isolation and loneliness and malignant individualism, but to call us into community, to make of us a people, to build of us a Church. Because he counted not equality with God something to be grasped, because he was and is his brothers' and sisters' keeper, he "unselfed" himself, emptying himself in death on a cross.

There was a certain man who set out to find himself. He

went off on his own, and in a far country, he did whatever turned him on. He did his own thing, his way. But he never found himself—until one day, when he thought of home and Father. And in that moment of clarity, Jesus said, he “came to himself,” and he went home. He found himself in his father’s arms. And so will we.

¹Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 220-221.

²Roger Rosenblatt, “The Rugged Individual Rides Again,” *Time*, October 15, 1984, p. 116.

³Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, p. 37.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. vii.

⁵Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), pp. 56-57.

⁶George Buttrick, “Matthew,” *Interpreter’s Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 7, p. 456.

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Rejecting The World's Way Of Thinking

Rubel Shelly

God created human beings with minds, and he expects us to use them. Jesus taught, engaged in argument, answered critics' questions, and otherwise fought the battle for the minds of men. He sought no shallow emotional commitment but a committed discipleship founded on informed faith.

Whenever the church is faithful to its calling, we battle in Jesus' name for the minds of men. "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to tear down strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

The church of Christ faces the constant challenge of confronting contemporary culture. There can be no faithful evangelism without serious-minded cultural analysis and bold, prophetic challenge of the fundamental elements of a given culture which run counter to divine revelation. The unbelieving world can be challenged and changed only when it is confronted with God's Word.

The Divine Mandate

Harry Blamires opens his challenging book, *The Chris-*

tian Mind, by writing:

There is no longer a Christian mind.

It is a commonplace that the mind of modern man has been secularized. For instance, it has been deprived of any orientation toward the supernatural. Tragic as this fact is, it would not be so desperately tragic had the Christian mind held out against the secular drift. But unfortunately the Christian mind has succumbed to the secular drift with a degree of weakness and nervelessness unmatched in Christian history. It is difficult to do justice in words to the complete loss of intellectual morale in the twentieth-century Church. One cannot characterize it without having recourse to language which will sound hysterical and melodramatic.

There is no longer a Christian mind. There is still, of course, a Christian ethic, a Christian practice, and a Christian spirituality. As a moral being, the modern Christian subscribes to a code other than that of the non-Christian. As a member of the Church, he undertakes obligations and observations ignored by the non-Christian. As a spiritual being, in prayer and meditation, he strives to cultivate a dimension of life unexplored by the non-Christian. But as a *thinking* being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion — its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which related all human problems — social, political, cultural — to

the doctrinal foundations of the Christian Faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.¹

The notion of a Christian mind for the church and our fulfillment of the Great Commission through prophetic preaching to a world whose intellectual posture and values we have analyzed critically must not be confused with swaggering, arrogant polemic. Strife and contention are negative qualities, and Christians are not to indulge in verbal fisticuffs of that sort (cf. Titus 3:9). Such contests arise from human pride and are driven by the desire to win at verbal jousting; they produce flaring tempers, hurt feelings, and closed doors.

The presentation and defense of the Christian faith must never be allowed to degenerate into verbal sleight of hand. The Christian has a power greater than logic with which to press his case — the power of love. In a classic article on Socrates, a respected Platonic scholar points to a fundamental contrast between the “gadfly of Athens” and Jesus of Nazareth which should be kept in mind.

Jesus wept for Jerusalem. Socrates warns Athens, scolds, exhorts it, condemns it. But he has no tears for it. One wonders if Plato, who raged against Athens, did not love it more in his rage and hate than ever did Socrates in his sad and good-tempered rebukes. One feels there is a last zone of frigidity in the soul of the great erotic; had he loved his fellows more, he could hardly have laid on them the burdens of his ‘despotic logic,’ impossible to be borne.²

A classic Biblical text having to do with our responsibility to confront the world with the gospel drives home this very point. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. *But do this with gentleness and respect.* . . ." (1 Peter 3:15; cf. 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Jude 3, 22). Against our own Socratic tendency toward "despotic logic," we would be better advised to employ more lightning and less thunder, more honesty and less dogmatism, more love and less acrimony.

A New Testament word which refers to the intellectual discipline of searching with a determination to find truth is *dialegomai*. Paul "reasoned with" (NIV) or "argued with" (ASV) the Jews of Thessalonica concerning the messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 17:2). He engaged in the same process of reasoning in his attempt to persuade people of his case among the Corinthians (Acts 18:4), with the people of Ephesus (Acts 18:19), and in other places.

While Paul was in Athens, the hometown of Socrates, he "reasoned (Gk, *dialegomai*) in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there" Acts 17:17). Writing on this verse, one evangelical has said:

For the way that Paul addressed the people in the market place Luke uses a distinctive word. He tell us that Paul "argued." And lest we fail to appreciate the significance of this, we should know there is here no isolated example of Paul presenting his case in this manner. Not only does Luke

frequently use the word “argue” of his evangelistic ministry, but he also has other words of similar meaning such as “confound,” “prove” (Acts 9:22, 17:3), “dispute” (Acts 9:29), “powerfully confute” (Acts 18:28). Expressions like this can leave us in no doubt about Paul’s normal aim which was to convince people’s minds of the truth of the Gospel as means of persuading them to submit their wills.³

God does not despise the human mind which he created. He appeals to it through facts, proofs, and reason. “God’s way is not to by-pass the understanding, but to enlighten it.”⁴ This enlightenment does not come from philosophical speculation and semantic chicanery but from divine revelation, the authoritative Word of God.

But we have withdrawn from the marketplace of dialogue into the safe confines of our church buildings. We are not battling for the minds of men. We have abandoned the field of battle before the challenge of secularism. *We have lost our mind* — our distinctly Christian mind and the mindset to be bold with the Christian faith in an age of doubt.

The Challenge of Secularism

As defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “secularism” is the notion that morality should be based solely on regard for the well-being of mankind in this present life to the exclusion of all considerations related to belief in God or a future life. This viewpoint is a conscious and deliberate rejection of the Christian world view and has become something of a new religion in itself. It now

dominates Western society.

Secular humanism makes man the norm of all truth and value. The idea of a transcendent deity or an eternal and absolute standard of morality is ridiculed. Entertainers, educators, legislators, scientists, theologians (!), writers — people from all spheres of influence can be cited who are aggressive advocates of the nontheistic perspective on life. The foundations of our culture have been shaken by their combined leadership, and they will carry the day completely unless competently trained and passionately committed Christians step forward to challenge them.

The beliefs and commitments of these individuals have been stated unambiguously and emphatically. They have published documents which amount to secular versions of a religious creed. The most significant of their creeds are “Humanist Manifesto I” (1933), “Humanist Manifesto II” (1973), and “A Secular Humanist Declaration” (1980).⁵

These publications speak of theism as “an unproved and an outmoded faith.” Their authors and signers declare they “can discover no divine purpose of providence for the human species. . . .No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.” They flatly assert that the realm of the supernatural is nonsensical and should be abandoned as a meaningful category among intellectuals. They declare that the human race is the product of nature rather than God and insist that humanity must define all value and meaning in relation to itself rather than deity, Scripture, or any transcendent value.

Some of the best-known personalities of their time signed one or more of these secularist declarations: John Dewey, Isaac Asimov, Antony Flew, B. F. Skinner, A. J.

Ayer, Joseph Fletcher, Betty Frieden, Julian Huxley, and others.

There is a song in our hymnals which comes to my mind at this point. As a possible instance of reciting words without much reflection on them, think about this common prayer song we use:

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence praise.

Against the thesis of this lecture, does the line about being reclothed in your rightful mind strike you forcefully? Do we ever see our mind as being messed up and in need of divine intervention? Do you consciously ask God to remake your thinking processes in any context other than song?

Textual Insights from Romans and Ephesians

Paul wrote this to the church at Rome: “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God” (Romans 8:5-8).

From this text, at least three things are apparent: (1) the mind/mindset of unredeemed humanity is hostile to God and cannot please him; (2) the sinful mind is marked by turmoil, unrest, and death; and (3) it does not — and, in fact, *cannot* — submit to God’s will.

It is beginning to sound like *salvation* will have to in-

volve a process of *redemption of the mind*. We need not only to be forgiven of our past, foolish ways but also “re clothed” with the mind which rightfully belongs to someone who is going to live for God. As the apostle later expressed it in the same epistle, it is imperative that Christians “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2b).

Have you ever watched an otherwise normal person go berserk in an outburst of violent temper? Foul language? Verbal or physical abuse of someone? Maybe it has happened in your own experience.

Do you recognize any of these terms/behaviors: lying, kleptomania, alcoholism, marital infidelity, or homosexuality? From a Biblical perspective, each names a sinful behavior. It is also true, however, that at some point after one’s voluntary decision to engage in one or more of these behaviors — which is a wrong use of freedom and therefore sinful — he or she can reach a point of involuntary slavery to that behavior.

At that point, all the lectures and scoldings in the world won’t change the person. In all likelihood, that approach will only reinforce his guilt and self-hatred which, in turn, will guarantee the behavior continues. This is the practical meaning of Paul’s words when he wrote of a mind which “does not submit to God’s law, *nor can it do so.*” What was once a behavior choice is no longer a choice. The person is no longer in control of his own will and cannot choose to stop without someone else’s intervention. As “insane” as the behavior appears to an outsider who observes it, the person involved in it cannot stop it even though he wants to stop desperately.

Alcoholism is a paradigm instance of this phenomenon.

When someone begins to *abuse* alcohol, he is sinning. The Bible forbids drunkenness, calling it an act of the “sinful nature” and declaring that “those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). But someone who *abuses* alcohol long enough or who has certain predisposing genetic and/or personality traits may become *addicted* to alcohol. The line separating voluntary abuse from involuntary addiction has been crossed. At that point, he is a sick person. As a disease, alcoholism has a predictable course and needs to be treated. Until there is an intervention of some sort, the alcoholic will continue to drink for he cannot not drink.

What has been learned to be true of alcoholism is also true of every other behavior which the Bible forbids. God forbids our choosing these things in order to protect us from their captivating, enslaving powers. He does not want us to get caught up in things which will alienate us from him, take away our will power, and make it impossible for us to submit to his will any longer. He wants to protect us from things which result in turmoil and death in our physical bodies, mental processes, emotions, spiritual lives, and relationships with people.

Another treatment of the same theme is found from Paul's pen in one of his Prison Epistles. In Ephesians 4:17-19, he traces the downward progression of life as it is lived by pagans. “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, *in the futility of their thinking*. They are *darkened in their understanding* and separated from the life of God because of the *ignorance* that is in them *due to the hardening of their hearts*. Having *lost all sensitivity*, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind

of impurity, with a continual lust for more” (Ephesians 4:17-19).

These are not people without education or productive job skills. They are people whose moral and spiritual lives are in darkness because of the state of their mind. They live “in the futility of their thinking.” This worldly and unchristian way of thinking traces to three factors: (1) deliberate ignorance of God (v. 18; cf. Romans 1:18-19), (2) the loss of sensitivity in their consciences (v. 19a), and (3) sinful indulgence in every imaginable impurity (v. 19b).

The same progression can be seen in any culture — whether in particular individuals or in the culture as a whole when this way of secular thinking dominates it. It doesn’t take a Solomon to see that the cultures of all the developed nations of our time are following the pagan way of thinking.

The earlier this downward process is interrupted in a person, the better. If it goes its full course, many will never come back. With self-esteem, will power, and sensitivity gone, it will be impossible for many of them to be brought back to repentance” (cf. Hebrews 6:4-6; 1 John 5:16). This is why the Bible stresses the urgency of salvation: Today is the day! Seek the Lord while he may be found! Don’t be deceived by sin’s treachery!

The only way to win the victory over sin is through Christ. The only way to escape the downward process Paul described is to be transformed by Christ’s power so that our minds are renewed, and we reject the world’s way of thinking. Jesus of Nazareth is heaven’s answer to our crisis. Thus, as Paul traced the reverse process of redemption in the next paragraph of Ephesians, he speaks of a new attitude of mind and a new way of thinking. “You,

however, did not come to *know Christ* that way. Surely you *heard of him* and were *taught in him* in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be *made new in the attitude of your minds*; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:20-24).

The process of salvation and transformation has three elements: (1) knowing Christ — both intellectually and personally (vs. 20-21), (2) putting off the old self and its wrong-headed, deceitful desires (v. 22), and (3) and exhibiting both a new mindset and lifestyle which reflect God’s glory (vs. 23-24).

A sinner’s role in the salvation process can best be described with the awkward term *active passivity*. We can’t fix what is wrong with us, and we have to begin with an admission of that fact. We have to surrender to God and his will for our lives. But that passive surrender to God’s saving power involves a voluntary and active decision by us. When he speaks, we listen; where he leads, we follow; when he commands, we obey.

“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’ ” (Romans 8:12-15).

Have you ever read the morning paper only to sigh that

the whole world seems to have “gone crazy”? Maybe you were saying more than you realized! Sin does make fools of us all. It makes us crazy. And it will take the power of God himself to bring us back to reality and to make us sane again.

Just as I am! Poor, wretched, blind —
 Sight, riches, *healing of the mind*,
 Yea, all I need, in Thee to find —
 O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Both Synagogue and Marketplace

During his second missionary tour, Paul arrived at Athens. While awaiting the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he did some sightseeing in the city. What he saw told him about the spiritual plight of its people. As he visited public places and walked through its streets, he became “greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols” (Acts 17:16).

Without waiting for his co-workers to join him, Paul started a one-man evangelistic ministry to Athens. “So he reasoned *in the synagogue* with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as *in the marketplace* day by day with those who happened to be there” (Acts 17:17).

When we think about evangelism, we almost always focus on “the synagogue” — that is, the traditional places for religious meetings where we anticipate finding people with a spiritual yearning of some sort. Too seldom do we think of “the marketplace” — that is, the public forums where we anticipate meeting people with secular or anti-religious postures. But it is the latter group which is growing fastest, having the widest influence on our culture, and leading our culture along the downward spiral which

comes of rejecting the knowledge of God. Without abandoning the synagogue, we must be more aggressively at work in the marketplace.

By all means we must evangelize people who come to our worship locations and exhibit an interest in spiritual things. To confine our efforts there, however, is to be pitifully short-sighted. It effectively isolates us from the mainstream of our culture.

We must imitate Paul and evangelize through social intercourse and in the arena of intellectual exchange. We must communicate our Christian commitment not only at prayer breakfasts but at business luncheons, not only in religious journals, but in the secular press, not only in Christian schools but in public schools, not only during evangelistic meetings at a church building but in daily discipleship which prompts service and sharing with people of all sorts within our spheres of influence.

In Paul's case at Athens, his sharing in the marketplace led to an exchange in the Areopagus (Acts 17:19). It was an unlikely place for a Christian preacher, for the Areopagus was a center for philosophical debate. Into that arena went Paul the theist, Christian, and apostle. He discussed his view of the divine nature and purpose with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. He quoted no Scripture, which they neither knew nor regarded as authoritative, but reasoned with them based on natural theology and his personal knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth. He didn't even duck so controversial a topic as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Just as when he preached in the synagogue and argued his case from Scripture, he had mixed results. Some turned up their noses at his presentation, others expressed

the desire to study further with him, and a few became believers (Acts 17:32-34).

We must get over our reluctance to enter the marketplace and begin pressing the case for the saving work of Jesus Christ among our secularized contemporaries. Few of them will come to our assemblies. We must go where they are.

Armed with truth and careful scholarship, we must be willing to enter into dialogue with anyone who will join the discussion. Surrendered to Christ and walking by his Spirit, we must present the Christian faith. Praying fervently and believing in the power of the gospel, we must wait for the Christian message to have its effect. Some will sneer, and others will be only mildly curious. But some will be saved.

Conclusion

If we are to be faithful to our calling in this age, we must get into the arena where the discussions are going on. We must enter the dialogue. We must challenge the worldly, secularized, God-rejecting mindset of our time with the saving truth about Jesus Christ.

The church must recapture the Christian mind first. We must reject the secular, materialistic, pleasure-mad spirit of our age which is so antagonistic to righteousness. We must think and think Christianity, act and act Christianly.

With our own thinking and behavior thoroughly Christian, we will then be in position to offer the world an alternative—an alternative of truth, light, and life: the alternative of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

¹Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1978), pp. 3-4.

²Gregory Vlastos, "The Paradox of Socrates," in *The Philosophy of Socrates* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), pp. 16-17.

³Kenneth F. W. Prior, *The Gospel in a Pagan Society* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), p. 34.

⁴Prior, *Gospel in a Pagan Society*, p. 36.

⁵"Humanist Manifesto I" originally appeared in *The New Humanist* 6 (May/June 1933), "Humanist Manifesto II" was first published in *The Humanist* 33 (September/October 1973). The two documents have since been reprinted in booklet form and distributed widely. "A Secular Humanist Declaration" was originally published in *Free Inquiry* 1 (Winter 1980) and later distributed in booklet form.

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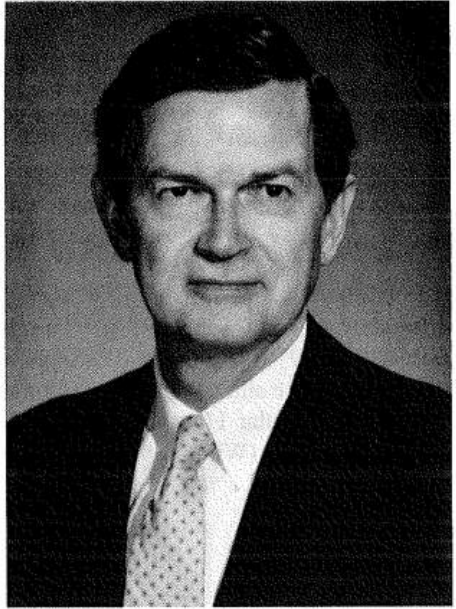
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The Christ Who Transcends Culture

Harold Hazelip

“Salvation is found in no one else. . .” (Acts 4:12). “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” (Matthew 11:3) The answer the gospel writers give us is clearly, “Yes, and we shall look for no other.” “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). “. . .at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. . .” (Philippians 2:10-11). “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

These are exclusive claims made concerning Jesus Christ. They were not made in ignorance of other great religious movements. The first century Graeco-Roman world presented a cafeteria of religions and cults, ranging from the high ethical monotheism of Judaism to the most primitive pagan magic and self-mutilation. Against all competitors, Jesus, and later the church, consciously and deliberately proclaimed the unique role of Christ as the revealer of God to human beings.

Today the claim that Jesus Christ is God the Son must be made in a hostile environment. Donald G. Miller has listed several current challenges to the claim for the uniqueness of Jesus. Among them are the missionary ag-

gressiveness of non-Christian religions, Marxism, resurgent nationalism, secularism, neopaganism, religious syncretism, the rapid growth of new knowledge, and the general spirit of religious tolerance. Miller observes that political democracy has made religious pluralism possible. In order to ease the tension from competing religious views and to express the good will which often characterizes the religious mindset, it has become fashionable to tolerate all views and to treat differences as if they are unimportant.¹

The ultimate expression of religious tolerance is syncretism—the combining of different beliefs and practices. W. A. Visser't Hooft traces four waves of syncretism in history. First, during the century before the exile the prophets had to fight idolatry. King Manasseh openly attached himself to the culture of the Assyrians. During this period we read of worship by Israelites of the sun (2 Kings 23:11), of Asherah the “Queen of Heaven” (Jeremiah 7:18), and of Tammuz, a Babylonian deity (Ezekiel 8:14). Sacred prostitution was introduced to the temple itself (2 Kings 23:7).

Second, from Alexander the Great to the time of Augustine, syncretism flourished. The emperor Alexander Severus had in his private chapel the statues of deified emperors, the claimed miracle worker Apollonius of Tyana, Abraham, Orpheus, and Christ. His collection of deities reminds one of Athens as Paul observed it (Acts 17:16).

Third, the period of the renaissance brought to eighteenth century Europe the view that historical revelation makes God unjust to the people who do not receive it. The tendency was to search for religion in nature (Rousseau)

or in reason (Lord Herbert) and to deny the claims of special revelation made by Christianity.

Fourth, Visser't Hooft believes the uniqueness of Christianity is being questioned widely today because of comparative religion studies.² This raises the question whether Christ's influence is largely limited to western culture or actually transcends all cultural and historical barriers.

Jesus' claims on the night before his death and Peter's words before the Jewish Supreme Court within a few weeks of Jesus' resurrection place the Biblical claim for Christ's uniqueness at the highest possible level (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). He is the one and only Savior or he is no savior at all. He is depicted not as *a* son of God, but as *the* unique Son of God, not as *a* lord, but as *the* Lord. When the claim is so great, we may be perplexed. But if the claim were any less, we would hardly be interested.

How Tolerant Should We Be?

If Christ is Lord of all, how tolerant should his followers be toward those who call upon other lords (1 Corinthians 8:4-6)? Tolerance toward the views of others may mean different things to different people. All of us should be grateful that after centuries of religious persecutions and holy wars, each person can practice his faith (in many parts of the world) without fear of harm from government or from religious leaders. Aquinas wrote that heretics “. . .deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be severed from the world by death.”³ Few believers in Christ would sanction the death penalty for heresy today.

Tolerance means that we insist that each person should exercise freedom of religion and of conscience. However,

the tolerance which recognized all religions to be equally true and equally false is not harmonious with Christianity. Gibbon summarizes this viewpoint as held in the Roman world: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful."⁴ In this view Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed, and Christ could be venerated alongside each other as parallel revealers of God.

Without appealing to Aristotle's law of contradiction, the Bible affirms truth about Jesus Christ in such a way as to exclude the possibility of recognizing its opposite to be true as well. If it is true that Julius Caesar was murdered on March 15, 44 B.C., then it is false to say that he died a natural death in the year 45 B.C. Truth is intolerant. If there is only one God, then there is not more than one. If there is only one Lord, then there is not more than one.

Granted that there is but one living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the claim that ultimate truth is only to be found in him is not arrogant intolerance. It is rather the nature of reality. To know him is to know the truth. The Christian makes this exclusive claim at the risk of being considered narrow and intolerant of the views of others.

Why Is Christ Unique?

Why did God choose to reveal himself uniquely to the Jews? Why did he decide to become man in the fullness of time, in the person of a carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth?

We must simply answer that we do not know why God chose to reveal himself as he did. We cannot claim to know how God ought to act for the enlightenment and the

salvation of the human race. We are not in position to lay down the conditions upon which he should save us.

Rousseau once asked in a letter to a friend, “Is it simple, is it natural, that God should have gone and found Moses in order to speak to a Jean Jacques Rousseau?” The affirmation of the Bible is that God chose his own way of revealing himself: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). It would be surprising if God’s ways were not very different from the ways we would have chosen with our limited wisdom.

Although we do not know why God chose to reveal himself uniquely in the person of his Son, we can now see the wisdom of what he has done. Before Jesus crossed the Kidron to Gethsemane, he prayed, “. . .that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21). If each person could find God in his own way, then each would be finding him without his brother. If the various tribes of mankind could find salvation through different redeemers, the human race would be doomed to be divided forever. As it is, “. . .he himself is our peace. . .” (Ephesians 2:14). We are drawn together as we respond to one God through one Lord Jesus Christ.

God Was in Christ

How should we present this claim for the Christ who transcends culture to others—especially to those of other cultures? The best approach to the person who does not know Christ today is likely not through an argument over

who can lay claim to final truth. Rather, the best method of presentation leads at once to the heart of Biblical teaching concerning Jesus Christ.

Other religions tend to look for God in nature (in the world about us), or in mystical experience (in the world within us). There are many commendable features in those religions. Buddhism has a deep sympathy for the world's suffering. Hinduism longs for communion with Ultimate Reality. Islam has a deep sense of the majesty of God. We cannot claim that Christians have been more diligent in their search for truth than have representatives of these religions.

We *can* affirm that the person who looks for God in nature must be very selective or he will have a one-sided view of God. This is true because nature is often very severe—"red in tooth and claw." And the person who looks for God within himself can hardly be sure whether it is God he has found or an idol of his own making, the reflection of his own experience.

The Biblical affirmation is not that we found God but that God has found us: "I was found of those who did not seek me; I reveal myself to those who did not ask for me" (Romans 10:20). Although the person who observes himself or nature carefully may learn many things about the ways of God, he will not learn from these sources how to be reconciled to God. Christianity is not another attempt of man to find God, or to understand himself or the nature of the universe. It is rather our response to the God who found us and who revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ.

The Jewish scholar Claude Montefiore decided to investigate whether there was anything new in Jesus'

teaching, anything which no Jewish prophet or rabbi had ever said. He eventually singled out one distinctive note: the picture of the divine Shepherd going out into the wilderness to seek a lost sheep, the picture of God not merely receiving those who come to him but taking the initiative in seeking those who have not turned to him. This is one thing not in any religion outside Christianity: God himself came to earth to reconcile by the sacrifice of his own life those who had become separated from him by their sin and guilt (John 1:1-18).

Other religions may speak of God somewhat as Christians do. They know of the sufferings of earthly life. They have heard of some kind of "incarnation" of deity and even of eternal life. One thing they do *not* have! They do not know of One who died on the cross for the atonement of us all, One who reconciled the world unto God by his own sacrifice of love (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Claims That Transcend Culture

Our beginning claim for Christianity is that it introduces human beings to the highest conception of God the world has ever known. The prophets of Israel emphasized the majesty and holiness of God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Hallowed be thy name." He also taught them to say, "Our Father." God is "high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1). Yet we are his offspring (Acts 17:29). He is knowable, understandable, lovable.

Christianity also introduces us to a living, universal Lord. Jesus Christ is the highest exegesis of God we have ever known (John 1:18). It is not only correct to say that "Jesus is like God"; it is equally correct to say that "God is like Jesus." "Call him a man," E. Stanley Jones wrote,

“and you will have to change your ideas of what man is; call him God, and you will have to change your ideas of what God is.” Jesus literally “put a face on God” for us (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Christianity also offers both moral understanding and moral power. The world had known high moral standards before Jesus came, but its best citizens found that they were unable to live up to their highest ideals. Paul vividly stated the human problem: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15). He found deliverance only through the forgiveness Jesus offers and the power of the indwelling Spirit who helps us overcome the flesh and produce his fruit in our lives (Romans 7:24-8:11; Galatians 5:22-25).

God’s revelation of himself in his Son, his pursuit of us with the offer of forgiving love, and the power he provides to help us overcome the evil one—these great truths are independent of any culture of civilization. God’s actions in Christ indeed occurred in time, in a given place, and among a given people. But because God is in it, it is not limited to any group of people. Christianity is not and never was a Western religion. Christ and his teachings stand above culture!

¹Miller, Donald G., *The Finality of Jesus Christ in Today’s World*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, n.d.), p. 1-26.

²Visser’t Hooft, *No Other Name*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 9-35.

³*Summa Theologica* II:ii.11.3

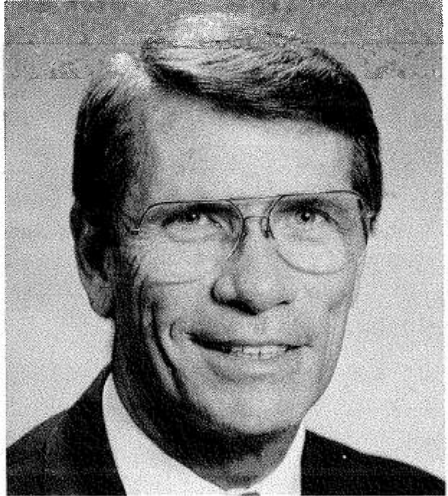
⁴Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (New York: Pocket Books, I, 14).

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Pressure For Success

Paul B. Faulkner, Ed.D

Talk about pressure! Think of Greg Louganis during the '88 Olympics. He was behind coming into his last dive. A fourteen-year old Chinese boy, Xiong Ni, had just completed a near-perfect dive to go well into the lead at the end of the last round. It would take the best dive of Greg's life to win. He had one dive left. And it was his most difficult dive—a reverse three-and-a-half somersault with tuck. With cheers for the Chinese diver still reverberating in the Chamshil swimming stadium, he thought: "No matter what happens, my mother will still love me." This, most certainly his last Olympic dive, had to be his best, and that with a three-inch gash in his head, and flash pictures popping. He needed a hefty 85.57 points to get the gold. He did it! He executed almost perfectly (86.70) and won with a point to spare. He was the first man ever to win two gold medals in two consecutive olympics—a fantastic performance under extreme pressure!

We didn't mention that he came into Seoul with an injured wrist and a low-grade fever, coupled with a sore throat that was going around the athletes' village. We didn't mention that he had to overcome dyslexia, stammering, and the taunts of schoolmates who called him "nigger" because of his dark Samoan skin.

But there were some sellouts to pressure at the '88 Olympics. What about Ben Johnson, the 100-yard dash specialist? He won the 100-yard dash in world record time

(9.79), but he had pumped himself up with Stanazolol (an illegal drug that can lead directly to liver cancer). He took the gamble and lost. His dream became a nightmare. After he opened his door to Canadian Olympic official Catherine Letheren and handed over his falsely won gold medal, he also lost about 10 million dollars in advertising contacts. He had denied the real winner an honest moment of glory. But worse, he sold his integrity and humiliated the people of his adopted home country, Canada. Actually he is Jamaican.

Some think most of our Olympic cycle team sold themselves out as well, though what they did was technically legal. They used caffeine pills equivalent to over 40 cups of coffee in a 15-minute period. Their coach thought that blood doping (injecting an extra pint of blood into the blood stream before the race to carry more oxygen to the lungs) was legitimate also. Pressure for success — it's the American way — or is it?

Competition: Good And Bad

American business, like the Olympics, is a great institution - **when it operates within the rules**. Competition brings prices down and increases production. But good management knows there is a point of no return when quality is sacrificed. When competition causes the airlines to lessen air safety which endangers lives, the cost is clearly too high. When pressure becomes stress and we cheat to win, management, employees, and customers need to re-evaluate.

Help Needed: Body And Mind

When I began working for Worth Food Market in Fort

Worth, for 25 cents an hour, I was sacking groceries with my hands, but my mind could wonder and dream. Later when I shoveled concrete on a highway project the company only needed by back - not my mind. One summer while driving a water truck for a construction company, I memorized scores of scriptures because I could drive the truck automatically, and with my mind I could devote myself to memorizing scriptures.

Work is not like that any more. Most businesses today when they hire want much more than your hands, feet, or back. They want your mind, your creativity, and your loyalty—a loyalty almost as dedicated as family loyalty. The pressure put on some workers today in the form of quotas, deadlines, etc., is awesome and intentional. Both employee and employer must be careful to stay clear of the urge to cheat on the priorities of life.

Proper Motivation

The motivation for many employees is purely selfish. They are willing to pay the price, take the risk, in order to have higher salaries. It is part of the game some Americans play when they play “Who is King of the Mountain?” Or, sometimes it’s called “See Who Ends Up With the Most Toys.” Many Christians get caught up in the insidious pride of this game.

To help us overcome the stress this produces, psychologists have created various treatments such as progressive relaxation, yogi meditation, hypnoses, deep relaxation, etc. Psychiatrists have identified many stress-related and stress-induced diseases like migraine tension headaches, asthma, insomnia, and hypertension.

In contrast to this, one can hardly imagine going into a

third-world country and admonishing a peasant working hard and barely eking out a living to “identify your stress and attend some workshops to help you manage it.” So maybe it is in order for us to consider the topic: “Pressure for Success.”

It is only fair to say that stress and pressure **can** have positive affects. Resistance against our muscles builds strength, helps the muscles to balance each other, and empowers us to overcome obstacles. We are beginning to recognize that the “Type A” people who were previously criticized for having more frequent heart attacks also **recover** twice as fast as “Type B” people.

Are we forced to deal with the **effects** of stress, or can we deal with it at the root? What does Divine Wisdom say? There are four major considerations that will help us to understand and control stress in our lives.

#1 The Health Factor

Many people simply have bad health habits that create stress. God has always been interested in our bodies because Christ dwells both in our spirit and our body (1 Corinthians 6:15).

The Old Testament gives a number of rules that govern the food the people of God could and couldn't eat (Deuteronomy 14). One New Testament text says “. . .let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit. .” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Most medical authorities today tell us that we should eat three meals a day, especially breakfast, sleep 7 or 8 hours per day, smoke nothing at all, drink little alcohol, if any, watch our weight, and exercise. If we practice most of these six health rules, we are told that our life expectan-

cy will be extended eleven years longer than those who practice two or three of these rules. Good health habits tend to **unstress** or **depressure** us.

Surprisingly, however, some people with very poor health habits are **not** stressed. There seem to be other qualities in life that compensate for some who smoke heavily or play hard in the game of life. We move on to item two.

#2 The Change Factor

Research has produced information implying that changes in life burden us with such tension that, if enough of these pressures accumulate in a short period of time, we will reach a breaking point. For example, the Holmes-Rahe Stress Test allows so many points for each of the major crises that may come in our life. They range from a high of 100 points for a death of a spouse to a low of 15 negative points if you change your sleeping habits or change your eating habits. The death of a close family member is 63 points. If you get a divorce, that is 73 points; getting married is exciting, but it still creates 50 stress points; getting back together in your marriage is another 45 points. Pregnancy is 40, a house mortgage over \$40,000 starts at 31 points, trouble with your in-laws is 29 points, and changing church activities is 19 points. When you add up those points, if your total is more than 300, research tell us that you are very likely to have a major breakdown within three years.

And yet, there are people who have crises, many crises, **major** crises that tally points considerably **more** than the 300 but who have a radiant lifestyle. It seems there are certain plus factors that can compensate or override these life

experiences that create high stress.

We are also beginning to find out that continuous minor hassles may be worse than major stressors. If we focus on all of these tiny stressors, the list becomes exhausting and endless. Maybe we are missing the point. It may not be how many hassles or how frequent, but how we **perceive** these stresses. One man's "doom" could be perceived by another as a "challenge."

Does God speak to how we make peace with extrinsic stress and pressure? In the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ said that those things which cause His people stress — poverty, hunger, mourning, persecution, and insult — also bring **blessings**. He said he would comfort the sad, fill the hungry, and give the kingdom to the poor and the earth to the meek. Persecution and insult have always followed his people, but they will be blessed right in the midst of trials. He is quoted as saying, "Re-joice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. . ." (Matthew 5).

#3 The Friendship Factor

People have uncanny abilities to take on major tasks accompanied by major stresses **as long as** they have friends backing them. But these same people might break down even with small stressors **if** they are lonely or have few people who care.

The Japanese people live a very fast-paced, industrialized, high-tech life in an urban society where pollution is strong. They smoke considerably more than Americans do, **but** strangely they have the highest life expectancy of any nation in the world, and their heart disease is the lowest of all the countries in the world.

Yet, when the Japanese move to the United States, they tend to have the same diseases with the same frequencies as Americans. How is this accounted for? Researchers found that when the Japanese were cut off from their roots, from their families, and from their community, they were more susceptible to disease. John Cassel, one of the first epidemiologists, has commented: "When. . . social ties were severed, people were far more likely to become ill."

There is a large body of evidence which indicates that the sort of person most likely to become ill is a person who doesn't have a place in any strong support network. Speaking about the diversity of illnesses which spring from a lack of a social network, Sidney Cobb, an epidemiologist at Brown University, concluded:

"There is an amazing similarity in the life circumstances of people who are suffering from conditions as diverse as tuberculosis, depression, hypertension, stroke, multiple accidents, cancer, arthritis, infection, mental illness and all kinds of infection, complications in pregnancy that seem to be brought on **by a lack of friendship.**" (emphasis added.)

There are at least eight studies of over 7,000 people who are high risk. They have six times the chance of major heart attacks, **but they don't!** How can one account for **this?** These studies support the concept that social ties are more important than not smoking and not overeating. In Alameda County, California, 7,000 adults were selected at random. They were asked exhaustive questions about their marriage, close friends, relatives, church attendance,

etc. The most dramatic finding was that those who had fewer social ties to others had a death rate two to five times **higher** than those who had strong social ties. This research was independent of whether or not they smoked, exercised, drank alcohol, or were overweight. It included both sexes and all ethnic groups.

Another study at the University of Massachusetts discovered that when a plant closed down, those with more social support had significantly less illness. A Yale University study found women to have less complications in pregnancy if they had social support, in contrast to those that didn't.

God understands man's need for a social support system. Over the ages, the Bible has spoken of His family, His loving concern for His people, His sheep, His flock, His koinonia, His fellowship, His loved ones. His people are told to love one another, pray one for another, serve one another, encourage one another, contribute to the needs of one another, be devoted to one another, honor one another, be faithful to one another, pray for one another, share with one another, show hospitality to one another, rejoice with one another, live in harmony with one another, (Romans 12).

But surprisingly, there are some highly stressed individuals who not only don't take care of their bodies but also are separated from their loved ones, lonely, AND STILL MAKE IT. Their lives are bountiful, fruitful, and powerful. How on earth do **they** do it?

Who are these people—people who, against insurmountable odds, are victors over stress?

Consider the prophets of the Old Testament. Most of them had stress factors far beyond the average servant of

God. They were noted for going against the grain of the majority. They tended to live lonely lives - yet they had a unifying factor that kept them going.

And what of our missionaries who are on the spiritual front lines? They may not have what they need to maintain good health. Some eat food they know will make them sick. They may be stressed with illnesses or death of loved ones far away. They often lack financial support, family support, and emotional support. They live in a foreign land with a foreign currency, foreign culture, and language. Alone. **Yet, somehow, most of them make it. How?**

And what about the many single people, especially single women in the United States who may be too poor to eat right or have secure housing? Many face additional stress factors of rape, abuse, fear, and lack of protection in the larger cities—**yet many make it.**

Who does not know of a divorced woman whose husband has left her without adequate support, a husband who refused to support his wife and family financially and emotionally. These ex-wives are left with far less financial support and far more responsibility. **Yet, somehow some of them make it.**

And there is another group of women — those who have been multi-married, perhaps living with men who are alcoholic and physically abusive. Many of these wives stay in their marriages because there is at least some financial support for the children — insufficient, but more than these women can provide alone. They have frustration, anxiety, and the pressures of negligent, abusive husbands. Still, they stay in their marriages, not giving up for the sake of the children. It is a wonder that any women can

make it under these circumstances - but many do!

I am thinking of an attractive young woman with her two children that come to church where I preached in Irving. She wanted the Lord in her life and in the lives of her children. I shall never forget her. The kids' clothes were worn but starched and ironed. She was dressed rather cheaply, according to middle class standards. Her hem line was too high and her makeup too heavy - for middle class standards. As she shared the hurts and pressures of her life, I marveled. At a very early age she had gone through one legal abortion. Later her husband crudely performed another with a coat hanger. He was her third husband, and he drank a lot. She thought she shouldn't be living with him, but he did provide some money for the children's support. She couldn't provide by herself unless she went back to being a bar maid. Her memory still weighs on my heart, perhaps because I am afraid I didn't do enough for her. Hopefully, she made it like so many others have. But how do people do it under such horrible circumstances? They have the fourth factor! This factor seems to help us overcome the stressors that otherwise would get to us.

#4 The Coherence Factor

The fourth factor is the major and ultimate factor. When we have this factor, it minimizes the negatives of the other three: the health factor, the change factor, and the friendships factor.

Those who ARE REALLY MAKING IT are those who above all have a world view that is coherent, comprehensive, and meaningful. Their world view is a positive world view despite the many negatives that pressure and stress

them.

I heard Norman Cousins speak on this theme in the summer of 1987. He is a faculty member of the School of Medicine at the University of Los Angeles. His basic theme for some time has been that fear, hate, rage, and frustration carry a high-stress price with them. His reasoning is that if these negative stressors create negative conditions for the body and mind, then by the same token positive emotions should pay off also. Blessed and faithful people, because their bodies and minds work together (instead of against each other) should live longer and happier.

The cover of Norman Cousins' book reads, "He is especially interested in the way attitudes and emotions can bring on disease or improve the prospects of recovery." In his judgment and by his research, he is convicted that faith, hope, and love work better than many medical interventions because these positive characteristics are preventive. They somehow strengthen the immune system. He speaks of how, in just five minutes of positive thought, he has been able to increase the resistance of the immune system 53%. He is convincing in his argument that the healing system is hooked to the belief system. He says, "We move along the path of our expectations." In effect, learning from our stress might be more appropriate than managing or reducing our stress.

His work has been validated in more recent studies by the work of Robert Ornstein and Dr. David Sobel in the book, *The Healing Brain*. They speak of "stress-resistant people." Sometimes it is also called "psychological hardiness." They suggest that "the psychological hardiness of the high stressed/low illness executives are charac-

terized by strong *commitment* to self, work, family, and other important values, a sense of control over one's life, and the ability to see change in one's life as a challenge rather than a threat." (Page 234)

To be more specific: there are four common principles that make world view of these stress-resistant people coherent and meaningful.

1. *Commitment*: They are a committed people. These people are committed to a specific set of values. Committed to staking their lives on risking themselves to high standards. They live in a world of giants, not dwarfs. They are committed to self improvement by hard work. If married they invest time, money, effort, energy, and planning for their families. Related to this very thing is the second characteristic.
2. *Meaning*: They are committed to a world view that gives meaning to life. A philosophy that answers the big questions. Everyone has a philosophy or world view, but not every philosophy adequately answers the "BIG FIVE" questions:
 - #1. Does your view of life **bless** people? Some life styles are a curse (i.e. the drug culture).
 - #2. Does your view of life bless **everybody** or is it primarily for the pretty, wealthy, young, or the rich?
 - #3. Does your view of life **last** or is it just here today and gone tomorrow? Is it a momentary high, but a hangover tomorrow?
 - #4. Does your view of life **make sense**? Does it integrate our existence? Or does it picture our ex-

istence as chaotic, disorganized, and nonsense?

#5. Finally, does your world view adequately answer the really big question - **Death!**?

3. *Control:* Stress-resistant people are in control. They know they have some control over life, and they do something about it. They see themselves as an automobile driver, one who doesn't have control over everything, the environment, road conditions, oncoming cars, traffic, upkeep of the automobile, but they do have control over the steering wheel and the brake, and they are going to use it to foster the commitment to the set of values they believe in.
4. *Challenge:* Stress-resistant people see change as a challenge, not as a threat. When life's fortunes or folly go against them, they don't pout or play "poor me." They have already guessed there would be changes in life that will come along, some for the better, some for the worse, but all for the glory of God. When they see old age creeping up and their memory begins to slip, they don't imagine themselves having Alzheimer's disease and give up (only 7% of the population over 65 develops Alzheimer's disease). When short-term memory fails, they go to the effort to learn new memory links (so they can remember where they placed their keys). They are aware that their wisdom is as good as it has ever been, maybe better. People still have a need for them, because they are making a contribution to those with lesser assets.
5. *Calling.* These people have a calling, a mission. They believe they were put here on purpose for a

purpose and they are not going to quit until the whistle blows—or the trumpet sounds.

When we have a worthy and worthwhile, meaningful purpose for living, we have a challenge that will lead us to a higher calling which, in turn, will cause us to naturally develop close friendships and see hardships for just what they are (a natural phase of life on this earth). In **effect, we are not stressed because we are overworked but because we are underbeing.** Joe Di Maggio said it best when he was speaking of his love, Marilyn Monroe: “She had everything to live **with**, but nothing to live **for**.”

True Faith Doesn't Need Proof

“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have **not seen** and yet have believed.”

John 20:29

In conclusion, it would not be fair for me to leave with you the impression that only those who are Christians have these stress-resistant characteristics. There are others in the world who have a deep commitment to a seemingly coherent world view. Yes, I believe the Christian has the **best** philosophy and the **best** chance of living joyfully in a frustrating world, but this is not the reason we serve Jesus.

We are **not** followers of Jesus in order to be more healthy, to have fewer life crises, to have more friends. If this is our motivation, we are using Jesus to satisfy our desires. Do we follow Jesus if he rewards us, if He **pays** off? Our faith must be greater than this.

Our faith rests not in the practical potential of living a cool life in the middle of a stinking, sweating world.

Rather, our faith rests on the historical Jesus the son of God, who came to this earth from heaven, lived among us as an example, and died on the cross to demonstrate His love and make atonement for our sins. We believe God is sovereign (supreme), whether things work for good or ill (as we see it in the here and now). He is God. We are willing to die in the middle of a garden of tears if that is His will.

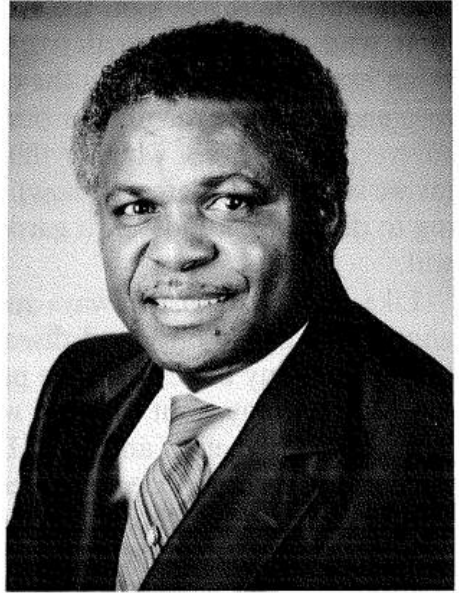
Like Job, we can't always make sense out of pain, anger, turmoil, killing, and disease. We may not understand death any better than the pagans — but we believe! Like Job we may want to argue with God or plead for an intercessor between us and God. But, in the final analysis, Job **knows** that his Redeemer lives! The message of Job is not that we will be blessed on this earth double fold, but rather that the sovereign God, whom we do not understand fully, loves us and will bless us — when he invites us into his presence.

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And They Did Not Receive Him

Dr. Jack Evans

To best understand this topic and its relationship to the general theme of this year's Bible Lectureship, "Christ and Culture: The Problem of Secularism," it is necessary to read the context in the Bible from which the text is taken. And the passage is as follows:

And it came to pass when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem; and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, You know not what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

Luke 9:51-56

This Samaritan village's refusal to receive Jesus for various cultural reasons is but a microcosm of the society

in which we live today. We Christians, as Christ's messengers, are going into "all the world" seeking those who would let Jesus live in their hearts, but finding that, for the most part, men will not receive him, much like this Samaritan village. When men do not receive him, however, today's messengers cannot react like James and John, who suggested that they burn up the Samaritan village because of this rejection; but we must remember the mission of Jesus: to seek and to save the lost.

From all indications surrounding this passage, the Samaritans felt justified in their refusal to receive Jesus into their village. For there was a long history of hostility between the Samaritans and the Jews that was based on the different, yet closely akin, cultural developments of the two races. Thus the reasons for the Samaritans' not receiving Jesus into their village must be explored. And these reasons can best be seen in our examining the thoughts, words, and lifestyle of a Samaritan woman in Sychar with whom Jesus had an extensive conversation. From this encounter, believing that this woman represented the general Samaritan mentality, we shall find three basic reasons as to why the Samaritans did not receive Jesus, and, thus, apply these reasons to our own society. We shall find that the Samaritans did not receive him because they (1) prejudge his attitude and lifestyle (2) underestimated his knowledge and concern (3) and misunderstood his mission and doctrine.

The Historical Journey

After Jesus had cleansed the temple in Jerusalem and declared that the true Temple would be for all people, and had told Nicodemus about the new birth and the fact that

he had come to die for all men who had been bitten by the serpent of sin, he left Jerusalem, which was in the South, and went into Galilee in the North. The usual route for Jews traveling from Judea to Galilee was through Perea, in order to avoid passing through the land which lay between them belonging to the Samaritans, whom the Jews hated. And this hatred was mutual, dating back to 722 B.C., when the Assyrian nation took the Northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. Samaria, at this time, was the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And following the Assyrian invasion and the carrying away of some of the Jews into captivity, the Assyrian king brought in a number of heathenistic foreigners, who intermarried with the Jews who were left in Samaria. And their offspring, being not all Jew or all heathen, were designated "Samaritans."

This race of Samaritans did not accept the Jewish view of their history. They said that the deportation of 722 B.C. was neither total nor final; that the exiles were, in fact, repatriated after 55 years. And it was the descendants of these native Israelites that they claimed to be. According to the Samaritans, the breach with the Judeans went back to the time of Eli, who set up an apostatic sanctuary of Yahweh at Shiloh, whereas they believed the true "chosen place" prescribed in the law of Moses was Mount Gerizim. They said that "accursed Ezra" had falsified the sacred text and had seduced the people, on their return from the Babylonian exile, to erect the second temple beside the Judean capital. They admitted that pagan colonists had brought heathen religion into Samaria, but insisted that they were still the offspring of the native Israelites of Samaria. They, therefore, opposed the

building of the sacred temple in Jerusalem as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, and chose instead to build a temple for God on Mount Gerizim. And though their temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 129/128 B.C., during the intertestamental period, the Samaritans continued to worship in the ruins of their temple, believing that the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was apostatic. The Jews, on the other hand, did not accept the Samaritans as true Israelites. They viewed them as a hybrid, mongrel semi-alien race, rejected their involvement in any Jewish activities, and despised them and their temple on Mount Gerizim. The hatred was so intense that no Jew would ever pronounce the word "Samaritan," unless in derision. The most offensive term that a Jew could apply to anyone was to call him a "Samaritan," which they equated with the devil (John 8:48).

It was because of this historical hatred between these two races that Jews would not pass through the land of the Samaritans in their travels from Judea in the South of Galilee in the North. But Jesus, our Lord, a Jew in the flesh, did not avoid these people. John says, "And he must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). The Maker of all men must needs pass through the abode of "foreign" humanity on his way to the heavenly throne. This was a divine compulsion by a human Christ. "He must needs go through Samaria." Whatever and wherever the problem is, Jesus always comes through.

It was noon, and Jesus, "wearied with his journey," but not weary of his work, came into this Samaritan city of Sychar, which was near the parcel of ground that Jacob had given to his son, Joseph, and he sat down at Jacob's well (John 4:5-6). It was then that a Samaritan woman

came with her pot, perhaps in the heat of the day, to draw water. The possible reason for her coming at this time of day will be explored later. But for now we see that Jesus began the conversation with her, not with a reproof, but with a request. His first word to her was "Give!" There must always be an emptying of the human before there can be a filling of the divine. He wished to do something spiritual for this despised woman, but he began by asking her to do something for him. He said to her, "Give me to drink" (v.7). Physical water then became the common denominator between the sinless Jesus and this sinful woman. The astonishment of this Samaritan woman at the request of this Jewish man gives us an insight into the Samaritan psyche and reveals the first reason as to why "they did not receive him."

They Prejudged his Attitude and Lifestyle

This woman had already recognized in Jesus the features of Jewish physiognomy with which the Samaritans had nothing in common. Too, she realized that it was uncustomary, in that society, for a man to speak to a woman in public, much less a Jewish man to a Samaritan woman. Her first response, therefore, revealed a wrong perception of Jesus, our Lord, based on her own racial prejudice. Out of her cultural background she, like most if not all Samaritans, felt that Jesus was a racist, chauvinistic Jew, who felt about Samaritans like all Jews felt about Samaritans. This false perception of Jesus, based on her experience with other Jews, caused her not to respond to his physical need for water but to point out vividly their sexual and racial differences and relationship. She said,

How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans (v. 9).

This woman was on the defensive and ready for battle. Her hatred for the Jews was a reaction to the Jews' initial action. And she felt, no doubt, justified in her feelings about Jesus, who was a Jew. But her perception of Jesus was wrong, as she later learned. And there is a progression of spiritual development in her as she continues to talk to him. A failure to understand Jesus always causes one to be prejudiced toward others, and thus become racist or sexist in his or her attitude. To this woman, at first, he was just another "Jew." But his answer to her implied that he actually was not the receiver, but the giver. Her error was in thinking that it was he who needed her help, when in reality it was she who needed him. Lovingly, he said to this defensive woman:

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water (v. 10).

With this response, the woman, who first saw Jesus only as a "Jew," but not God's Son; as a weary man, but not the rest for the weary; as a thirsty pilgrim, but not the one who could quench the spiritual thirst of men, grew in her respect for him. He was no longer "just a Jew," but now a "Sir." She said:

Sir, you have nothing to draw with from this deep well; from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou a greater man than our father Jacob. . .? (v. 12)

This woman's spiritual progression can be seen even in these words. He was no longer just a "Jew" or "Sir," but now a man. In asking him to compare himself with "their father Jacob," however, she lets us know that she was still on the defensive and somewhat suspicious. Jesus defused this tense situation by showing that he offered a different kind of water than that which was in that well. He answered the woman and said:

Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (v. 13-14).

Jesus here lets the woman and us know his philosophy of life. He is saying that all the physical provisions of life have one defect: they do not satisfy forever. The waters of the world only make men more thirsty. The water wells of men are dug in the wrong direction; they go downward. But the water well of Jesus goes upward, even into heaven itself. Men must constantly return to dip from the water wells of men; but the well of Jesus is built in the soul of the drinker, springing up into everlasting life.

While developing in her respect for him, this woman was still confused. She still felt that he was speaking about physical water in a well. But she felt that his promise of a well of her own would exempt her from the toil of coming to Jacob's well. Jesus was speaking from the top of spiritual comprehension, while the woman was speaking from the depths of sensuous knowledge. In her lifestyle, she could not comprehend the spiritual depth of Jesus' words. And thus, she could not receive him until she could

grasp his meaning and take on the mind of Christ.

Today's world is much like the Samaritans in its perception of Jesus, as portrayed in this woman. Many do not receive him into their lives because of their false perceptions of him. They feel that he was "just another man." Most world religions view him as just another religious leader. Islam views him as just another prophet who was a forerunner of Mohammed. Judaism views him as an imposter who claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Christendom, in its division, views him in many selfish ways, with some "Christians" using his words from the Bible and the symbol of the cross on which he died to foster racism, hatred, and division. But Jesus is more than just a religious leader; he is more than "just another prophet"; he is more than just a man—he is the Son of God and God the Son. And men cannot receive him until they comprehend this message and surrender to his control. Much of mankind is still confused about this man Jesus, much like the Samaritan woman.

This woman, though not grasping the true meaning of Jesus' words about "living water," felt that he had something that she needed. So she said to him,

Sir, give me water such as that, so that I may never be thirsty and have to come here for water again.
(v. 15).

Recognizing her limited spiritual perception, Jesus began moving the conversation toward the reason why the woman could not embrace his spiritual meaning: her life was immoral. He told her abruptly, "Go, call thy husband, and come here." In other words, he was saying to this woman, "Go and face the truth of the life you live;

come and receive the water of life.” The woman answered: “I have no husband.”

They Underestimated His Knowledge and Concern

While growing in her respect for him, this woman still underestimated the omniscience of our Lord. She had asked for living water, but did not understand that the well had to be dug within her. The waters of his love and care could not flow in her life until Jesus had dug through the hard rocks of sin, the layers of transgression, the clay of habitual adultery, and the numerous deposits of carnal thoughts. These sinful traits were still present in her life when she said to Christ, “I have no husband.” This was a true statement, as far as it went. But it did not go far enough. She told him as much as she wanted him to know, not knowing that Jesus could read her heart and life, past, present, and future. Like this woman, mankind today does not realize that Jesus does not need man to tell him about man, “. . .for he knows man, and what is in man” (John 2:24-25). And because of this God-only-knows knowledge, he is the only one who knows what to do about man’s basic problem, which is sin. And this is demonstrated in the Samaritan woman’s part-truth: “I have no husband.”

Jesus commended the woman for the part of the truth that she did tell. He said, “True enough, you have no husband” (v. 18). He then revealed to her his God-only-knows knowledge about her sinful life. He said:

You have had five husbands; and the one with whom you are now living is not your husband; yes, you have told the truth (v. 18).

Immorality, then, was another reason why the living waters could not flow in the life of this Samaritan woman. And today's world cannot have Jesus, the built-in well of everlasting water, until it repents and works with him in solving the problems, not only of sexual immorality, but of the "immoral moralities" that confront us today.

Yes, we live in a sex-crazed world of hedonism and pleasure—a world with the philosophy that says, "If it feels good, do it!" Men and women are "shacking," "swinging," and "coming out of the closets" about their sexual preferences. The only fear that they have today is not of God, but of catching AIDS or some other venereal disease. And they think that the solution to this fearful problem is the dispensing of condoms, which many American colleges and universities are doing today. The immorality of drug abuse is also with us today, which breeds violent crime and can also cause AIDS. And the world thinks that the solutions to these problems are the building of more prisons, and the free dispensing of clean needles to the drug addicts. And then there are the "immoral moralities." These are immoralities, as defined by God, that are made moral in the eyes of men because of acceptance by masses of people. Examples of such are sexism, secularism, and racism. And society feels that the solutions to these problems are legislations and supreme court decisions.

But Jesus knows that all of man's solutions are not and cannot be the basic answer to man's problems. Jesus knows and cares. Jesus does not only know the answer; he is the answer. Man must be in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17) and have Jesus in him (Colossians 1:27) in order to solve his problems and have peace in his soul. In Christ even the

cultural differences melt. Paul says,

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

But for man to be in Christ, he cannot do like the Samaritan woman did when Jesus sought to deal with her life. On Jesus' mentioning her immoral lifestyle, the woman abruptly changed the subject of the conversation. Like many of the world today, she was willing to make religion a matter of discussion, but not a matter of decision. And her attitude typified that of the Samaritans of Jesus' day and that of our world today.

They Misunderstood His Mission and Doctrine

Representing Samaritan thought and, ultimately, the thinking of mankind, this Samaritan woman sought to divert the attention of Jesus from her specific, immoral lifestyle and direct it to the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans: the place of worship. Pointing out that she believed that he was a prophet, which was another level in her progressive respect for him, the woman said,

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you (Jews) say that in Jerusalem is a place where men are to worship (v. 20).

Recognizing that Jesus was now more than just a "Jew," "a man," "a Sir," but a prophet, the woman wanted him to declare who was right about the physical place of worship, the Jews or the Samaritans. This request reflects her misunderstanding of Jesus' mission and teachings. Jesus

had not come to support the old Jewish system of religion, which was centered in physical Jerusalem, and which was too narrow to embrace all nations, languages, and cultures. His teachings were not designed to emphasize where man should worship, but how man should worship. The woman was concerned about the physical, while Jesus was emphasizing the spiritual. And it is largely this dichotomy that exists in the world today. Men are concerned with “the *place*” where men are to worship; while the teachings of Jesus are emphasizing the *spirit* in which men are to worship. Jesus answered the woman:

Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when you shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth: for the father seeketh such to worship him. God is spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (v. 21-24).

In these words, Jesus is telling this woman, and all mankind, that the worship of the New Testament would be unlike that of the old covenant, in that it would be spiritual and not physical in nature. The physical things of the Old Testament, such as the Tabernacle, the temple, the priesthood, the feast, circumcision, animal sacrifice, and mechanical instruments of music, would all be spiritualized. Jesus is pointing out that since “God is Spirit,” then man’s mode of worship must correspond to the essence of God. Thus, New Testament worship is the spirit of man responding to the Spirit of God. Paul says, “The Spirit

itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16).

After her encounter with our Lord, the woman’s spiritual progression brought her to the point of understanding that Jesus was not just “a Jew,” “a man,” “a Sir,” or “just a prophet”; but he was the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world.

Conclusion

Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). He was at first rejected by his own: the Jews (John 1:11). And then he was rejected by others. But Jesus was accustomed to rejection. For the prophet had foretold that he would be “despised and rejected of men” (Isaiah 53:3). But the stone which the builders rejected, Jesus, has now become the head of the corner (1 Peter 2:7). In other words, Jesus is now in command of all mankind. And if the race of mankind is to receive solutions to its ethnic, cultural, social, moral, and religious problems today, it must receive Jesus. For Jesus is all sufficient.

For the artist, He is altogether lovely.

For the architect, He is the chief cornerstone.

For the astronomer, He is the sun of righteousness
and bright and morning star.

For the baker, He is the living bread.

For the banker, He is the unending riches.

For the builder, He is the sure foundation.

For the carpenter, He is the door.

For the doctor, He is the great physician who has
never lost a case.

For the editor, He is the good things of great joy.

For the electrician, He is the light of the world.
For the farmer, he is the sower and lord of harvest.
For the florist, He is the rose of sharon and the
lily of the valley.
For the jeweler, He is the living precious stone.
For the lawyer, He is the counselor, lawgiver, and
advocate.
For the laborer, He is the giver of rest.

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The World's Recipe For Happiness Versus Christ's Recipe For Happiness

Wayne Kilpatrick

Introduction

Everyone wants to be happy. I've never met anyone in my life who said, "I want to be miserable. I hope I have a lousy life!" You can ask parents what they want their children to be when they grow up, and they will say, "I really don't care. I just want them to be happy." You say something to a young person about what he would like to be when he grows up and he will answer, "I really don't know yet, but I just want to be happy." I think that is the quest of all men, don't you? All of us want to be happy. Isn't it sad that while happiness seems to be a universal quest, so few really find it? Why is that? I believe it is because they seek it in all the wrong places.

The World's Recipe For Happiness

The secular view is that money will make you happy. If you just have money, then all your problems will go away. "Get all you can and can all you get," is the philosophy of many. However, money does not satisfy. If a man has five dollars, he wants ten; if he has five thousand, he wants ten thousand; if he has five million, he wants ten million. Many multi-millionaires are working, even in old age, to

amass more millions, not because they need it, but because they are not satisfied with what they have.

A preacher told this story: He and another man had worked side by side in their youth for a dollar per day. Then their paths separated. The other man went on to become a millionaire, while the preacher had spent his life telling others about Jesus. After twenty-five years, they met on a train and talked for hours over old times and the changes that the years had brought. In the course of the conversation, the preacher asked the millionaire, "Are you as happy and contented now as you were when we worked together side by side for a dollar a day?" And the millionaire answered sadly, "No, I must confess that I do not now have the peace and contentment I had in those days. The cares and responsibilities and obligations brought on by my wealth far outweigh any happiness I have gotten out of it." The Bible says that "money faileth." Yes, it fails to bring contentment, it fails to build character, it fails to buy one's way into the gates of glory.

The world also would have us believe that fame and power bring happiness. When Alexander the Great was thirty-two years of age, he sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Fame and power didn't satisfy him. There are those who believe that happiness is to be found in pleasure. Solomon tried everything under the sun. He became the richest, the wisest, the most-married man in the world. Yet all that he had did not satisfy him. He said, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

Others seek happiness through alcohol. Go to the bottle and get so numb that you can't think of all your problems. Just get intoxicated and at least for that small

amount of time, you're happy. You don't have problems. Of course, people don't stop to think about the problems they are causing by this method. Others turn to drugs and immorality. What is the result of all this? Man is still miserable. "All is vanity and vexation of the spirit."

Is there any hope for man? Is he doomed to live a miserable existence upon this earth? Indeed there is hope. And it is found in

Christ's Recipe For Happiness

In Matthew 5:39-45, Jesus tells us how to be happy. I'm going to guarantee you in advance; try it—it will work. This is an absolute, foolproof method for being happy.

Now, let's read our text. In these verses, we see the characteristic ethic of the Christian life. We see how a Christian's conduct is to distinguish him from a non-Christian. Somebody says, "How in the world can I be happy when somebody slaps me on one cheek and I turn the other? How can that make me happy? Or if somebody curses me and I bless him, how can that make me happy?" I tell you what—it will work. In our study, I want to emphasize three main things. I think that you will see that it will work. You go home and try it, and I know it will.

Before I go any farther with our discussions, let me just say a word or two about the **Sermon on the Mount**. The sermon is preached just outside the little village of Capernaum on a little hill that sloped down gently into the Sea of Galilee. The sermon begins with the word "Blessed," and it is repeated eight times. What is Jesus talking about? Happiness. He is talking about abundant living. After all, Jesus said in John 10:10, "I have come that you might

have life and have it more abundantly.” He said one time, “In this life you have 30, 60, and a hundred fold.” It’s not “pie in the sky in the sweet by and by” only. It also works for the nasty now. It works in my home, on my job, in my recreation—everywhere. It works down here where I live right now. Jesus wants me to be happy. He wants my life to be filled with joy, happiness, and blessedness.

I deeply resent the fact that many of us go around advertising Christianity as being glum and without joy. I don’t buy that. And I want you to quit selling it. If you’re happy, then act like it. Notify your face every once in a while. We have something special, people. We have the promise of the best of two worlds. We have the best there is right down here; and when this life is over, we go to be with our Father forever. It’s the best of two worlds! Now let’s act as if it were!

In this sermon, preached on the mountainside, Jesus gives the structure for a happy Christian life. I want you to notice three statements of the great Master Teacher, and you’ll learn the art of happiness.

Turn The Other Cheek

In verse 30, Jesus said, “I say unto you that you resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” What does it mean? Well, I tell you this, Jesus didn’t mean for this to be taken literally. There’s far more here than meets the eye. The verse is not teaching pacifism. It is not saying that you cannot go to war, you cannot practice self-defense, you cannot take care of your home, or your nation, or your own life. It’s not saying that at all. If you want to prove that, you are going to have to go someplace other than Matthew 5:39.

What the verse is literally saying is, "Don't try to get even; don't seek revenge." Jesus, in this passage, is pointing out the danger of building up resentment within our minds and seeking some way to hurt someone else just a little bit more than he has hurt us. That's what he is talking about. Don't build up resentment. Don't try to get even. Don't seek revenge.

Every once in a while some of us preachers will get cornered about something we've preached. They'll say, "Hey, I see a little inconsistency here in what you preach and in the way you're acting." We'll say, "That was preaching, and this is living," as if they don't harmonize.

"Jesus, you've done some good preaching. How do you do when it comes to living?" He practiced it perfectly, didn't he? Turn the other cheek. Don't try to get even. Don't seek revenge. Did they insult him when he was here? Of course they did. They said, "He eats with publicans and sinners," implying that he was like the people with whom he associated. "He is like the people he is running around with. He eats with publicans and harlots or sinners. He is like the company he keeps." They would say, "He is a wine bibber and a gluttonous man." He knew about all of that. What did he say in return? He opened not his mouth.

During the trial they blindfolded him, slapped him, and spat in his face; and all kinds of indignities were heaped upon him. The Bible says in Isaiah 53:7, "He opened not His mouth." He didn't seek revenge. He didn't try to get even. He didn't say, "One of these days I'll send all these legions of angels and they will annihilate you." He didn't say, "You just wait. I'm going to burn every last one of you in hell." He didn't say, "You just wait. I'll have your

heads cut off. I'll have you burned at the stake. I'll have you crucified." What He said was, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." That's what he taught, and that's how he lived. He taught it, and he lived it to perfection.

Let me see if I can illustrate what I'm talking about. Messineur was a very famous artist in France, years ago. He was a painter of landscapes and portraits. Late one night he called the most famous, most brilliant doctor-surgeon in all of Paris to hurry to his house. He had an emergency. He said to that great doctor, "I have an emergency and I need you, and I don't want anybody else to come. You're the only one that I will trust with this. Please come." It was already past the doctor's bedtime. He had to get up and get dressed, but he rushed over.

Messineur met him at the front door of his mansion. The doctor said, "Well, I'm glad to see that the emergency is not with you, for you are very important to France." He said, "Please, Doctor, come quickly." He led him through several rooms of the mansion until finally they came out to a little sunporch. There, lying in the midst of some cushions, was a little French Poodle with a broken leg. The doctor stood in wide-eyed amazement. His mouth dropped open. He could not believe that he had been called out at night. He didn't make house calls for anybody. But to come out to treat a dog! Well, he swallowed his pride, at least for the moment, and went ahead and set that little dog's legs as tenderly as if he were setting the leg of a king. He put the splint on, wrapped it up, turned to walk out the door of the mansion, when Messineur said, "Doctor, I'm grateful to you. Send me a bill. Send me a big bill. I don't care how big it is—just

send it to me. I'm so grateful to you."

The Doctor said, "I'll not send you a bill at all. I tell you what. Be at my office next week, and I'll explain to you how you can repay me." The next week, Messineur came to the doctor's office. The doctor said, "You are a painter, aren't you?" Messineur said, "Yes, I paint landscapes and portraits." He said, "But you are a painter. Come with me." He took him through several rooms and finally came to a little tiny room. In that room was just one piece of furniture. It was an old cabinet with a lot of newspapers piled on it. There was a can of white paint and a little cheap brush. The doctor said, "You're a painter; paint that cabinet and we'll be even."

Messineur said, without any resentment in his voice whatsoever, "Doctor, are you going to be using that room for the next three or four days?" He said, "No, I'm not. Take your time and paint it when you can." Messineur said, "Do you mind if I take a key and lock up the room?" The doctor said, "No, that would be fine."

Three or four days later, Messineur came back to the doctor's office. He said, "Doctor, I finished painting the cabinet. I hope you'll have time to come and look at it, and I really hope you'll like it." The doctor stopped and went into the room to see the painted cabinet. It has been said that Messineur painted his landscape masterpiece on the front of that cabinet. The doctor stood there teary-eyed, and with quivering lips, he extended his hand to Messineur. He said, "You're a better man than I am. I'm going to take this cabinet home and put it in my living room; only I'm not going to tell the world how ugly I was to you."

Messineur turned the other cheek, didn't he? No resent-

ment. “Paint the cabinet.” He could have painted it in a few hours, walked out, and the debt would have been paid. If he had done that, he and that doctor would have squared off at each other and would have been enemies for the rest of their lives. But, as it was, they became friends. Here was a man who refused to bear resentment, who didn’t try to get even. He didn’t paint the cabinet and let paint fall all over the floor, or splatter the walls. He didn’t say, with every stroke of the brush, “I resent this. Me, a great landscape painter, a portrait painter, and he’s got me painting a cabinet!” He painted his masterpiece on the front of the cabinet. I think that’s what Jesus meant when he said, “Turn the other cheek.”

Pray For Your Enemies

How can you be happy on this earth? Well, Jesus says, turn the other cheek. And in verse 44, “Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them which hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” Here is another key to happiness—pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Easy? Not on your lives! He didn’t say it would be easy. He did say it’s the way to happiness. If you want to find happiness, you’re going to have to pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you. No one will dispute the fact that a lot of happiness is wrapped up in this command, even though it’s not easy to do. It is true that when you pray for others, you not only help them, but you receive a blessing for yourself. Prayer helps others, and it will help you.

There was a preacher conducting a meeting in Texas several years ago. He came across this passage in Matthew

5:44. He said, "You know, friends, the best way in the world to get rid of an enemy is to pray for him. It will help him, and it will help you."

That night, when he had gone back to his motel and had gone to sleep, his phone rang. He picked up the phone and there was a tearful woman on the other end. She said, "Preacher, Preacher, I just can't do it, I just can't do it." He said, "Lady, do what? What are you talking about?" She said, "I cannot pray for those who have hurt me. I just can't do it, and I'm miserable." And with that she hung up the phone.

"I just can't do it, and I'm miserable." He never did know who the woman was. He never did know what her problems were. He never did know what it was she could not forgive. But the preacher knew this—if you can't pray for people who spitefully use you, you are going to be miserable. You are absolutely going to be miserable.

I heard a story about an old boy who was so glum, so unhappy and sad. He would come every Sunday and sit in the auditorium with a scowl on his face, until the preacher learned not to look in his direction. After services, he tried to avoid shaking his hand. He learned quickly not to ask him, "How are you doing?", because he would tell him!

One day the man came out with this scowl on his face. He said, "Preacher, I'll be in your office at 10:00 in the morning. I want to talk to you." "Well, all right, you come." Next day, at 10:00, this unhappy and miserable man showed up in the office. He said, "Preacher, I look around on Sunday and I see people smiling. They look happy, and I want to know why everyone in the whole church is happy and I am so miserable."

The preacher said, "Why don't you tell me a little bit

about yourself? Tell me about your job, your home, and all of that.” The man said, “The problem is my job. I own a little business, and I am in competition with four fellows in this town. They’re a bunch of cutthroats, liars, and cheats, and they’re constantly trying to undermine me and run me out of business. It’s a fight every day I live just to stay alive. That’s my problem. It’s these dishonest, lowdown businessmen competing with me!”

The preacher said, “Well, I know how to make you happy.” He said, “Tell me how to be happy.” The preacher said, “No, I’m not going to tell you.” He said, “You know how to make me happy, and you are not going to tell me!” The preacher said, “I’m not going to tell you, because if I did, you wouldn’t do it anyway!” The man said, “I’ll have you know, I’ll do anything that’s necessary. Just tell me, and I’ll do it.” The preacher said, “All right, I’ll tell you. I want you to pray for your competitors. Pray for God to bless them more than he blesses you.” He said, “Preacher, you tricked me. You know I don’t want to do that.” He said, “I knew you wouldn’t, and that’s why I didn’t want to tell you.” He said, “I promised you, didn’t I?” “You promised me,” the preacher said. He said, “I promised you. I guess I’ll do it, but I won’t like it—not one minute. I’ll tell you that!”

Well, the weeks passed, and at first there was no change in the old boy—still the scowl, still unhappy, still miserable. Two or three weeks later, the preacher began to notice that the man was looking a little more relaxed. It wasn’t too long before he actually noticed a smile on his face and a nod while he was preaching. It even got to be, when he came out to shake hands with the preacher, he would give him a good, firm handshake with no com-

plaining. Finally, after this had gone on for a while, the preacher said, "I want an appointment with you at 10:00 in the morning in my office. You be there." The businessman said, "I'll come."

The next morning he showed up. The preacher said, "Sit down. I want you to tell me what has happened in your life. I notice that you are happy. I notice you seem to have no resentment, so I want you to tell me what happened." He said, "I'll tell you what happened. I started doing just exactly what you asked me. When I first started doing it, I would say, 'Lord, I want you to bless my competitors more than you bless me.' I would name them one by one. Then I would say, 'Lord, you know I don't mean a word of that.' And you know what? After doing that two or three weeks, I finally really did mean it. About a month after I started praying, I had lunch with three of those fellows at one time. They are really nice guys. They're struggling just as I am. They're trying to make ends meet and make a little money to provide for their families, just as I am. You know, I kind of liked them. Next week, I have an appointment to meet with the other fellow. I'm sure I'm going to like him, too."

Pray for them who spitefully use you and persecute you. It will work. It will absolutely change lives. It will change you.

In his book, **Shields of Brass**, Roy Angel tells the story about a machinist who was notoriously foul-mouthed. He cursed on the job all the time. One day he was working on this great big locomotive and things weren't going just right. He looked down and there was a great Christian man named Matt Duvall. Matt was standing with his hat held over his heart. He looked up at the fellow and said,

“Boss, I wish you wouldn’t use my Lord’s name in vain like that. It hurts me deep inside.” Well, the machinist said, “Go on Matt! Shut up and leave me alone. Tend to your own business.” As Matt turned to walk away he said, “I’m going to pray for you.” The machinist uttered something under his breath, but later on in the day, when he would curse, he would look around to find out where Matt was.

It was that same day that he was working with a big drill. It jumped out of its hole, caught in his bib overalls, and began to wrap around and around until it tore into his flesh. He was taken to the hospital. That night one of his co-workers came and visited with him and asked if he needed anything he could get for him. He said, “I guess I don’t really need anything. But I wish you would do this. Ask Matt to pray for me.” Prayer changes people. It changes us. Pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you.

Children Of Your Father

Then, finally, let’s read verse 45. What does that mean? Does that mean if I turn the other cheek, I will become a child of God? No, that’s not what it means at all. That’s not the way to become a Christian. I’ll tell you what it does mean. It means the world will know I am the son of my Father—“That you may be the children of your father.” If I do these things the world will just know. I won’t have to tell them. I won’t have to say, “Hey, look at me, I’m the child of my Father.” They’ll know. By my turning the other cheek and praying for those who spitefully use me, they will know I’m the son of my Father. Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe with all of my

heart that Matthew, Chapter 5, has in it the recipe for happiness. I believe it's there.

I want to close with a little story that I think illustrates what I'm talking about—being the children of the Father. It was Christmas time. A little urchin boy, filthy, dressed in rags, stood outside a storefront window, hungrily looking inside at the toys. There was a fine man who had stopped by that store to buy a few presents for his children. As he was looking in the storefront window, he couldn't help but notice the little boy standing outside, cold and dirty. His heart went out to the little boy. He went out to where he was and said, "Son, what's Santa Claus going to bring you?" The little boy said, "Mister, there ain't gonna be no Santa Claus at my house this year. My Daddy's sick. He has been sick for several months. My mother works, but she barely makes enough money to pay the rent and buy our food. There ain't going to be no Santa Claus at our house. I come down here to the store to look at the toys, and that helps. If my Daddy could just get well that would be plenty of Christmas for me."

The man said, "Son, every boy ought to have a Christmas. Come in here and pick you out some things, and I'll buy them for you. I'll be your Santa Claus." He said, "Mister, are you kidding? Are you kidding?" He said, "No. Come on in. Pick some things out, and I'll pay for them and you can take them home. They will be your Christmas." The little boy picked out several items and the man paid for them. The little fellow had his package and was ready to go. As he walked to the front door, he suddenly dropped his package, came running back over to the man, threw his arms around him and said, "Mister, are you God?" The man said, "No, I'm not God. I'm just

one of His children.”

Has someone looked at you and said, “You remind me of Jesus”? “That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” I want the world to see the church and say, “There are the children of God.” That will help us to be happy and our Father will be happy with us.

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Networks. Millions of Americans count on the familiar words, "Hi, I'm Landon Saunders and this is HEARTBEAT" to give a new perspective on the age-old concerns of self-esteem, loneliness and depression, problems at home and at the office, and in relationships with their spouse or child or friend. A native of West Virginia, Saunders has traveled to more than 60 nations lecturing and studying human behavior and personal relationships. His work is used worldwide by schools, churches, businesses and professional groups, and civic organizations.

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I Saw The Towers Of Darkness Fall I Saw The Morning Break

Landon B. Saunders

The subject, “Christ and Culture,” focuses on the real genius of the Gospel. God sent his Son in a particular time and a particular place. He did not simply send the world the New Testament as a guide. In one sense the Bible wasn’t really written for the world, but for the people of God. What God did for the world was to make the Word become flesh, to dwell among us.

And we, the disciples of Christ, have been the messengers of God in every generation, every period of history, and every nation from the time of Christ until today.

As we take up our task, to bring the message of hope to the people of our time, we do what every generation of Christians has had to do since the church began.

God So Loved The World. . . .

The first thing we must realize is this: caring about the world is more important than understanding the culture. That is true because the way we view the world, and not the way the culture happens to be, will determine whether we choose to make an attempt to help, or withdraw in smug isolation, or retreat in suspicious fear.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only

Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:16-17

Do we so love the world as “God so loved the world”?
Can we understand why Jesus wept over Jerusalem?
(Luke 19:41)

Do we think to pray for our cities, our rulers, our nation, our people, our planet?

Jonah and Ninevah

When we approach the world with revulsion, arrogance, helpless acquiescence, fear, hostility, or unsympathetic judgment, does it not also say what we believe about God? In other words, do we believe it is possible that God really hates the world? Does he regard the world as hopeless? As irredeemable? As unworthy of his effort of creation? As unlovable?

Jonah certainly thought so. I want to recommend that you take just a moment to read the little Old Testament book of Jonah. It has four brief chapters which can be read in less than ten minutes. And, while the fish tale is fascinating to children, Jonah is an adult story.

Jonah lived in the time of the great Assyrian Empire. Its capital, Ninevah, was as corrupt as it was powerful. It was, moreover, the leading city of Jonah’s enemies.

Now God told Jonah to go to Ninevah and warn them: “. . .and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.” (Jonah 1:2)

As you recall, Jonah chose to run from his mission—to

flee to Tarshish, the opposite direction from Ninevah. Jonah's decision to deny his mission jeopardized his very life. Then he repented, went to Ninevah and proclaimed God's Warning: "Yet forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown." (Jonah 3:4)

The Bible says the people of Ninevah believed Jonah. They repented, and their repentance was thorough and severe. Everyone turned from "his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands." (Jonah 3:8) And when God saw that they repented of their evil, he had mercy on them and did not destroy them.

Now we come to the point of the story. When God showed mercy to Ninevah, "it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry." (Jonah 4:1) Jonah prayed to God and said,

That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish, for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die than to live.

Jonah 4:2-3

Here is a clear warning for anyone who claims to be, and wants to be, one of God's people. How we regard our own world may reveal whether we are followers of Jesus or followers of Jonah. Do we believe "God so loves the world?" Do we behave as though he does? Or do we prefer to believe he could not possibly put up with such an evil and corrupt generation? And might we not feel uneasy when confronting our culture because we secretly suspect that while God is seeking opportunities for mercy, we, in

contrast, most want to see society get what it deserves?

Jonah thought he was against Ninevah when in fact he was against God. Ninevah belonged to God. It was part of his creation, no matter how corrupt it had become. And God so loved Ninevah that he sent Jonah, not to destroy it, but to save it. Jonah's attempt to run away from Ninevah was an attempt to run away from God. He thought he could prevent God's will. Instead, he nearly lost his own opportunity to live. Jonah, too, got a second chance, not because he deserved it, but because God so loved Jonah.

Be Perfect Therefore. . . .

There is one final observation we need to make before turning to address the issue of culture. And this is it: There is no question that God's will will be done, even in our time. The only question is whether we will get to be part of what God is doing in the world. The issue is not one of clearly understanding our culture, though that is important. The problem facing the church today is not the pervasive secularism in society today, though that, too, must be considered.

What is our challenge, then? It is faith. Faith!

When we look at our world, do we see what God is doing with it? Do we know, confidently, that God has not abandoned us, and has not withdrawn from our nation? We must realize that he still loves the world, that he is still here, that he is still working, and that he has work for us to do.

This is an exciting time to be alive. The most exciting thing about it is that we have work to do. We have a place; we have a purpose. We belong to God. But we also belong

to the world. We are here for God, and we are here for the world. We need to understand that this is not a contradiction. It is perfectly consistent.

Jesus reminded the people of his day, saying,

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust. . . .

You, therefore, must be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:44-45, 48

God is still providing for the welfare of the world—the good and the evil.

We are called to be part of what God is doing in the world.

Do we regard the world as an enemy? Even so, to be his children our work is the same.

As we turn to consider some ways to approach our culture let us remember that faith is the key—faith in the nature and will of God. And we must remember that he will do his will. Our choice is to accept his purpose for us and get to be part of what he is doing.

Lift Up Your Eyes

Once we have understood that our identity and role as Christians allows—demands—us to love the world as God loves the world, then, and only then, it becomes important to understand the world we are called to love. And the world we are to love is our world; that is, not some other

place or time or culture, but our own.

Let us recall briefly that the New Testament itself emerges from the larger cultural context of the Roman Empire of two thousand years ago. And it specifically grows out of the cultural milieu of one of its provinces, first-century Palestine.

The New Testament writers document, sometimes incidentally, sometimes purposefully, the various political systems, ideologists, theological differences, family and social traditions, manners, customs, superstitions, rules of etiquette, economic classes, trades and professions of the time of Jesus of Nazareth and the early church.

We are given an impressive amount of information about governors, centurions, tax collectors, freemen, freedmen, slaves, merchants, lawyers, philosophers, fishermen, carpenters, tentmakers, farmers, shepherds, and even prostitutes.

We learn about religious factions. We know about Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians, Zealots, and ascetics.

We know about languages, dialects, and accents—about Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic. Peter spoke like a Galilean.

We know about holidays, festivals, pilgrimages, weddings, and banquets.

We know about paganism, idolatry, temple cultism, polytheism, demon possession, and witchcraft.

We know about prejudices, racism, Jew and Greek, Cretans, Samaritans, and the place of women.

And against this Greco-Roman and Jewish cultural backdrop we see the life of Jesus the Christ. We observe him attending the synagogues, the weddings, the parties, the markets, and the workplaces of his people.

When he confronts the religious leaders, he bases his message on terms familiar to them—the Scriptures. He answers their challenges about the proper interpretation of the Scriptures, and he confuses them with questions of his own.

But when Jesus talks to the poor, to the “man-on-the-street,” the fisherman and the farmer, he understands that they are not Biblical scholars. He tells them stories. “A sower went out to sow. . . .” He compares the kingdom of God to events in nature. He talks about sheep, sparrows, flowers, the sun, and the rain.

Jesus loved the people of his time; that is clear. But he also understood them.

And so, during the training of his disciples, he took them through Samaria. This remarkable incident, recorded in John 4, could not be understood without some appreciation of local custom and Palestinian culture. That is so true that John has to explain some things to his readers; for example, “For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” (John 4:27)

Since Jews had no dealings with Samaritans, and since it would be doubly odd for a Jewish man to hold a conversation in public with a strange Samaritan woman, his disciples felt too uncomfortable to ask Jesus why he had done just that. (John 4:27)

Instead, since they had brought back some food, they merely offered him lunch. Incidentally, the discussion with the woman dealt with traditional and opposing beliefs between Samaritans and Jews, but we shall have to by-pass this important passage to get to our point about Jesus’ disciples.

Jesus told them, in essence, my (and, therefore, your)

sustaining, nourishing, life-giving purpose is to accomplish God's will, which in this case is to help this poor woman and bring Good News to her city. You who are unaware of this culture are culture-bound yourselves, thinking she and it are unworthy of our mission. In fact, they are more immediately receptive than our own people.

What he literally says to them is, "Lift up your eyes and see how the fields are already white for harvest." (John 4:35)

What Jesus did not tell them is that all fields at all times are now and forever white unto harvest—a mistaken presumption which has been made all too often. The lesson is not about the perpetual readiness of every culture. This city is ready because "others have labored" already. He quotes an old, doubtless familiar, farmers' saying: "One sows and another reaps." (John 4:37)

Jesus' lesson to his disciples, then and now, is: LIFT UP YOUR EYES. Our heads may be down, looking at our own feet. How can we see the field? How will we know if the task before us is to sow or to reap? If our head is down, we may trod into a barren field with a sickle or into a ripened field with a plow!

Look up! Be aware! Love your people! Know your culture! It's part of the task of being a Christian.

All Things To All Men

The Apostle Paul was the "Cross-cultural Apostle." Born and raised in Asia Minor, educated in Jerusalem, he was well-suited to his destiny. But it took some doing to get there. In the early part of his adult career, he was completely controlled by his Jewish culture. He was one of its finest products.

Here is how he described himself:

If any other man has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless.

Philippians 3:4-6

Here was young Saul of Tarsus, a man of ambition, who did not ask questions, who seems not to be troubled by the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth.

What he was troubled by were possible threats to his traditional ways of thinking. Therefore he was determined to ruthlessly suppress the gentle and loving disciples of Jesus, imprisoning and persecuting both men and women—and, at the same time, building his prestige among his leaders and peers.

But God so loved Saul of Tarsus that he was given a vision of the Christ, one that shook him from being a mere product of his culture and enlarged his view of the entire world as people for whom Christ died.

This man, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was no longer used by his culture, but used it to reach everyone he could. He realized that in Christ “the old wall” of division was broken down.

Of his new life in Christ he wrote,

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law—though not being myself under the law—that

I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

1 Corinthians 9:19-22

In the book of Acts and in Paul's letter are many examples of Paul's way of dealing with all kinds of people. Two things stand out clearly:

1. In Christ, Paul had transcended his own cultural limitations.
2. In Christ, Paul carefully and sympathetically used the culture of his day to relate the message of Christ in such a way that they could understand and accept his message. As he points out in his letters, he did this by the deliberate language he used and by the deliberate way he lived among them.

Christ And Our Culture

What does all of this mean for us? The question of Christ and culture, put simply, is how does one Christian relate to the world today?

For many years I have tried to walk in the midst of the world, to speak to those of the world directly, to feel the pain and darkness and lostness of the world, to understand the longings of the hearts of those who find it hard to identify with any group of believers.

From that vantage point I am still learning to look with new eyes at the task of loving the world—what that

means, the kind of heart it requires, the kind of lifestyle demanded for effectiveness.

From that vantage point I have also looked with new eyes at the religious world—its hopes and dreams, its agendas, its behavior and language, its attitudes and dispositions.

And from that vantage point I have looked anew at Scripture. In some ways I can only describe my experience as “scales falling from eyes.”

Now let me offer, from what I have learned, a few very basic conclusions about what it means to be a Christian in our particular culture.

1. Much has been said and written about the growing “secularism” of our society. What does that mean? To be “secular” as opposed to being “religious” basically refers to living without divine guidelines or influence. It means living as though God were not present, or if present, as though God didn’t make a difference in human affairs.

Secularism isn’t simply “unbelief.” One can be a Christian, yet live a very secular life. That is why we said earlier that the issue isn’t really—or merely—secularism. The issue of our time, for Christians especially, is one of faith; that is, believing God is present, caring, and powerful; and also one of faithfulness; that is, living each day of our lives aware of and responsive to God’s presence. Living prayerfully. Living joyfully, because we experience in our own daily lives the kingdom of God in our midst.

2. We must see through superficial trends in our culture and penetrate to the really important and more abiding changes. The truth is, as I’ve experienced it over recent years, people are not turning from God. They aren’t going to church as much as they were a generation ago. But peo-

ple today want to believe in God, a God who cares. They want to live purposeful, meaningful lives.

One of the reasons secularism has begun to dominate our culture is the condition of the religious world itself. Its stridency, its self-righteousness, its uncaring demands have not appealed to many in our time.

3. We need to go beyond the apparently widening gap between the religious and secular worlds in our time. When we do, when we reach out to people around us who are not Christians, when we also examine our own lives, we will not fear secularism. It isn't something new at all. The Christians of the first century faced the same issues, the same temptations. Human nature hasn't changed. Secularism is just a new name for self-reliance versus reliance upon God. It is the age-old war between the flesh and the spirit. It is what Paul describes as the human condition in Romans 7.

Its solution, therefore, is the same. What people need to see in the lives of Christians everywhere—what we have not demonstrated very convincingly in our time—is that God does make a difference in a person's life.

In Christ, all our priorities are forever changed. We find joy in our children. We find energy and enthusiasm for our jobs and professions. We look beyond massive failure and disappointments and are guided by a hope that is real. We can afford to admit mistakes and know how to forgive others.

4. Just as Jesus was God's Word become flesh, and just as Paul became all things to all men that by all means he might win some, Christians today must be living translators of God's message. Our very lives, the circumstances of our being an inevitable part of our own culture,

is our greatest tool for reaching our own people.

As we seek to live more faithfully, let us also turn our energies outward and find ways to become Jews to the Jews, lawless to the lawless, weak to the weak. Is our world secular? Let us then become secular to the secular, though living by faith in God's loving presence.

It means understanding and speaking the language of our time, rather than cloaking the Good News in the traditional religious language handed down to us from seventeenth-century England. It means going into the market-place, into businesses and communities, using the media, doing whatever it takes, rather than remaining cloistered within the confines of our own buildings and activities.

I know from my own experience that it isn't easy. But it is necessary, it is right, and it is worth it!

Christ and culture comes down to this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." It is still the most powerful force in human life. It can transform the world. Be more loving. We haven't tried it yet in this generation so far as I can see. I haven't yet met anyone who was too compassionate. I haven't yet found a church that loved its community too much—that loved one another too much. And do you know any who are loving their enemies too much?

God so loved the world. . . . We need to love with the heart of God. When we do, to whatever extent we try, we can bring salvation to our people.

The world is a dark place filled with fear, loneliness, outrage, grief, injustice, death.

"You are the light of the world," Jesus tells us.

I believe we are. I believe wherever two or three are gathered together, he is there. I believe the power of a

faithful few once changed the whole world. I believe it will happen again.

I saw the towers of darkness fall. . .

I saw the morning break.

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CLASS**

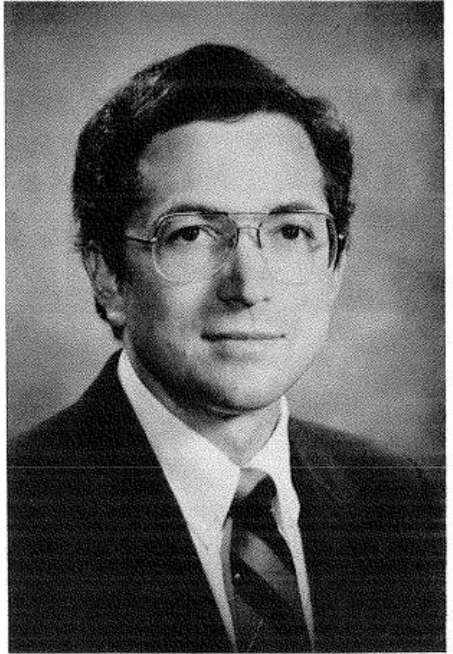
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Success: The Fatal Attraction

Michael Cope

Part 1: The Hook

Like a seductress, she can woo. As a magnetic field with a compass, she can pull irresistibly. Like the Sirens of ancient mythology, she can sing a sweet tune that compels you to sail to her isle. “She” is success: that golden goddess with the attractiveness of Aphrodite and the thunder of Poseidon.

We fell in love with her in school when we heard the high school cheer: “S-U-C-C-E-S-S. That’s the way you spell success.” Real food for thought! We paid homage to her around graduation when we selected the boy and girl “Most Likely to Succeed.”

We return to those schools periodically for the most sacred of worship assemblies to her—called reunions—times of judgment to reckon what we’ve done in this body, whether good or bad. Who pounced up in the BMW? Who limped up in a battered Plymouth? Who married well? Who finished his Ph.D.? Who landed the most prestigious job?

Success is our national religion. We eat it, breathe it, caress it, baby it, worship it, and even worse, judge ourselves by it. If we think we’ve lived up to society’s standards for success, we feel great about ourselves. If, on the other hand, we fall short, we feel like worthless schmucks—Willy Loman redivivus.

Whose self-esteem can stand the feeling of failure? We all want—need—desperately to succeed. For this mistress/goddess we will ignore our family. We'll compromise. We'll stay externally busy, ignoring our disordered private worlds.

The hook is set by our culture's definition of what real success is.

Success Is Money

The first, most obvious, criterion for success in our society is money, or at least the appearance of money. We're very aware of exclusive neighborhoods, right cars, exotic vacations, designer clothing, expensive watches, etc., because these are evidence of doing well.

I recently spent some time with a man who meets all the monetary requirements for success. Things are going his way financially—an imperative in the roaring '80s. He understands the *quality* that is available to those who can afford it, true conspicuous consumption, that leaves no doubts of whether someone has succeeded or not.

The man's portfolio, while not too diversified, is heavy with commodities. He understands investment and security, an imperative since the crash of October, '87. Though he's not a broker, he could stay with the best in the market. Shearson-Lehman-Hutton would be glad to have him.

And to make him the perfect representative of the Yuppie decade, he's a bit greedy. No quality is more denounced or more secretly admired in America than covetousness.

I appreciate the honesty of the 1987 hit movie "Wall Street." Michael Douglas plays Gordon Gekko, a power-

ful, money-thirsty corporate raider. In one scene he pleases with the stockholders of Teldar Paper Corporation to accept his takeover bid:

Greed is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed—in all of its forms—greed of life, for money, for love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind, and greed, you mark my words, will not only save Teldar Paper but that other malfunctioning corporation called the USA.

The man I've been with would love Donald Trump, a real hero for 1989. About a year ago Trump bought a private yacht for \$29 million. Of course it took \$8 million to fix it up a bit.

The yacht has eleven double guest suites, each complete with stereo, CD, VCR, and color TV. It has a cinema with seating for eighteen, a small waterfall, a huge barbecue deck, a disco with flashing lights, 210 phone lines, three elevators, a solid gold sink, and an infirmary with better equipment than many hospitals.

When asked why he bought the yacht since he doesn't care much for boats and won't have the time for it, Trump replied: "quality means everything." He wanted not a boat but the best boat in the universe.

The spirit of materialism showed up in a massive survey of Baby Boomers last year in *Rolling Stone Magazine*. In two articles called "Portrait of a Generation," those around 20-40 were asked to compare their generation to that of their parents. When asked which emphasized being involved in church more, 8% said their own, while 75%

said their parents' generation. But when asked about being success-oriented and getting ahead in business, 66% thought it applied more to their generation, while only 16% said it described their parents'.

If the tide of materialism is turning, it didn't show up in a survey given by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute to 1988 incoming college freshmen. The study revealed that the "greed factor" with these 300,000 students was higher than ever in the twenty-two years of testing.

The nice thing for us about this spirit is that it goes nicely with Christianity—at least a certain version of Christianity. Of course you have to overlook a few verses, like. . .

"Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33)

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. . . . But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort." (Luke 6:20, 24)

"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:25)

"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (Luke 9:58)

"You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Luke 16:22)

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abun-

dance of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15)

But who wants to be picky when you're trying to prove something? By baptizing the secular language of Wall Street, we have the health and wealth gospel. Larry Wright described his conservative Christian upbringing in Dallas pointedly:

Christianity had been the prop that sustained my materialism—in Dallas this was no contradiction. On Sunday mornings the church parking lots were filled with expensive new cars, the pastors were busy making real-estate deals and defending the oil-depletion allowance, especially wealthy churchgoers were said to be “blessed.”

The man I've been with recently is an appropriate representative for the past decade. If he were in ministry, we'd probably call him a success.

Actually I've only been with him in my office with my Bible opened to Luke 12. This man we'd be tempted to call a success was called by Jesus a fool. He had made the mistake of putting his crops in his heart, thinking life was found in the abundance of things.

Success Is Power/Popularity

Power and popularity, Siamese twins connected at the swelled head, are further essentials for success in America.

The idolatry of today is the idolatry of power. Books by the score appeal to our Machiavellian passions. Today, by and large, political leaders give more energy to jockeying for position than to serving the public good; business executives care more

for keeping on top of the heap than for producing a useful product; university professors seek sophistication more than truth; and religious leaders care more for their image than for the gospel. And in the midst of this power-crazed society many Christians wonder how to live with integrity.²

We know all too well the symbols: office size, salary, amount of secretarial help, kind of office equipment, staff size, budget, and speaking appearances. We've learned to notice what names are "hot"—on lectureships, retreats, encampments, workshops, youth rallies—and what names are not. Our culture has told us this is important.

Kent and Barbara Hughes struggled with feelings of failure at a small, non-growing church. Barbara went to a meeting with two chic friends whose husbands had just left the ministry. When she asked how their husbands were doing, one replied:

"He's never been happier. He's selling life insurance now. It takes a special kind of man to be in the ministry. You just can't measure your success, and every man must be able to do that in order to have a good self-image."³

Her friend was wrong. We do have (unwritten) standards to measure success in ministry. Unfortunately, the standards are unbiblical and ungodly.

Too often success smacks of a resume mentality: who we know, where we've spoken, how often we've been published, what degrees we've been granted, who recognizes us, now busy we are. If I'm so busy that people in my church don't have access to me, so busy that I live on

planes, so busy that I miss my son's little league games—then I'm successful.

Every preacher should watch the movie "Mass Appeal." Jack Lemmon plays a priest who is very popular. He maintains his popularity by playing to the crowd (congregation). He has lost the hard edge of integrity and runs from any prophetic word that would offend his fans. He relishes too much the praise, the limelight, the awe.

Our television age begs us to entertain it, as Neil Postman pointed out in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. TV has taught us to value flash over substance with information—even news!—coming as Twinkies rather than as broccoli.

The temptation, enhanced by our desire to be successful, is to begin cheating on our textual work to get to the "good stuff": the stories, the jokes, the applications, and the lively illustrations. We end up being relevant with messages that just don't matter. Our pulpits too often dish out banana splits with an occasional aspirin stuck in for good measure. Such sermons seem filling but eventually produce anorexic churches.

Success Is Results

To be successful today one must also produce results. Tangible results. The CEO must show graphs with lines going in the right direction. Students must provide grades that are competitive. And preachers must manufacture growth.

The successful minister, we know, is the one whose church has grown in giving, programs, staff, and (especially) size. These, unlike servanthood, discipleship, and compassion, can be put on an end-of-the-year chart.

So we do the things that produce growth. We market the church with polished campaigns. We figure out how to compete with sister congregations to get our share of newcomers. And we preach expository sermons because experts say you have to do that to grow (rather than because it is the healthiest kind of preaching).

This overwhelming interest in quantitative figures forces us to become quite pragmatic. Integrity tends to slip. Figures are juggled to prove what we must. And we use language like, "They must be doing something right," when they might actually be doing something hellish.

Has The Church Been Hooked?

These are the world's standards for success: money, power, and results. I'd like to say that we have withstood the values of this world. But have we?

How many men in small, out-of-the-way, nondescript churches feel like failures because they haven't been asked to keynote a lectureship or haven't been called by a large church to interview? How many, to protect their self-esteem, have quietly slipped out of ministry because they didn't produce a "model" growing church? How many hang on, bitter at and envious of those in larger churches, convincing themselves that these other preachers must be compromising, liberal, or unfaithful?

How many in larger, better-known churches feel the pressure to come up with big figures? How many keep a watchful, suspicious eye on younger preachers, worried that the new generation will soon outstrip them in popularity?

How often do elders ask a preacher to leave because they aren't keeping up with "the competition"? One

preacher I know, in his fifties, was asked to leave by his church because they wanted to “press forward.” Never mind that his eight years in town gave him great credibility; forget the fact that the townspeople, especially long-time residents, loved him; ignore his regular rounds at the hospital and his faithfulness to prayer and scripture.

An interesting bulletin came from that church shortly after he was fired. The search committee was announced—a committee that would seek a man twenty to thirty years younger with maybe more audience appeal. It also carried an article by one of the deacons entitled “Taking Lessons from Business.” He asked,

If the church operated like a thriving business, how much better would it be? For comparison, the elders would be equal to the bosses, the deacons would be equal to the managers, and everyone else would be employees. . .

In a good business, if there is a problem with an employee, the manager deals with it. On occasion the boss must be brought in. How many times do we let a church problem go unnoticed or drag on until it is out of control? Our managers and bosses have not done their jobs. Very rarely can employees settle disputes for themselves. . .

Much could be written to compare the church to a good business, but I believe the point is clear. We need to be in touch with our managers and our bosses. If we would operate like a thriving business, it could result in having a thriving church.

With that kind of saturation of the world’s perspective, it’s little wonder the preacher was asked to leave. In the

same bulletin there was a kind letter from the brother who said, "Please pray for us as we decide where our ministry can be the most faithful." The deacon wrote of success as good business principles; the preacher, as faithfulness to God.

The alumni bulletin of one of our Christian colleges recently featured a graduate who "by anyone's standards . . . is a success story." The article refers to his skyrocketing rise in his field and his popularity. He expresses thanks for his liberal arts training—a "well-rounded education." The article includes no mention of faith or spiritual values. It closes: "_____—a success story by anyone's definition."

That's just the problem. We're too comfortable with anyone's definition. The hook has been set.

Part 2: The Escape

Last fall I came upon a striking contrast in Manhattan. On 42nd Street, several bagladies were rummaging through garbage cans for their supper. Just blocks away well-groomed, upwardly-mobile men and women were rummaging through Saks Fifth Avenue for symbols of success. Whom should we pity more?

The popular guidelines for success always focus on the external: where we live, what we wear, how many people hear us, what we've done. How distant those guidelines are from those of a God who looks on the heart rather than on outward appearances (1 Samuel 16:7). How far they are from the perspective of Jesus, who told the Pharisees: "What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight" (Luke 16:15).

Our preference for externals shows when we praise the

bright, athletic, beautiful child and pity the child with disabilities. What an indictment of our values!

Last year my daughter began attending a special school, Sunshine school, for children with learning disabilities. Some just need special help with their disabilities; other are retarded. Many people, while thankful for the school, think the children are pitiful.

But from God's perspective—looking beyond worldly standards—they are quite delightful. These are some of the most loving children in the world. They are not handicapped children" (with the emphasis on handicapped), but children with handicaps (emphasis on children). "Normal" is a word the world might not apply to all the children; but in God's sight they may be more normal than others—if normal has anything to do with having hearts like God intended.

It can't be right that one boy is more valuable than another because of where he bought his jeans. It can't be right for millions of American women to feel like complete zeros because they can't measure up to the statistics of a twenty-year-old strutting on a ramp in Atlantic City. It can't be right to deify a young man because of an athletic ability with which he was born. We cannot, as God's people, buy into the concept of success through external circumstances.⁴

Erma Bombeck once filled her humorous pen with serious ink and wrote the following words:

On the first Saturday of last month a 22-year-old U.S. tennis player hoisted a silver bowl over his head at center court at Wimbledon. On the day before five blind mountain climbers, one man with an artificial leg, an epileptic and two deaf adven-

turers stood atop the snow-capped summit of Mt. Ranier. It was a noisy victory for the tennis player who shared it with 14,000 fans, some of whom had slept on the sidewalks outside the club for six nights waiting for tickets. It was a quiet victory for the climbers who led their own cheering. There was a lot of rhetoric exchanged at Wimbledon regarding bad calls. At Mt. Ranier they learned to live with life's bad calls a long time ago. . . .In our search for heroes and heroines we often lose our perspective. . . .Hero is a term that should be awarded to those who, given a set of circumstances, react with courage, dignity, decency and compassion—people who make us feel better by having seen or touched them. I think the crowds went to the wrong summit and cheered the wrong champion.

If success is not to be measured by the standards of our culture, then by what? Fortunately, scripture offers some clear insights into God's perspective.

1 Peter: Success Is Belonging To God

The Christian communities addressed by Peter in 1 Peter faced the same temptation we face: to allow their society to define their worth. Because of their faith in Christ, the churches were subject to the verbal abuse and slander of their neighbors (2:12, 15; 3:16; 4:4, 14). People considered them odd because of the change in their lives (4:4).

Because of this persecution, the Christians were beginning to go in two directions. Some were retaliating; others

were sacrificing their holy lives so they could fit in better.

1 Peter 2:4-10 is one of the best self-esteem texts in scripture, based not on pop psychology but the redemptive work of God in Christ. Jesus was the living stone, they are told, “rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him.” The world had no place for him; he didn’t meet its standards. And yet he was God’s Chosen One.

Now they are his living stones (2:5) who should not consider it strange that they are rejected just as he was. If their self-worth was built upon how others viewed them, they were in trouble.

But from the divine vantage point, they were “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (2:9). They are special people, owned by the Lord of the universe. What could be more successful?

Why do we want so much more? Why does it matter how we’re perceived by our peers, our brotherhood, and our neighbors? Why accept the bogus standards of this secular world?

We’re successful if, in desperation, we open our hands and cry out to God for deliverance; if we confess our utter sinfulness; if we place our faith not in our abilities to attain but in God’s ability to atone through Christ.

1 Corinthians: Success is Faithfulness

Before Paul began answering questions from the Christians in Corinth, he had to defend his authority. Word had come from Chloe’s household that not everyone thought he was the one to ask. Some were in favor of seeking Paul’s guidance while others objected.

Paul saw the current conflict over his authority as only

a symptom of a deeper problem: their exaltation of teachers. And beneath that he saw an even more fundamental problem: a wrong view of wisdom.

The Christians apparently held on to their pagan criteria for evaluating wisdom: rhetoric, logic, and reasoning. Paul, confessedly not the world's greatest rhetorician (2:4), fell short in the evaluation.

Paul's argument is based on the cross (1:17), which was foolishness by human standards. But from the spiritual perspective, the cross was true wisdom. A man with the Spirit should be able to discern that (2:6-16). If we give up the message of the cross, we are no longer Christian in any meaningful sense.

A better standard for success than rhetoric, logic, and reasoning is given by Paul in 4:1-2: "So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

Success is being faithful to our trust. It means holding firmly to the word of the cross. It doesn't matter whether we wear a Hart-Schaffner-Marx or a J.C. Penney suit, whether we have a staff of ten or more, whether our salary is at the top or bottom of the scale. What matters is that we are faithful stewards.

After I preach to 2,700 on Sunday, my wife leads a prayer group of twelve women in our house. My task is noticed by many, hers by few. As 5,400 eyes stare at me, she quietly tries to take care of our two children in the pew. Faithfulness, not fanfare, is the key.

A good friend from college preaches in western Kansas at a tiny church. He would be the first to tell you that I'm a better speaker than he is; he doesn't receive the invita-

tions to speak I receive. Last year he sent me a tape of a lesson in which he spoke of his battle with envy—a battle he had won by realizing that God is equally interested in both of us. He's not a failure just because the worldly symbols of success are absent. His job, he said in the sermon, is to be faithful to his calling. He understands that obedience, not church size, is important to God.

Some of the Christians in Corinth had an over-realized eschatology. That explains why Paul pokes at their emphasis on what they already have (4:8). With that worldly outlook, Paul no doubt did seem like a weak, dishonored fool, even the scum of the earth (4:10-13). . . . But he was faithful to his trust.

When we feel like soft peddling the gospel and instead preach the way of the cross, we are faithful. When admirers seek to puff us up and instead we keep our trust in God's abilities, we are faithful. When we are yanked by the temptations of this world and yet resist, we are faithful.

Charles Colson wrote in the monthly newsletter of Prison Fellowship this insightful warning:

By the time you read this, we will have dedicated our new national offices near Washington, D.C. As a result of this and other recent expansions, many people have written me to the effect that "God is obviously blessing Prison Fellowship's ministry."

As much as I am sincerely certain that God is, indeed, blessing us, I believe even more certainly that it's a dangerous and misguided policy to measure God's blessing by standards of visible, tangible, material "success."

The inference is that when things are prospering “God is blessing us” and, conversely, that when things are going poorly, or unpublicized, God’s blessing is not upon the work or it is unimportantWe must continuously use the measure of our obedience to the guidelines of his Word as the real—and only—standard of our “success,” not some more supposedly tangible or glamorous scale.⁵

If our lives are malleable, if our hearts are obedient, if our allegiance is to the living Christ, if our yielding is to the indwelling Spirit of God—then we are successes.

2 Corinthians: Success Is Reliance Upon God

The opposition Paul faces in 2 Corinthians is beyond the misunderstandings of 1 Corinthians. This is all-out warfare for the gospel itself is at stake.

Some Jewish Christians had come to Corinth, challenging Paul’s authority and claiming to be apostles themselves. Paul made a painful visit followed by a tear-filled letter. When he pens 2 Corinthians he knows some big battles have been won (7:6-7) but that the war isn’t over. The two main sections of the book, 2:14-7:4 and 10-13, investigate true discipleship. For our purposes they also investigate true success.

To Paul’s opponents, success can be measured by power. They preached a Jesus who was a wonder-worker. They valued highly-charged spiritual experiences and charismatic speaking abilities. The true disciple to them was the one with the following.

Paul’s only defense is his weakness: “I will not boast about myself, except in my weaknesses” (12:5; cf. 11:30; 12:10). As to accomplishments, his resume lists only

beatings, imprisonments, sleepless nights, and such (11:23ff). He will admit to having treasure in jars of clay (4:7). But the treasure is all God's; he is only the breakable container.

The lesson Paul had learned is that weakness forces us to rely on God (12:7-10). It squeezes out any self-centered confidence and substitutes confidence in God.

Maybe it's not so great when we appear to be models of success: spiritual CEOs. Possibly the power of God has a difficult time breaking through when we're so competent. The center of history, the cross, should constantly remind us how victory and weakness often walk hand in hand. God's ways aren't our ways.

A deep reliance upon God keeps us on our knees. How often do spiritual leaders ask each other about their prayer life? When preachers interview with a congregation, they are asked about numerous issues. But who quizzes them about their time with God? It's a great tragedy that many of us could omit prayer completely and be "successful": we could, by natural skills, keep folks entertained. But we would also be great failures on the eternal scale.

The reigning God, the living Christ, the indwelling Spirit—these are the true powers in the lives of successful ministers.

Philippians: Success Is Servanthood

Philippians has often been called the epistle of joy. But while joy is mentioned often in the book, it is seemingly because of its absence in the Philippian church, not its superabundance. Paul's admonitions in 2:1-4 indicate that the church had some serious problems getting along. Euodia and Syntyche (4:2) were likely not the only ones

having those problems.

The Christians are going to have to quit focusing on themselves and begin thinking of others (2:4). The attitude they need is the servanthood of Christ who emptied himself. The Christological hymn doesn't appear for dispassionate concerns; rather, it is applied Christology. This church needed to follow in the steps of Jesus, who "humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross."

True success means living for other people. It will look much more like Mother Teresa than Donald Trump. It is not providing a spouse with diamonds but with unconditional love. It is not simply offering a church homiletical pearls but a life poured out in service.

Our calling is not to emulate the sleek, muscular Apollo, but rather the suffering, crucified man of Nazareth. "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (3:10).

The choices are before us and we must decide. Will we pursue success through possessions, power, and results? Or will we escape the book and seek success from a godly perspective?

Part 3: Freedom!

Our fatal attraction to the goddess of success must be broken. We must return to the cross, return to our calling, to let God free us from this insatiable mistress.

Last year Randy Mayeux, preacher for the Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas, spoke at the Men's Dinner during the Pepperdine Lectureship. His speech was partly confessional, partly instructional, partly in-

spirational, and fully autobiographical.

Along with Frederick Buechner, “my assumption is that the story of any one of us is in some measure the story of us all.”⁶

I’ve asked Randy to finish this class with that story. Please take it personally!

¹Larry Wright, *In The New World*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 117.

²Richard Foster, *Money, Sex and Power* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), p. 10.

³Kent and Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1987), p. 26.

⁴See Mike Cope, *Living in Two Worlds* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1987), pp. 25f.

⁵Kent and Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome*, pp. 37f.

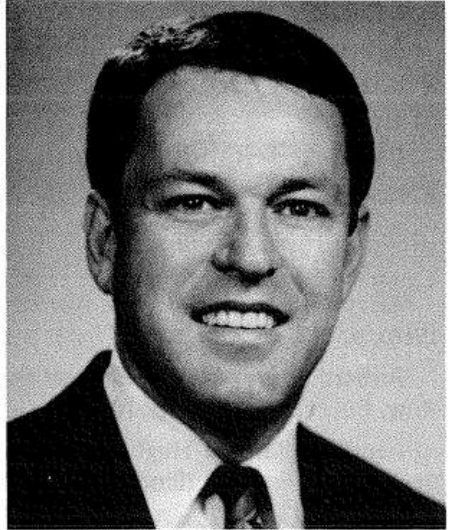
⁶Frederick Buechner, *The Sacred Journey* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982), p. 6.

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Family: His wife is the former Jeannie Johnston. They have two sons, Jody and Evan.

Education: He received his B.A. degree from Abilene Christian University; M.A. in Religion from Pepperdine University; and finished the classwork for the Ph.D. in Communication at the University of Southern California (projected completion 1989).



Work and Ministry: Youth Minister at 11th and Willis in Abilene and at Westgate in Beaumont. Youth Minister and Education Minister at Inglewood, California. Minister at Central in Long Beach, California, from 1976-1981; for 37th and Altantic from 1981-1987; and for Preston Road from April 1987 to the present time.

Other Fields of Special Interest: Speaks from coast to coast in meetings, youth rallies, seminars, and Lectureships. Serves on the President's Council of Pepperdine University and was chairman of the Chancellor's Council of Pepperdine for over five years. In 1981 and 1982 named an "Outstanding Young Man of America." Randy has written for *Christian Bible Teacher*, *Power for Today*, *Firm Foundation*, *Teenage Christian*, *20th Century Christian*, and *Image*. He is the author of the teen elective, *How Do I Decide: Foundations for Moral Reconstruction*, and the *Bible Study Journal*. His first book was published in 1985 by Sweet Publishing Company, *How to Claim the Promise*. In 1986-1987, he served as co-chairman of the Drug and Substance Abuse Sub-committee of the Task Force on Gangs and Substance Abuse in Long Beach, California, by special invitation of the Mayor of Long Beach.

The Forgotten Loyalty

Randy Mayeux

It took me over a year to finally do it. I finally went to Dealey Plaza. I dropped off Cooter Hale, an attorney, at the Court House as he was going in for trial. I drove by it and felt that I just had to finally do it. I parked the car, got out, went inside the building (you can't get to the 6th floor yet — they are making a museum of it). I looked at the spot right on the road where Kennedy's car had been. I went over and looked at the grassy knoll. I pictured where he died: at least, where the bullet hit. And the story of my life swept over me.

There's one line from Paul. It's direct; it's blunt. "So, then men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

It is in the 1950's. It is my earliest memory. McDuff Avenue in Jacksonville, Florida. I lived with my mother, (she was divorced - I never knew my dad). I lived with my Aunt Bea, MeeMaw, and DaaDaa. Four adults and little Randy, the only child, the only grandchild. There was dinner every night at home, there was security in the arms of an extended family. . .even without a daddy. The year I was born there were only a few thousand television sets in the entire country. I didn't go into the house at night and watch television. I went into the house and put on my grandfather's rubber wading boots and walked around. I

remember eating a bowl of rice krispies and there was a black rice krispie and I went screaming that there was a bug in my cereal. And four adults wrapped me in their arms and told me it was not a bug. It was a secure childhood, in the beginning.

During that time, Abilene Christian Lectures were going longer than from Sunday to Wednesday. And gospel meetings were still going on, and people came to them night after night after night. And people *lived* in their neighborhoods, and *worked* in their neighborhoods, and went to *church* in their neighborhoods. They didn't commute on long freeways and spend those 2½ to 3 hours a day in their cars. The world was simpler; it was really truly simpler then. And so people went to work, and went to church, and loved their family, and life was simpler.

It was sleepy. Eisenhower years were sleepy years — and then John Kennedy became president. I think maybe the day the world changed was the night when he was campaigning. They had been waiting for him at the University of Michigan. He was supposed to speak at 10:30 that night. When he got there at 2:00 in the morning, not a single person had left. And this idealistic, young, vigorous candidate pointed his arm, straight down: “Why don't *you* go feed the poor in Africa?” The next morning his campaign headquarters received a call and the young man's voice said, “I'm the one he pointed at. I want to go feed the poor in Africa. What do I do?” The campaign had no idea what was going on, but they tracked down Kennedy and asked, “What did you say last night?”. . .and the Peace Corp was born and that young man was the first to sign up.

Maybe the day the world changed was the day that Ken-

nedey gave what the *New York Times* called “the greatest speech in this century.” Students of rhetoric say that you need great circumstances or great turmoil to have a great speech. Kennedy had neither — but created a great speech. “Let the word go forth that the torch has been passed to a new generation. . . Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what *you* can do for your country.”

I don’t know what changed the world. I don’t know if it was television. I don’t know if it was the racial change that created the suburbs, that created the commuters, that created the distance, that created the loss of intimacy. I don’t know. But I know the world began changing and the pace was quickening. Martin Luther got on the steps of the memorial and said, “I have a dream that some day my children will be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” Then, in 1968, there was “Black Power.” Athletes raised their fists at the Mexico Olympics, and then there was “Women Power” and bra burnings, and “Gray Power,” and “Gay Power.” The rioting began. . . Viet Nam. We never got over Viet Nam.

At ACU in 1968, I’d been a Christian less than 2 months. I remember so vividly the most exciting part of those first two years. It was not a class, and it was not church Sunday morning (though I loved the preaching of John Allen Chalk and Tony Ash). It was a little room at Minter Lane where they brought chairs in and stuffed the room to the gills. Earl McMillian led and taught it. . . well. And I remember Malcolm Jacobs standing up one night, screaming with his veins sticking out of his neck. “If we use the history of the early church to say that we shouldn’t have a piano, then nobody can kill anybody.

Don't go to Viet Nam!" And I don't know how to describe this, but the idealism that John Kennedy had started and Martin Luther King had continued was stirring in my heart in 1968.

In 1972, I went to Jones Hall in Houston. Landon Saunders was the first of two speakers. He spoke for 18½ minutes. He quoted from the Beatles. "He's a real no-where man, sitting in his no-where land." And then he gave line after line after line after line from Jesus the Christ. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. I am the resurrection and the life." And then he said with the passion that only Landon has, "Why are we so silent?" And our generation wanted to get into evangelism — and tried.

This selfless, idealistic, visionary, dreaming generation saw the bankruptcy of John Kennedy's own moral failure that's become more evident year after year. It has heard the rumors of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy and the play and the movie that thrilled our souls that a dream was made at Camelot. "A people of idealistic dreams" became a pretty good symbol of our generation, but we soon demanded more than we dreamed.

It's a fine line between idealism and the obsession with personal pursuits. It's no accident that the hippies turned into yuppies, that the peace sign turned into BMW insignias. "I want" was the cry of my generation.

And in this latest presidential campaign one of the campaigners is a man that is such a symbolic representation of the whole pilgrimae — Gary Hart. One of the columnists began following Hart very carefully in those early days when he reentered the race, and finally sewed together all of the statements by Hart and we learned why Hart was running. Not to serve the country, not to present his ideas,

but to “find himself.” The ultimate good in the America of my generation is to “find yourself.” And you can even use a presidential campaign to do it.

Lawrence White wrote the book *In The New World*. He says that the day the world changed was the day that John Kennedy was killed. In his own way, Lawrence White decided to see the world and he went to Europe and his moment of reckoning came when he was on a roof top in Europe. He had tried drugs, he had tried everything else, and he was “discovering himself” as he toured the world. And on a roof top where you could spend the night in your sleeping bag for just a few cents, he saw the whole roof covered with long-haired Americans who had not bathed, whose minds were tripping out on drugs, oblivious to the beauty of Europe and the wonder around them. And he came to his senses. He came home.

The legacy has hit the churches. At age 25, I entered a pulpit at Central in Long Beach. . . idealistic, ready to no longer be silent. I don't know when it happened; I don't know how it happened. Maybe it was partly because all of my models (and please, for those of you who are, forgive this), but all of my models had grown so frustrated with the institution of “church” that they seemed to say: “I've had enough with elders, I'm going to do something else — maybe para-church.” And there were no longer any models left who said, “I lay down my life in local ministry.” And preacher after preacher needed bigger and bigger dreams (and I think you know how much I want to pursue such dreams). Then this whole era began of big churches (“big” is the only criteria today). And when a preacher feels this incredible pressure to get bigger by next year and then bigger by the next year, and then when he

can't figure out a way to get any bigger, he does something stupid. The pressure is there to get bigger, and it's pressure that no one can bear.

Eugene Peterson in *Working The Anvil* says that there are only three tasks of the minister: Prayer, The Word, and Spiritual Formation. He says that in the average American church, the administrative duties, the church growth duties, the luncheon appointments, and everything else are so time consuming we don't have 5% of our time to spend on prayer, and the word, and spiritual formation.

I don't know when it happened or how it happened, but faithfulness to call became faithfulness to dream; but dream is defined by *career* dream. One military man said (I'm no expert on the military, I'm only quoting one military man) that one of the reasons we lost Viet Nam is because for the first time in the history of this country the officers had a shorter tour of duty than the enlisted men. The enlisted men went to fight, but the officers (thinking it was going to be a short war) went so they could get on their resume - "Combat Duty." They did combat duty for six months instead of, like the enlisted men, one year, so they could get all the officers to Viet Nam, and get "combat duty" on their resumes. Enlisted men went out and died for a cause that the officers called "a career move."

Preaching "faithfulness to call" became "faithfulness to career," at least in my life, and I think in the lives of others. When you are faithful to a career, you get angry at anyone who stands in the way of your career. You lash out — at your church, at your family, at elders who don't understand that if they don't approve this choice it hurts your career. And you turn the church into a tool to

enhance your career, and the job of the church is to turn *your* dreams into realities. I lost the reality of the fact that it's *my* job to hear the dream of God and the dream of the people and be used to turn *those* dreams into realities.

So we get angry and we become more unfaithful, more unfaithful to our God, and more faithful to our call. And the selfless rallying cry of John Kennedy, "ask not what your country can do for you," becomes the incredibly self-serving cry of Barbra Streisand, who in studying the Torah in Yentl, exclaims to the man, "Don't you understand? I want more! More than darning your socks and cooking your meals and staying home and loving you. I want more!". . . "It all began the day I learned that from my window I could only see a piece of sky." But right now we need to quit looking out the window and look inside — at our families, at our churches. — They provide all the dreams we need.

Gary Freeman is one of the casualties. Gary Freeman tells the story in his first book about a bunch of people ship-wrecked on an island. They're ship-wrecked with nothing but themselves, but there's a major problem. Once they figure out how to eat, once they figure out how to get out of the rain, then they don't have any way to decide who becomes more successful than anybody else. So they create a status test. The first man to build a summer cottage on the top of the hill in the middle of the island is the winner. Finally, after a number of years of wives egging on the husbands, and children egging on the daddys and divorces occurring and suicides — somebody finally builds the cottage in the middle of the island at the top of the mountain. He gets in his cottage — successful — but he feels lonely and empty.

In a consumer society, and, its spiritual parallel, a self-centered church, there's a tendency among preachers and others to use the church for their selfish pursuits. The result is nobody serves and everybody grabs for more. One day you wake up with your eyes open and you come to your senses.

My road home started with a trip to Jacksonville. I went to the corner of McDuff Avenue. The house where I sat on the front porch and walked around in my granddad's rubber boots was gone. There is now a shopping center there. For some strange reason, at that very sight, I settled down. I am afraid that there have been some things that I waited too late to sort out — I travelled too much, and I took too much. I wouldn't trade Dallas for anything, but I would like to get back the last two years at Long Beach — for a chance to give better, and take less.

I have some fears today. That the trend occurring where preachers are divorcing and elders are divorcing and deacons are divorcing will continue. I fear this current exodus of the "Lord's churches losing their preachers" is a continuing phenomenon. When you've got people who travel so much as your models, they don't have time to invest their life in the family of one church and in the family of one family.

Two people — One, Uncle C.B. You know the big IBM computers? I mean the big ones that run the state budgets? He fixes them. He's one of the best in the country. He's retired now. About a week and half every year they'd fly him to New York City and train him on how to fix their latest problems. He lives in Denham Springs, Louisiana. If you've ever wondered what the definition of a "red neck" is, please go meet my Uncle C.B. and you'll

learn. And Uncle C.B. told IBM every year for over two and a half decades, “I’m not moving! I’m raising my family in this house. I’m staying in this church. And I don’t care how many thousands of dollars you offer me, I’m not moving!” Now he’s retired and he’s got three daughters. One of them lives a half block down the street, married with children; another one moved a long way out of town - 2 miles, and the third one is just getting married. He’s turned back the clock. And it’s worth doing.

The other man is Gordan MacDonald. I went to a retreat where he and his wife spoke. And he said, “Do you understand what happens when you travel? You only give one speech, one night, Thursday night. You spend all day Wednesday getting ready. You go on Thursday. You come back Friday. And it’s been an exhausting flight and an exhausting experience and for three days you are emotionally distant from your church and from your wife. And you do that 2 or 3 times a month, 10-12 months out of the year, 8-10 years out of a decade — you find out that you don’t know the people in your church and you find out that you don’t know your family at home. And my advice for preachers who don’t want to get into this mess is “quit your travelling.”

We have forgotten our loyalties; there are 2. #1: Loyalty to family. There is no other loyalty that comes close. If you lose this — you lost too much! #2: Loyalty to our church. I really do think that it’s time to turn back the clock on this one. I remember when I got the call. It finally dawned on me; I don’t want to miss my singles class on Wednesday nights to speak at another church. I just don’t go speak on Wednesday nights anymore. I’d rather be with those 80 people that I know. God has not called me

to give “run-in and run-out speaking engagements” all over the country. God had some men at Preston Road call me to serve there. I’m trying to learn to say “no” more often.

W.E. Sangster climbed into the pulpit for his first time at Central Methodist Hall, the largest Methodist Church in London. He was the new preacher. It was an unusual day, the day that Britain declared war on Germany in WWII. He practically never left the building during the war. He went down to the basement where people were hiding from the bombs, and he spent his time embracing the people, loving the people, praying with the people, serving the people. During the war, to prepare his sermons, he never opened a book. He did not recommend that as a life-time pursuit, but he said, “My preaching was the best I ever did those years, because I was with my people around the clock.”

In Ezekiel 34, God has a message. This is what the Sovereign Lord says, “Woe, to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool, and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost.” And so they are scattered because there is no shepherd.

And I think every elder, and every deacon, and every preacher ought to decide right now that your loyalty is to that local congregation where God has called you. I think that as we wait for God to raise up another generation, as he’s doing, as we look at the ones who are the casualties and feel their pain, and then as we look at the others who

were more than casualties and were salvaged, we rejoice. We acknowledge that God alone has to be the shepherd in these moments of greatest tragedy. But my suggestion is “pay attention to your wife, pay attention to your children, pay attention to *your* elders, and *your* people, and *your* classes. And if you want to push your dreams, make sure they’re the dreams of God and of those people. Be loyal and faithful.” I’ve got a hunch that if you never read another book by Schuller or Wagner, that if you never attend another seminar on Church Growth, that if you never again dream some gigantic dream that wells up out of some career pursuit instead of the heart of God. . .that if we love our wives, and love our children, and love the local church that God puts us in, that we would grow like nothing we have ever seen.

Let us pray. “Father, you have made every one of us the recipient of a great gift. And you have called every one of us to stewardship. Fill us with your power, so that we can be faithful stewards. May our families be strong, and may our churches be firm and secure in our ministry. And send us to our families and to the church you called us to in power and in love and may those forgotten loyalties never be forgotten again. For the times we’ve pushed our own career pursuits ahead of your desires, forgive us. And for the pain that is has caused, heal the memories. And help us never again forget the loyalties that are most precious. In the name of Christ. Amen.”

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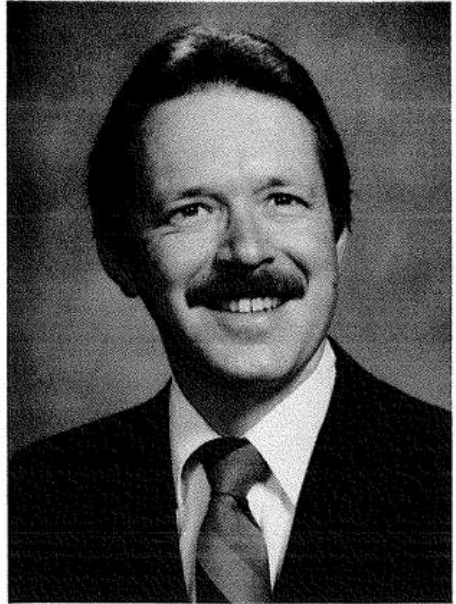
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The Women Should Keep Silence In The Churches

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Allen Black

In a culture in which woman's role in society has shifted dramatically in a short period of time, the relevant passages of scripture have been subjected to intense scrutiny by interpreters from a broad range of theological perspectives. One of the key texts in this discussion has been 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, which, unfortunately, absolutely bristles with exegetical difficulties. It is not possible to write a thorough analysis of this passage within the space limitations of this paper. My goal will be to outline the most common interpretations of the nature of the silence Paul demanded for women in the Corinthian assemblies, eliminating some alternatives as untenable and providing some guidance concerning the strengths and weaknessess of others.

We will begin with two extremes, one of which holds that Paul did not write 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and the other of which holds that Paul demanded absolute silence. The former view is perhaps becoming the most popular view in scholarly circles. Barrett, Conzelmann, Fee, and numerous others regard vv. 34-35 or vv. 33b-36 (including v. 33b as the beginning of the sentence in v. 34 and v. 36 as the completion of the paragraph) as a non-Pauline interpolation.¹

The primary grounds for this position are: (a) a significant block of Western witnesses transpose vv. 34-35 to after 14:40, (b) vv. 34-35 (or 33b-36) are thought to contradict 1 Corinthians 11:5, and (c) vv. 34-35 (or 33b-36) are thought to be ill-suited to the context and to interrupt the flow of thought between vv. 33 and 36 (or 33a and 37).²

In response to the argument from the Western text, it is important to note that there are no witnesses which omit vv. 34-35. All the extant evidence has vv. 34-35 either in their common position or after v. 40, except the Latin Codex Fuldensis (547 A.D.) which has vv. 34-35 both after 14:40 and in the margin after 14:33.³

The lack of a witness in which vv. 34-35 are missing raises a significant question about the validity of proposing an interpolation on the basis of the manuscript evidence. As Fee points out, the origin of the Western text must be explained; but in spite of Fee's objections, Metzger is probably right in suggesting that the Western text represents an attempt to relocate vv. 34-35 in a place where it seems less of an interruption to the context.⁴

The manuscript evidence is a weak basis for questioning the authenticity of vv. 34-35 and is virtually irrelevant for those like Conzelmann who question not only vv. 34-35, but also v. 33b and v. 36.⁵

It is unlikely that the manuscript evidence would convince many to reject the authenticity of these verses were it not for the problems of relating the passage to 1 Corinthians 11:5 and to its immediate context in 1 Corinthians 14. These are indeed serious difficulties which cannot be resolved with certainty and which will occupy most of the remainder of this paper. However, it is important to note

that most scholars acknowledge the presence of similar difficulties in other Pauline texts without resorting to interpolation theories. Paul has a well-known tendency toward diversions and occasionally makes statements that raise harmonization questions. Without strong textual warrant, it is better to try to explain such difficulties than to remove them by positing interpolations.

On the other end of the spectrum from those who think Paul gave no command to silence are the few individuals who have held that Paul intended to command the Corinthian women to absolute silence, including even singing.⁶

It should be noted that from a prooftexting standpoint which refuses to take the rest of scripture into account, this position could be upheld. In Ephesians 5:19 Paul identifies singing as “speaking” to one another. Therefore, when he forbids women to speak in the assemblies one could argue that singing is included. One might even support this with culturally relevant information regarding synagogue worship. However, the vast majority of interpreters believe that in the light of other scriptures the intended scope of Paul’s statement does not involve a prohibition of women singing in the assembly.

The answer we seek concerning the meaning of Paul’s words lies somewhere between these extremes. Having accepted the notion that Paul’s words do not enjoin absolute silence, we must ask for a more precise understanding of what Paul forbids. There are three major difficulties involved: (a) how 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 relates to 1 Corinthians 11:5, (b) how 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 relates to its immediate context, and (c) whether Paul is talking about women (in general) or wives. Each of these issues is notoriously difficult and all of the commonly proposed

solutions have serious weaknesses.

The problem with relating 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 to 1 Corinthians 11:5 is that in chapter 11 Paul appears to accept the propriety of a woman praying or prophesying in public as long as she wears her veil. When he says, "Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head. . . ," he seems to assume that both men and women may pray and prophesy if they are properly attired. If 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 forbids women praying or prophesying, the possibility for conflict is obvious.

There are three basic routes for providing a solution to this problem: (a) 1 Corinthians 11:5 does not permit women to pray or prophesy, (b) 1 Corinthians 11:6 does not envision the assemblies of the church, and (c) 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 does not intend to forbid praying or prophesying.

The first route considers both 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 14:34-35 to be aimed at the assemblies of the church; but holds that since 14:34-35 forbids women to speak in the assembly, 11:5 must only be discussing headdress and does not imply permission for women to pray or prophesy.⁷

But, would Paul have written regulations in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 concerning a practice which he planned to forbid in chapter 14? Why should he specify the need of women wearing veils when they pray or prophesy if he intended to bring a halt to these practices?⁸

If both contexts involve the assembled church and chapter 14 prohibits women praying and prophesying in the church, then it does not make sense for Paul to say

they must wear a veil when they do what he forbids. This position is very weak.

A second approach is to deny that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 envisions the assembly of the church.⁹

Neither the prior context of 1 Corinthians 10 nor any statement in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 clearly demands a setting in the assemblies. 1 Corinthians 11:17ff. does, but not retroactively.¹⁰

However, by far the majority of interpreters think that Paul's regulations concerning veils suggest some sort of public and mixed setting.¹¹

Two basic arguments may be made for this understanding. The first is that the request for women to wear veils implies a public setting. But, presumably it was shameful for a woman to be shaven wherever she was (cf. 11:5-6), and it may have been a dishonoring of her head to pray or prophesy without a veil even when she was not in public. If Oster is correct in proposing that Paul also wants to forbid men from following the Roman (as opposed to Greek) custom of wearing a veil liturgically, that custom could presumably involve personal worship activities.¹²

We do not fully understand Paul's cultural setting and his motivations for prohibiting or enjoining veils during praying or prophesying, and we should allow the possibility that they include private settings. The other argument for taking 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 to apply primarily to public settings is more substantial. Prophesying need not take place only in the assemblies of the church, but it does imply more than one person.¹³

This may suggest a somewhat public setting for 11:2-16, but not conclusively in view of the references to prayer, a

public or private activity.

In considering the possibility that the tension between chapters 11 and 14 might be eased by not restricting the veiling commands of 11:2-16 to church assemblies, we must avoid the tendency to read the text anachronistically by inserting modern distinctions between “church services” and other assemblies such as Bible school or ladies classes. It would also be difficult to demonstrate that Paul would accept modern distinctions between women praying in small or large groups. Although this proposed solution may have its merits, it is not without problems.

The third option is that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 has a fairly restricted scope in what it prohibits and therefore is not in conflict with 1 Corinthians 11:5. Even without the incentive provided by the apparent problem of harmonizing, it would be necessary to investigate the connections between vv. 34-35 and their context. As we have observed, the contextual connections are difficult. Why does Paul bring up the problem of women speaking in this context? If Paul’s command to silence is not absolute, what may we say about the scope of the command?

The context of vv. 34-35 suggests two possible restrictions of Paul’s prohibition. Some think that Paul is referring specifically to women (or wives) who are engaging in the discerning of the prophets.¹⁴

This suggestion is a bit awkward in that it must jump contextually over vv. 30-33 to v. 29. Furthermore, it has difficulty with v. 35 in that when Paul refers to women asking questions, their motivation appears to be the desire to learn, not the attempt to discern the truth or falsehood of the prophecy.¹⁵

A more likely suggestion is that vv. 34-35 are concerned

with the issue of disruption of the assemblies which is paramount in vv. 26-33.¹⁶

The women at Corinth may have contributed more than their share to the disruption of the service. Even their manner of shouting out questions may have contributed to the problem. If so, the restriction may be especially aimed at the disruptive speech prevalent at Corinth. But it may be argued against this view that it does not give enough weight to Paul's appeal to the notion of woman's subordination as taught in the law.

Neither of these two contextually restricted views seems totally satisfying. However, they both point in a direction that is significant for understanding our passage. Having already admitted that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 cannot be taken as an absolute prohibition of every form of speech by women in the assemblies, we must admit the possibility that the prohibition is restricted by context in such a way that Paul might have permitted women to speak in ways other than singing. But whatever he might have allowed must be consistent with his appeal to the law's teaching concerning subordination.

The final question we must take up regarding the scope of Paul's prohibition is whether he has in mind women in general or wives specifically. The Greeks have one word for both women and wives and only context can determine which choice to make in English translation. Although all the major English translations have chosen the broader term at this point, it can be argued that the instruction to "ask their husbands at home" indicates that Paul has in mind wives in particular.¹⁷

It is clear that Paul addresses married women in v. 35, but whether his reading of the law (v. 34) concerning the

subordination of women was restricted to wives and husbands is questionable in the light of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. The easiest of the three texts to read as applying to husbands and wives only is 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, but if either of the other two is understood to apply to men and women in general, then it becomes likely that v. 35 is instruction to those who happen to be wives (presumably most of the women involved) without restricting the referent of the word *gune* in vv. 34-35 to wives only.

It is somewhat frustrating to leave this examination with so many uncertainties, but it is preferable to an uninformed dogmatism. We are looking in on Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians from the outside. At certain points we reach difficulties in interpretation where we really need more inside information to decide between the alternatives. We may at least rule out certain unacceptable alternatives and weigh the strengths and weaknesses of others. The evidence does not support the hypotheses that would either eliminate the command to silence as non-Pauline or treat it as an absolute demand to total silence. The major issue is the scope of the silence commanded. If it is not absolute, how do we determine what is included?

In addition to the near-universal recognition that the rest of scripture eliminates singing from the scope of the command, there are three other ways in which the scope might be limited by the context of 1 Corinthians. If 1 Corinthians 11:5 implies permission for a woman to pray or prophesy in public settings, the question should be raised whether 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 clearly forbids this activity in the assembly. The immediate context of

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 raises a question about whether Paul had every form of speaking in mind, or should be understood to be prohibiting certain contextually specified activities such as discerning the prophets or disrupting the assembly. Finally, one may ask whether Paul is speaking only of wives or of all women at Corinth. Each of these questions should be further explored as we seek to understand 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, to integrate its teachings with other scriptures, and to apply this understanding in an appropriate manner to our own cultural setting.

¹C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 332-33; Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the First Epistle of the Corinthians*, trans. James Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 246; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 699-702.

²See esp. Fee, 699-702. Cf. also E. Earle Ellis, "The Silenced Wives of Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism*, ed. E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 213-14. (Ellis thinks these verses were a Pauline gloss.)

³Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 565.

⁴Fee, 700; Metzger, 565.

⁵Conzelmann, 246. Conzelmann and others take v. 33b as the beginning of the sentence ending in v. 34 rather than the end of the sentence beginning in v. 32.

⁶E.g., the Whitten-Welch Debate, published in pamphlet form, cited as representing this position in Neil Lightfoot, *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives* (Memphis: Student Association Press, 1978), 56. From this radical standpoint one might also forbid women from confessing faith (or sin) in the assembly.

⁷E.g., John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. J. Pringle, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), 1:355-56.

⁸Cf. Barrett, 250.

⁹E.g., F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *The New International Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), 251-53.

¹⁰Cf. Fee, 536 (vs. Barrett, 260).

¹¹E.g., Fee, 497-98; Lightfoot, 27.

¹²Richard Oster, "When Men Wore Veils to Worship," Forthcoming in *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988).

¹³Grosheide, 251-52.

¹⁴E.g., James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A consideration of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1973), 217.

¹⁵Fee, 704.

¹⁶E.g., Barrett, 332 (although he prefers the view that 14:34-35 are an interpolation).

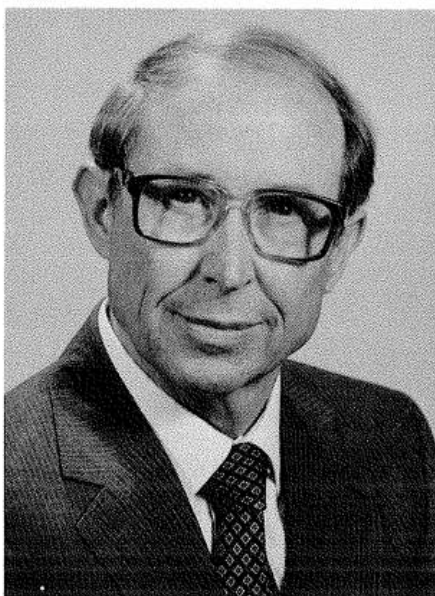
¹⁷E.g., Ellis, 216-17.

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Wives, Be Subject To Your Husbands

Neil R. Lightfoot

Several years ago I was invited to present the “W. B. West, Jr., Lectures for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship” at the Harding Graduate School, Memphis, Tennessee. I was particularly asked to deal with the Biblical passages on women, and so I entitled the lectures *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives*.¹ My purpose at that time was to focus on the passages that especially have to do with woman’s role in the public assembly, such as 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 14, and 1 Timothy 2. Since I was not able to deal directly with passages on woman’s role in the home and her relationship to her husband, I now welcome the opportunity to address the subject, “Wives, be subject to your husbands.”

There are three main passages in the New Testament which devote attention to the husband-wife relationship in the home: Ephesians 5:22-23, Colossians 3:18-19, and 1 Peter 3:1-8. In each case these husband-wife admonitions are parts of longer sections of exhortation directed to other members of a Christian household. Martin Luther called this sketch of household duties a *Haustafel*, that is, a “house-table.”² The Ephesian *Haustafel*, for example, consists of instructions to wives and husbands (5:22-23), to children and parents (6:1-4), and to slaves and masters

(6:5-9); and the passages in Colossians and 1 Peter may be divided similarly. Although the structure and message of the “house-tables” are important in their own right, I want to turn attention to the verses on wives and husbands.

Ephesians 5:22-23 is perhaps the grandest piece in all of literature on the relationship of husbands and wives. It is a question whether the section begins with verse 21 or 22. Actually, verse 21 is transitional. “Be subject” is a present participle, the last in a series of five participles (“speaking” in songs, “singing,” “making melody,” “giving thanks” and “submitting”) which are to be taken together and conclude the paragraph. But “be subject to one another” (v. 21) also introduces the Ephesians “house-table,” a significant rubric by which the rest is to be interpreted.³ So understood, “be subject to one another” is the general principle, with wives, children, and slaves as illustrations of the principle. (Clearly, “be subject to one another” does not mean that husbands are to be subject to wives any more than parents are subject to children or masters to slaves.) The principle of submission is to be followed out of “fear for Christ.”⁴ The conduct of the Christian at home should be determined by his disposition toward Christ.

If, as Paul later says (v. 31), husband and wife in marriage become one,⁵ each necessarily has duties toward the other. Wives are to be subject to their husbands (vv. 22, 24) “as to the Lord” and “in everything.” “In everything” should not be deprived of meaning, which in context probably denotes everything in the marital relationship. “As to the Lord” is further explained in the next sentence, with the meaning that the wife regards submis-

sion to her husband as submission to Christ. The concluding exhortation to wives (v. 33) is that they “respect” and “revere” (lit. “fear”) their husbands.

The duties of husbands to wives are equally demanding, and even more so if judged by the extent of the verses involved. Three times Paul says that husbands are to love their wives (vv. 25, 28, 33). And they are to love as Christ loved and died for the church (v. 25), as a man loves himself (v. 28), as one leaves. . .and cleaves to. . .and is faithfully devoted to his wife (v. 31).

Colossians 3:18-19, though brief, contains similar injunctions to those in Ephesians. If wives must responsibly submit to their husbands, husbands must show loving care for their wives and not be sharp with them. An additional reason is given for submission of wives—“it is fitting in the Lord,” that is, it is the right thing for a Christian to do.

1 Peter 3:1-7 in its general import is not unlike Paul’s teachings on husband and wife in Ephesians and Colossians. Peter, however, addressing the situation of a mixed marriage, gives specifics on how a believing wife is to relate to her unbelieving husband. She, too, is to be submissive. She is not to be self-assertive; she is not to nag him because he is not a Christian. Instead, her chaste behavior does her speaking for her, behavior that is adorned by a “gentle and quiet spirit” in submissiveness. Sarah well illustrates such conduct. She “obeyed” Abraham, a point made explicit by Peter, showing that subjection to one’s husband involves obedience. Submission, then, according to Peter, is a character trait and concerns one’s whole way of life, which Christian wives are to exemplify.

As for Christian husbands, they are to live with their wives in a “considerate” and “understanding” manner.⁶ The husband is to recognize that his wife is the “weaker vessel,” that is, that her body, generally speaking, is not as strong as his (cf. the NEB here), and that together husband and wife are equally heirs of eternal life. Failing this, the mutual prayers of husband and wife will be blocked. On the other hand, living with understanding toward one’s wife requires the husband especially to “honor” her.

These primary passages on the husband-wife relationship present special exegetical difficulties which need to be discussed. I might point out, however, that these would not be major problems if it were not for a recent surge of books and articles questioning the role of women. Again and again the relevant texts have been distorted and manipulated to mean what they obviously do not say. As always, what is needed is simply the careful exegesis of the texts in their appropriate contexts. Certain terms in particular need explication and set correctly within their contextual frameworks.

1. Head (*kephale*). Paul expressly declares that “the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23). Ephesians 1:22 describes Christ as “head over all things to the church” (cf. Colossians 1:18; 2:10), and Ephesians 4:15 further speaks of Christ as head. When, therefore, the original readers of Ephesians read of Christ as head of the church and of the husband as head of the wife, they knew what Paul meant. They knew that the word “head” (*kephale*), in the words of the Arndt-Gingrich lexicon, denotes “superior rank.”⁷

Now what has changed? Rather recently, Stephen

Bedale wrote an article entitled "The Meaning of *Kephale* in the Pauline Epistles," attempting to demonstrate that the word "head" does not indicate authority but means "source." Others, including C. K. Barrett, F. F. Bruce, and Colin Brown, have joined in with Bedale.⁸ But the evidence for this, in all of Greek literature, is practically nil. Wayne Grudem's recent article has demonstrated this, in which he classifies more than 2,300 examples of the use of "head" (*kephale*) and ends up with only two possible occurrences of "head" as "source"—and these are highly questionable.⁹

But suppose there are a hundred examples of "head" (*kephale*) used as "source." This by itself would not prove anything. A hundred examples of the word in Greek literature would show that this is a possible meaning in the New Testament. Always what has to be determined is the actual New Testament use of the word, and this always according to the meaning the context supplies. In Ephesians 1:22 Christ as "head" is in connection with "far above all rule and authority and power" (v. 21) and "put (lit. "subjected," from *hypotasso*) all things under his feet" (v. 22). In Ephesians 5:23 Christ as head of the church is followed in 5:24 with "as the church is subject (from *hypotasso*) to Christ." In both cases "head" (*kephale*) is contextually related to "subject" (*hypotasso*). I ask you, in these passages is Christ the "source" or is he "head over" the church? Likewise here, is the husband the "source" of the wife or "head over" the wife?

2. "Subject" (*hypotasso*). What does Paul precisely mean when he says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands" (Ephesians 5:22, 24; cf. 5:24; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, 5)? The verb "subject" (*hypotasso*)

is found in the New Testament about forty times: in the active, “to subject” or “to subordinate,” in the passive, “to be subjected,” “to be subordinated,” “to obey,” “to subject oneself.”¹⁰ A few illustrations may clarify its meaning. Jesus was subject (RSV, “obedient”) to his parents (Luke 2:51); everyone is to be subject to the governing authorities (Romans 13:1); Christians are to submit themselves to God (James 4:7); the younger men are to submit themselves to the older men (1 Peter 5:5); and so forth.

There has been an increasing effort in recent years to soften the meaning of “subject.” In a society where “coheadship” and “female leadership” in the home are advocated, submission of wife to husband cuts across the grain. J. B. Phillips has translated that wives were “to learn to adapt” themselves to their husbands. Others suggest that “submission” really means “devotion.”¹¹ Such contortions of the text are scarcely worthy of comment, for any diminishing of the term “submission” takes away from the “submission” that the church renders to Christ. “As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.”

On this entire subject another term is often overlooked and frequently misunderstood. Yet it is the very term that explains the nature of headship and transforms the meaning of subjection.

3. Love (*agape, agapao*). As we have seen, husbands are not to be bitter against their wives. They are to honor them; they are to love them. But why is “love” required of husbands and “submission” of wives? Some describe this as unfair and go so far as to say that this reveals Paul’s ingrained prejudice against women.

The word "love," whether in Greek or English, is wide-open to misunderstanding. The English word "love," to varying degrees, covers a whole universe of feelings and affection. There is, likewise, much overlapping in the meaning of the Greek words of love—*eros*, *phile*, and *agape*. As generally defined, *eros* is love that seeks to please self, that satisfies self whenever and by whatever and by whomever. *Agape*, by contrast, is a giving, active love for the sake of someone else. *Phile* lies between these two extremes and is simply the term for affection. But these terms for love cannot be so sharply and systematically distinguished, as is often done by popular books and indefensibly by some exegetes. For example, in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, *agape* is used for all kinds of love. It is not surprising, then, that in the New Testament, which reflects a marked Septuagintal influence, *agape* has various shades of meaning which must always be detected from the context.¹² Sometimes *agape* means "affection," as when Jesus looked at the rich young man and "loved" him (Mark 10:21); sometimes *agape* is void of affection and aims at good for the other person—so "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44).

What does Paul really mean, then, when he tells husbands to love their wives? First, it needs to be stressed, in the context of Ephesians 5, that Paul is issuing a strong command for love. Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church. The Greek verb is *agapao*. This is a positive love, an act of will which reaches out for the other person and desires the other's best interest. But this, too, involves affection. When we read that Christ loved the church, does this not convey his affection for the church? In the same way, when we read that husbands

ought to love their wives, this clearly includes affection. Yet there is more: love in Ephesians 5 means *eros* as well. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one" (Ephesians 5:31). Leaving, cleaving, and joining here cannot be explained except with reference to the strong sexual attraction of male and female. In other words, the husband should love his wife in terms of her best interest, but in marriage there is also a special place for romance.

How does all this relate to the husband as head of the wife and to the wife as subject to her husband? The answer is that true love between husband and wife transforms it all and makes it all work! Earlier, I said that I do not believe that Paul in Ephesians 5:21 is speaking of mutual subjection, that is, that Paul is requiring the husband to submit to the wife as well as the wife to submit to the husband. Now I want to take this one step further: the idea of mutual subjection *is* taught in Scripture, and it is in the word "love." There is no love between husband and wife where there is not mutual subjection, and mutual subjection is only possible in an atmosphere of love.

So it is not true, Biblically speaking, that in marriage more is required of the wife than the husband. Anyone who says this has simply failed to recognize the demands of love. Biblically speaking, husband and wife are to give to each other sexually (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). If they are to give in to the needs of one another sexually, how much more are they to give in to each other in other matters as well! Love and submission go together. When a Christian lady marries, she voluntarily yields herself in subjection to her husband. When a Christian man takes a wife, he voluntarily submits to her in his love for her. He nourishes

and cares for her as Christ does the church.

The problem, in reality, is not so much what the Bible teaches about headship and subjection, but rather what the Bible teaches about love. The reason why husbands cannot “give orders” to wives is because love does not command. “Love does not insist on its own way” (1 Corinthians 13:5). The reason why wives cannot rebel and revolt against husbands is because love seeks to serve and “bear all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7). Either husband or wife that “loves to rule” abolishes the Christ-principle of the “rule of love.”

I want to conclude with some brief statements on other matters that I had intended to discuss, but will not be able to do so because of lack of time. Perhaps some of these points will be raised in the question and answer period.

1. The Biblical teaching on headship and subjection does not concern inherent superiority or inferiority. Jesus was subject to his parents. Was he inferior to them?

2. The Biblical teaching on husbands and wives is perfectly consistent with Biblical teaching elsewhere. Paul who teaches that the husband is the head of the wife in the home is the same Paul who does not allow the wife to teach or rule in the church.

3. The Biblical teaching on husbands and wives is not temporary. Because Paul seems in 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14 to be dealing with Christian women who perhaps were causing problems, nevertheless this is not the case in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, and 1 Timothy 2 (nor in 1 Peter 3).

4. The Biblical teaching on husband and wife is not cultural. Because Paul and Peter directed slaves to obey their masters (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22 - 4:1;

1 Peter 2:18-25), — directions which would give way with the end of slavery—this does not argue that “husband headship” has no application in our culture today. In Ephesians, for example, immediately after the section on husbands and wives, children are told to obey their parents (6:1). Is obedience to parents cultural? As to slavery, the New Testament treats it altogether differently from the divinely instituted relationships of husband and wife and of parents and children. Gerhard Delling has written an extraordinarily fine article on the meaning of *hypotasso* (“subject”).¹³ Concerning slavery in the New Testament, he states: “The submission of slaves to their masters is demanded. . . , but not because slavery is ordained by God. . . . Slavery is accepted as a social reality which primitive Christianity was not in a position to abolish externally. Among Christians it could be overcome in *agape*. . . .” The last statement is significant. Slavery, and problems connected with it, “among Christians could be overcome in *agape*.”

This has been my purpose in this paper. To paraphrase the above statement: among Christians any problem pertaining to husband’s headship and wife’s subjection can be overcome by *agape*. “My beloved is mine and I am his” (Song of Solomon 2:16).

¹Students of the Harding Graduate School made arrangements for the publication of the lectures: *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives* (Memphis: Student Association Press, 1978).

²For a good summary on the *Haustafeln* (pl.), see P. T. O’Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary* Vol. 44, *Colossians, Philemon* (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 214-220); cf. also D. Schroeder, “Lists, Ethical,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplement*, 546-547; F. Stagg,

“The Domestic Code and Final Appeal Ephesians 5:21 - 6:24,” *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979), 541-552; E. G. Hinson, “The Christian Household in Colossians 3:18 - 4:1,” *Review and Expositor* 70 (1973), 495-506.

³J. Paul Sampley, *‘And the Two Shall Become One Flesh,’ A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 117.

⁴*Phobos* is the word for “fear”; “respect” and “reverence” may well be undertranslations of the concept.

⁵“One flesh” is the equivalent of “one person” or “one body.” Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 743; cf. the translations of the NEB and the RSV.

⁶Literally, *kata gnōsin*, “according to (Christian) knowledge”—with tact and understanding based on a knowledge of the gospel. Perhaps above all things, wives want “consideration” from their husbands.

⁷Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, 430.

⁸C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 248f.; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), 103; C. Brown, “Head,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* II, 162, but Brown apparently contradicts K. Munzer in the same article.

⁹W. Grudem, “Does *kephale* (“head”) Mean “Source” or “Authority Over” in Greek Literature? A survey of 2,336 Examples,” in George W. Knight III, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 49-80.

¹⁰Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, 848.

¹¹E. g., D. Fennema, “Unity in Marriage,” *Reformed Review* 25 (1971), 65.

¹²Careful students of the Fourth Gospel know that John uses *phile* and *agape* interchangeably. Cf. parallel statements in the Gospels, for example, Matthew 23:6 - Luke 11:43, where Matthew uses *agapao* and Luke uses *phileo*. On *agape*, among other works, see C. C. Tarelli, “AGAPE,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 1 (1950), 64-67, and W.

Harrelson, "The Idea of Agape in the New Testament," *Journal of Religion* 31 (1951), 169-182.

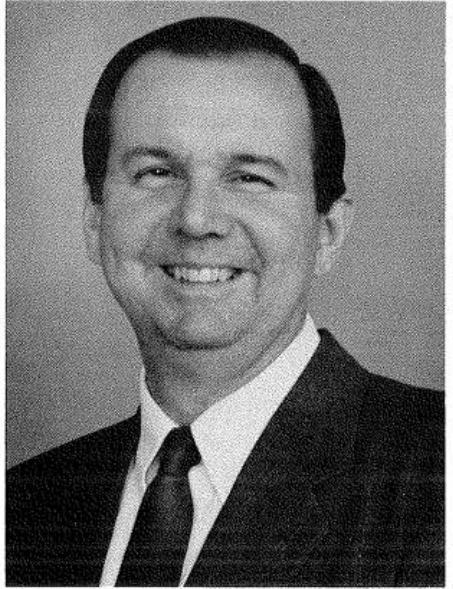
¹³*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VIII, 44.

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Paul's Motive For Forbidding Women To Teach

Tommy South

“Traditional” vs. “Feminist” Interpretation

There has been considerable controversy in recent years over what is sometimes called the “traditional” vs. the “feminist” interpretation of Paul’s statements forbidding women to teach and preach. Because it is in some ways the most absolute of these statements, 1 Timothy 2:12 has become a hotly-debated text and the object of much painstaking exegesis. Out of this discussion has arisen a widespread challenge to the traditional view that Paul disallowed women as teachers of men in the church in favor of a broader interpretation which would allow these roles for women. This challenge comes not only from advocates of theological liberalism but from many conservative/evangelical scholars as well.¹

Proponents of a more “feminist” reading of 1 Timothy 2:12 have attacked the traditional interpretation from an amazing variety of angles, only a few of which can be briefly discussed here. Some would deny that Paul ever wrote such a thing by maintaining that 1 Timothy is the work of a later, more authoritarian individual who based his thinking on 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. They then point out that the latter passage is textually questionable and conclude that Paul wrote neither 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 nor 1 Timothy 2:12.² Space will not permit a discussion

of the authorship question, but suffice it to say that such arguments are highly questionable, especially when 1 Timothy 2:12 is made to be dependent on 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. It is arbitrary to dismiss them together, and many scholars who deny that Paul wrote 1 Timothy still maintain the genuineness of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. But unless both texts can be dismissed with certainty, the problem remains. Others appeals to Galatians 3:28 as Paul's "classic statement" on male/female relations within the church, and argue that 1 Timothy 2:12 and similar texts must be interpreted in light of the great principle that all sexual distinctions have been abolished in Christ.³ But there is no justification for making Galatians 3:28 the definitive statement on sex roles, since the male/female reference there is only a passing one, and the context shows that sex roles is not Paul's topic. Paul does not elaborate the implications of his male/female reference, and it is a giant assumption to interpret it as abolishing all sex roles within Christianity.⁴ It is more accurate to see Galatians 3:28 as a statement of spiritual equality in Christ but not as a programmatic discussion of sex roles.

Another attempt to mitigate the absoluteness of Paul's prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12 is to maintain that he is not forbidding women to teach, but to teach in such a way as to domineer over men.⁵ From this point of view, Paul's concern is not with the *fact* of women teaching but the *manner* of their teaching. It is true that *authenteo* can mean "to domineer" or "lord it over,"⁶ but that it means so here is open to question. And the construction *didaskein . . . oude authentein* ("to teach or to have authority over") seems to refer to two separate but closely

related activities,⁷ so that it seems unjustified to take *authenteo* as governing the meaning of *didaskein*, as this argument proposes. Besides, it is clear from verses 13-15 that Paul is concerned about *women teaching*, not *how* they teach. If his concern were the abuse of authority, he would speak to both men *and* women.

Perhaps the most widely advocated "feminist" explanation, especially among conservative scholars, is to accept the absoluteness of Paul's prohibition but to maintain that it was never meant to be universal in application. Some writers appeal to cultural limitations — i.e., Paul's words were valid for the time in which he wrote them, but times have changed. A more specific suggestion is that Paul was combatting a Gnostic tendency at Ephesus in which women occupied privileged positions.⁸ Thus Paul would be opposing the heretical tendency, not the teaching activity of women. Evans suggests that the general lack of education among women in the First Century caused Paul to prohibit them from teaching in keeping with 1:7, but that he would not say the same were he writing today.⁹ But it is important to notice that Paul mentions no such cultural/situational factors in the context of 1 Timothy 2:12. Rather, he offers a theological justification (vv. 13-15) that is universal in scope, as he does also in 1 Corinthians 11:3-12. And as Douglas Moo points out, "it is not legitimate to limit the scope of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 simply by mentioning cultural or historical factors which *could* have been operative; the presence of such a factor must be adequately demonstrated."¹⁰

Other similar arguments are currently being made against the traditional interpretation, but these are sufficient to illuminate the nature of the problem.

The Question of Paul's Motive

All of this raises a significant question: What is it about 1 Timothy 2:12 that causes so many sincere Bible students not to want to accept what appears to be its obvious intention?¹¹ One of the chief problems, it would seem, is the question, not of *what* Paul says, but *why* he says what he does. What is his *motive* for forbidding women to teach or to have authority over men in a formal setting? Does he intend to demean women, to treat them as second-class citizens of the kingdom? Does he mean to suggest that they are less intelligent, more ignorant, or more prone to error than men are? If we are not comfortable with these suggestions, we may be uncomfortable with the prohibition itself and thus try to lessen it in some way. And if we are not satisfied with this procedure, we are still left with the question of what motivated Paul to write as he did.

1 Timothy 2:12 in Context

Two statements in 1 Timothy are helpful in establishing Paul's purpose for saying what he does in 2:12. The first is 1:3-7, where Paul urges Timothy to "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine," then goes on to explain that these persons desire to teach but lack the required understanding. The second statement is 3:14-15, where Paul expressly states that he is "writing these instructions. . .so that. . .you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God. . . ." In between these two statements lies a series of instructions pertaining to public worship (2:1-15)¹² and church leadership (3:1-13). So these instructions combine a concern for doctrinal accuracy with an

equal concern for good church order.

Part of this dual concern involves the respective roles of men and women in worship. Paul specifies that the men are to lead the prayers in a peaceable spirit (v. 8)¹³ and that women should properly adorn themselves in a way that will not bring undue criticism against the church (vv. 9-10). He then addresses the woman's role in the teaching and learning activities of the church. Verse 11 states that she is to learn in "quietness"¹⁴ with a submissive attitude — i.e., to take the role of a learner. Verse 12 states negatively what v. 11 says positively; i.e., the spirit of quiet submission means that women are not to take the role of teachers of the church in a formal sense,¹⁵ since to do so would put them in an authoritative position over men. Verses 13-15 provide the justification for such a prohibition, as Paul appeals to the order of creation and the fact that it was the woman who was deceived and not the man. He then moves to the subject of the qualifications of those who are to lead the church (ch. 3).

Verses 13 - 15 and the Question of Motive

The closest thing to an indication of motive within the text itself is vv. 13-15. But it is not the function of these verses to state Paul's motive so much as to justify from scripture the prohibition just given. But as noted earlier, these verses do affect the question of motive by ruling against the conclusion that Paul spoke only to a specific cultural and/or temporal situation. By making reference to the creation account and the story of the fall into sin, he universalizes his prohibition on a distinctly theological basis. But exactly what does Paul imply by this statement of justification? First, it is wrong to conclude that he in-

tends to portray Eve as the sole culprit in the first occasion of sin and to exonerate Adam, as if to say that women are inherently more prone to sin than men are. Paul concentrates upon the woman because it is her role that is under discussion; and in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 he is very clear about Adam's responsibility for sin and death.¹⁶ Second, there is no need to read vv. 13-15 as a generalization about the "deceivability" of women. Stephen Clark argues that Paul's words should be read not as a statement of empirical evidence but as a *typology* which would have appealed to the minds of first-century Jews and Christians. Paul does not state that "woman is deceivable" but that "the woman was deceived."

The typological mode of thought would assume that if the woman was deceived and not the man, then the scripture must be indicating something about the place of women. Otherwise, scripture would not have preserved that feature of the story. Eve is a type of "woman" and the fact that she was deceived is a part of this portrayal. It is a fact which a typological mode of thought would see as a basis for what "woman" should do or not do. Therefore, 1 Timothy 2 might not be concerned with the deceivability of woman, but simply with the fact that "the woman was deceived."¹⁷

This is an attractive explanation of these otherwise difficult verses, and if correct, it would imply that Paul taught the headship/leadership of man because he believed that the Bible (the Old Testament) taught it. It is not necessary to insist that he must have had another "reason" than this. For Paul that would be reason

enough. Clark argues that sex roles are a necessary part of social structure and that Paul's words both here and elsewhere acknowledge that fact but without stating it in just that way. It is certainly not impossible that Paul had this in mind when he wrote vv. 13-15, since in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 he has a great deal to say about social roles. And it is vital to recognize that in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Paul is discussing roles and not relative worth. This ought not to need emphasis, but it is a point repeatedly missed or ignored by those who wish to make out Paul (or whoever they consider to be the author of 1 Timothy) to be a rigidly authoritarian chauvinist.¹⁸ But equality and differentiation of roles are not mutually exclusive. For example, 1 Peter 3:7 recognizes that both husband and wife are "joint heirs" of grace, yet the man is to honor his wife as the "weaker vessel." An analogy from the Old Testament¹⁹ would be the role of the first-born son, who was granted a certain status solely on the basis of having been born first (Genesis 27:18ff, 43:33; Deuteronomy 21:15-17). No intrinsic value made him occupy his position. Likewise, it is not by virtue of worth that Paul says that men should teach and women learn. He simply says that "Adam was formed first." When he adds that it was the woman and not the man who was deceived, we may take this simply as support for the correctness of the supposition that being first puts the man in the leadership role.

Teaching as an Authoritative Function

But we still must ask why Paul singles out teaching as an activity in which women, because of their role differentiation, are not to participate. This question becomes even more pertinent when we recall that in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5

he indicates that women may pray and prophesy (though he does not specify the circumstances under which they may do so). To modern minds this prohibition against teaching may seem arbitrary and unnecessary and may promote the desire to give something other than the traditional interpretation to 1 Timothy 2:12, especially in the case of those who wish to have women participate in “ordained ministry.”

Much of this has to do with our modern conception of teaching, which is basically the imparting of information. But in the ancient world, teaching was by nature an authoritative act. Teaching and learning were not simply related activities, but involved a relationship of authority and submission between teacher and pupil.²⁰ This of necessity implied that only certain people, qualified by their gifts and knowledge, should function in the teaching role. This concept may seem foreign in the church today, where the primary requirement for a teacher is the willingness to stand before a class, but it is strongly reflected in the New Testament. For example, in Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11, teaching is said to be a gift which God bestows on certain people for the benefit of the entire church. Acts 13:1 reveals that there were resident in the church at Antioch a class of “prophets and teachers,” who are listed by name. In the Pastoral Letters themselves there is an obvious concern that only qualified teachers who can speak with authority be heard in the church. We have already observed 1 Timothy 1:3-7 where Paul deplores the problem of people wanting to teach who do not have the necessary understanding and teach false doctrine as a result. To counter this, he specifies the kinds of people who are to teach.

Especially significant is the teaching role of elders/bishops, who must be capable of instructing the church in order to be qualified to carry out their intended function (1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17; Titus 1:9-11). Timothy himself, as Paul's emissary, is to "command and teach," to "take heed to yourself and to your teaching," and to "teach and urge these duties" (1 Timothy 4:11, 4:16, 6:2b-3), all suggesting teaching with authority. In 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul instructs Timothy to hand on the teaching role to men who are both faithful and capable — not just willing. In the same letter Paul declares himself to be an appointed teacher (1:11) and reminds Timothy that "you have observed my teaching" (3:10). He urges Timothy to handle the word of truth rightly (2:15); to be, as God's servant, "an apt teacher" (2:24); and to be "unfailing in patience and in teaching" (4:2).

It appears that Paul's concept of teaching is more restrictive than ours, that he viewed the teaching role as one of authority for which one must be qualified by knowledge and gifts. This concept of teaching helps us make sense of James' generally ignored admonition: "Let not many of you become teachers" (3:1). With our discussion-group-oriented concept of Bible teaching today, we need the reminder that teaching, in the formal sense at least, is an authoritative function.

Conclusion

That is why Paul forbids the teaching function to women. It is an authority and leadership role, and scripture has, according to Paul's understanding, assigned these roles to men. It was enough for Paul that scripture said so, trusting in the validity of God's design. We may

not fully understand the reasoning behind this design, and certain aspects of our culture may make it difficult for us to construe Paul's words as he meant them, but his intention is clear. Hopefully that will be enough for us also.

¹For a sampling of conservative/evangelical scholars who challenge the traditional view, see Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), and Mary J. Evans, *Women in the Bible* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1983).

²"Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals are thus immediately discarded and, for our purposes, hopefully forgotten. Also to be discarded as a post-Pauline gloss is 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36. . ." (Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XL, 1972, 284). Cf. M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972, 49). Even so conservative an author as F. F. Bruce has recently suggested non-Pauline authorship as a possible solution to the problem of how the church's great liberator came to be regarded as an authoritarian ("The Enigma of Paul," *Bible Review*, August, 1988, 32-33).

³Bilezikian (126-28) regards Galatians 3:28 as one of two "inaugural statements of the new (Christian) community" on the subject of sex roles (along with Acts 2:17-21), and argues that all apparent exceptions to these statements (including 1 Timothy 2:12) must be interpreted in light of them.

⁴For a full critique of this abuse of Galatians 3:28, see the excellent discussion in Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1980, 138-50).

⁵Evans, 103.

⁶See Carroll D. Osburn, "Authenteo (1 Timothy 2:12)" *Restoration Quarterly* No. 25 (1982) 3-12.

⁷Douglas J. Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," *Trinity Journal* 1 (new series) (1980) 68.

⁸Dibelius and Conzelmann, 48-49.

⁹Evans, 103-08. Also, Ronald A. Ward, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1974): "The able Christian woman of today would not fall into the errors of doctrine to which the women of Paul's day were prone" (52).

¹⁰Moo, 73.

¹¹Even many of those who reject the traditional interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12 will acknowledge that its intent is quite clear: "However, regardless of the details, the conclusion is inescapable, that as a lowest common denominator to this diversity of views, Paul places a restraint on the didactic ministry of women in the church" (Bilezikian, 174). Irene M. Robbins rejects the Pauline authorship of 1 Timothy but acknowledges that 2:12 is "plain, straightforward, and definite" ("St. Paul and the Ministry of Women," *Expository Times* 46, 1934-35, 185-88).

¹²While Paul does not explicitly state that he is talking about public worship in Chapter 2, almost all commentators agree that worship is what he has in mind. This is implied not only in the statement about behavior in the household of God, suggesting a corporate setting (3:14-15), but also in the reference to "prayers" (2:1), the plural suggesting the formal prayers of the church, as in Acts 2:42. Also, if the "men" are to do the praying (2:8), Paul must be thinking of worship, or women would be forbidden to pray at all. "In every place," then, means every place of worship. See Neil R. Lightfoot, *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives* (Memphis: Student Association Press, 1978) 31-32. For exceptions to the view that Paul is discussing public worship, see Dibelius and Conzelmann, 44 and 47, and Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 74.

¹³Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), makes the often-overlooked point that Paul is not concerned solely with the conduct of women in worship, but gives instructions to the men as well (29).

¹⁴The noun *hesuchia* can be translated as either "silence" (RSV) or "quietness," but the latter seems preferable here. The point is not for

women to be silent, but for them to learn in a spirit of quiet submission.

¹⁵This would not exclude women teaching women (Titus 2:3-4) or children, nor would it forbid them to teach in informal evangelical settings (Acts 18:26).

¹⁶Moo, 69-70.

¹⁷Clark, 204. Ronald W. Pierce, "Male/Female Leadership and Korah's Revolt: An Analogy?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30 (1987) 3-10, tentatively supports the view that vv. 13-15 are not "logical" but typological.

¹⁸E.g., Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975): "Women, according to the author, are to take a subordinate role to men in the teaching of the church. . . for they are inferior in their gifts, so far as the teaching office is concerned" (60). For a contrary view, see C.K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 53-56.

¹⁹George W. Knight III, *The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 13-14.

²⁰E. Lohse, "rhabbi, rhabbouni," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel VI (1968) 961-965; K. Wegenast, "Teach, Instruct, etc." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. by Colin Brown III (1978) 759ff. Cf. Clark, 196.