

CHALCEDON

No. 401, DECEMBER 1998

Report



plus . . . R. J. Rushdoony on Infallibility

Andrew Sandlin on Confrontational Theology

Brian Abshire introducing Reformed Heritage Churches

Steve Schlissel on Reformed Matchmaking

plus much more

CHALCEDON *Report*

A Monthly Report Dealing With the Relationship of Christian Faith to the World

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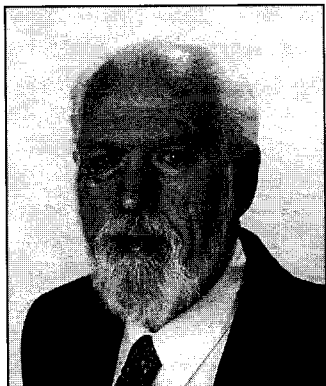
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The Doctrine of God and Infallibility

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony

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Scripture tells me that God, being God, is incapable of lying (Num. 23:9). Jesus Christ more explicitly defines himself as the way, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14:6). There is no access to the Godhead except through him. Scripture is explicit about identifying Jesus Christ with the Godhead, and God as *the truth*.

This doctrine of God is thus very important in the doctrine of Scripture. God cannot lie. He is also immutable, unchangeable. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. "For I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). Change means that things outside ourselves affect and govern our being. As creatures, we are dependent on a world of other peoples and a vast creation made by God. God has no such need for others nor a need for anything outside himself. In fact, God expresses his displeasure with all double-minded men (Ja. 1:6-7).

There can be nothing prior to the one and eternal God so that there is nothing that can contribute to his being. He is forever one God in three Persons, and forever one, yet in three Persons. God who cannot lie is thus forever *truth*, and all that he is and does is truth. *God therefore can speak only an infallible word*. In all other religions except those which have borrowed from or are imitative of the Bible, there is no doctrine of inerrancy nor infallibility. Bible religion, on the other hand, mandates it. The God who speaks in and through the Bible speaks a necessarily infallible word. God is internally and eternally God, all wise and all perfect in all his being. His perfection is also a *moral* perfection, whereas in some religions this moral perfection is lacking, or is replaced by cleverness. Some native religions saw in their supreme being no moral excellence, but a constant cleverness that was a delight, rather than a moral strength.

Unless a religion arises after Christianity and is imitative of it, it has no doctrine of inerrancy nor infallibility because the question is essentially alien to it. On the other hand, in Christianity, the doctrine of infallibility is an inescapable implication of its doctrines of God and revelation.

When we turn to the Bible, as against two works written as imitations thereof, the differences are many. Believers in the *Koran*, and in the *Book of Mormon*, are as convinced, as are Christians, in the truth and historicity of those works.

They are given as true and historical. Much criticism has been leveled against both works, and we have no intention here of reporting on the history of this criticism.

Both the *Koran* and the *Book of Mormon* purport to be in continuity with the Bible, so they begin by making a claim to a final place in the history of revelation. The final truth in the history of revelation is in them, or will come through them. Islam left room for a great prophet yet to come, a king or warrior king or emahdi, and Mormonism believes in a continuing revelation through the hands of the twelve apostles who rule the church. Thus, the finality of revelation is denied even as an arena of authoritative rule is set forth. The finality of the enscriptured word is replaced with the finality of some men. In this step, a dramatic change in the faith has taken place, and a shift in authority. In the place of the infallible work, we have the binding authority of a group of men. The new revelations undermine the Biblical one.

Orthodox theology thus speaks of the Bible's "verbal inspiration," "plenary inspiration," and so on. The Scriptures are the very words of God, the oracles of God. Van Til thus wrote, "... we may thus call this view of God and his relation to the world the *covenantal* view. As such it is exhaustively personal. There is no area in which man can find himself confronted with impersonal fact or law. All so-called impersonal laws and all so-called uninterpreted facts are what they are because they are expressive of the revelation of God's will and purpose" (C. Van Til: *The Doctrine of Scripture* [Den Dulk Foundation, 1967], p. 37). This should tell us why the language of covenantalism is Reformed and Van Tilian. It is alien to antinomianism and holds to the personal and covenantal law of the Triune God.

Basic to Biblical Faith, to the Reformed Faith, is the belief in the sovereignty of God. The term *lord* is applied to God in both Old and New Testaments and is in the Septuagint routinely rendered as *lord*, God, or sovereign. Calvinism has done justice to the doctrine of God's sovereignty and therefore has been most ready to champion inerrancy, because basic to that view of Scripture is God's lordship or sovereignty.

Where men reject God's sovereignty, they accept and exalt man's sovereignty, and man's reason then prevails over faith and God's sovereignty. Rationalism then too prevails over presuppositionalism, and theology is supplanted with humanistic calculations. We have then the world of the contemporary church, with God locked out by supposedly sovereign man.

The infallible God of Scripture can speak only an infallible word, and this he has done. No other word is possible from such a God. Humanism in its every form will

require a god who cannot speak, or who speaks with a confused tongue. The God of Scripture is not such a God. He is *the Lord*, the Sovereign King over all creation. His word is the creating word, the infallible and inerrant word.

In affirming the word of God as infallible, we affirm our faith that the God of Scripture is he whom he says he is, and that we believe his every word, and by his grace, hope to live in terms of his every word.

EDITORIAL

Confrontational Theology

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin



It is the sign of an emasculated and effete church that it refuses to confront difficult theological issues, combat pernicious doctrinal heresies, and insists, rather, on attempting to synthesize contrary theological viewpoints. An obvious example is the so-called “two”- or “three”-point Calvinists. This is the

illogic which attempts to create theological harmony between two competing systems. The fact is that if one affirms the first of five points of Calvinism, total depravity, he will be “irresistibly pushed to affirm all five points.

An even more pervasive and significant example is the question of heresy and other theological perversion within the bosom of a church or denomination. The notion of “peaceful coexistence” between theological modernists and Bible believers within a single denomination is a Pollyanna faith. As Machen demonstrated so powerfully in *Christianity and Liberalism*, the latter is a different religion altogether from Christianity. It operates on entirely different premises and leads to entirely different conclusions. Within a church or denomination, therefore, these two rival faiths, if consistently practiced, will work relentlessly to supplant each

other. Unfortunately, late last century and early this century, the modernists were more epistemologically self-conscious than the Bible believers, and thus were able to purge most major Protestant denominations of orthodoxy. In more recent years, the Bible believers of both the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Southern Baptist Convention have grasped the implications of the irreconcilability of these two separate premises and have, by and large, purged their respective denominations of heresy and unbelief.

Their success presupposes *confrontational theology*. All too frequently what passes for conservative theology these days is little more than abstract, ivory-tower exercise by newsletter or Internet warriors interested only in erudite theological speculation. They often fail to understand—or else refuse to grant—that theological perspectives cannot but produce certain practical consequences. Arminian theology, for example, produces a different sort of individual and different sort of church than Calvinist theology. Karl Marx argued that the governing factor in men’s lives from which all their actions spring is economics—the relation between economic classes. This is flatly erroneous. The fundamental issue in human society because it issues from the very core of man’s being is *religious*, and therefore theological. Men act as they do because they possess certain theological convictions. The Protestant conception of the church, for example, is quite different from the Roman Catholic conception of the church, just as the Reformed conception of the church is different

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from the Lutheran conception of the church. This is because each conception of the church originates from a different theology. And what is true about conceptions of the church is equally true about conceptions of theology proper, soteriology, Christology, and on down the theological line.

The modern—even conservative—temper inclines to the view that it can create an ecumenical unity by overlooking mutually incompatible theological systems. This was the nonsense espoused in the World Council of Churches and that led, not surprisingly, to a complete repudiation of orthodox Christianity and adoption of a new orthodoxy—socialism, goddess religion and relativism. The history of the World Council of Churches testifies that orthodox Christianity is an exclusive religion. To say that we are orthodox, Biblical Christians, is to say, among other things, that those who have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and as a result have not placed faith in Christ's redemptive work are outside the pale of salvation. This is not an impolite, acrimonious claim; it is simply a statement of fact. This exclusiveness inherent in Christianity runs counter to the ecumenical program whose ultimate goal is unity, and not truth. It has things backward. Biblically, unity is grounded in truth, not vice versa.

I will never forget an episode that occurred while I was pastoring in northeast Ohio which graphically demonstrated this truth. The organizers for our county's annual Day of Prayer asked me to serve on the steering committee. One of the first items of business was deciding whom we should ask to pray at the public gathering. I responded, "Well, first of all, we need to establish some sort of theological criteria for anyone we would consider." I mentioned as a basic standard the Apostles' Creed. One of the other ministers on the steering committee (it was a she) argued, "Well, we don't want to exclude anybody that is a Christian."

I responded, "Lady, if someone cannot publicly affirm the bare orthodoxy of the Apostles' Creed, he is not fit to pray at a local National Day of Prayer meeting."

In the modern world, the creeds are often perceived as divisive. *Of course, the creeds are divisive.* They were devised initially to divide those who embraced and taught right doctrine from those who embraced and taught wrong doctrine. Not only the Biblical writers, but also the patristic fathers, were dedicated to just such confrontational theology.

Until we recover a theology of confrontation, we can expect the prevalence of heresy and other theological deviation within the church. Of course, I distinguish between confrontational theology and acerbic theology. Two points here are worth considering. The first is that a theology of confrontation is not equivalent to a theology of acrimony. We are called to speak the truth in love; and when our defense of the Faith degenerates into rancor, talebearing, and slander, it has become manifestly sinful.

Second, we must distinguish between cardinal elements of the Faith and important but secondary doctrines. This

is the function of the ecumenical creeds. We do not fight over the gifts of the Spirit, the mode of baptism, and the precise details of eschatology with the same vehemence with which we defend the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, the deity of Christ, his second Advent, and so forth. A prime reason that modern fundamentalists, for example, continually splinter churches and denominations is that they place issues of skirt length, Bible translation, and theater attendance virtually on a par with issues of creedal orthodoxy. Theirs frequently is not a confrontational theology, but an ill-informed theology.

We must never, however, permit the errors of acrimonious and ill-informed theology to force us to abandon confrontational theology. Unfortunately, most of the modern church has in fact abandoned confrontational theology. It will not recover confrontational theology *until it recovers a sense of the centrality of truth and the vitality of orthodoxy.*

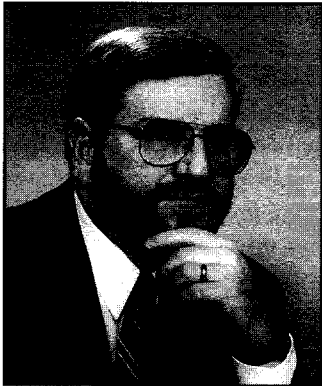
The fundamental feature of Christian religion is that it corresponds to God-created reality. It does not exist as a postulate of the experience of man. In other words, Christianity is an objective fact. Until the modern church recognizes that this, at the core, is what Christianity really is, it will dismiss confrontational theology.

In addition, confrontational theology will lie dormant as long as concern for orthodoxy lies dormant. The modern church is rife with existentialism, the concern with the existential moment, and not the claims of historic Christianity. But God has decreed that Christianity has come down to us in certain historical forms, primarily Christian orthodoxy. We do not mean by this, of course, that tradition is a coordinate source of revelation or that Christianity is *merely* an historical religion. It is the religion created by the living, Triune God. However, this religion comes to us in particular historical circumstances, and since God shapes history according to his predestinating decree, we can be certain that he has led his church in affirming the truth of the outlines of the Faith. This point Charles Hodge argued masterfully in his *Systematic Theology*. The accurate summary of foundational Christian truth is hammered out in the ecumenical creeds; the Faith is more fully fleshed out in the later Reformation confessions. To a church that is interested in entertainment and experience rather than doctrine and history, nonetheless, these creeds are stale relics of a past best forgotten. We must recover, therefore, not only a sense of the objective truth-claims of Christianity, but also the objective truth-claims of historic orthodoxy. Then we will be in a position to recover a confrontational theology, since we will have a standard by which to judge the competing religions within the cacophony of voices in the modern world.

It is only when theology again becomes confrontational that the church and Christianity will again become relevant. Theology will become confrontational only when theology is taken seriously; and when theology is taken seriously, Christianity and Christian civilization will be taken seriously.

Introducing Reformed Heritage Churches

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire



In the thirty-five years of Chalcedon's ministry, Rush has affected literally millions of lives. Through his writing and speaking, he helped create a hunger for a truly Biblical faith by throwing down the gauntlet before a compromised evangelicalism. As a consequence, thousands of people have

become dissatisfied with "business as usual" Christianity and expect the church to be more than a spiritual social club or an ecclesiastical bureaucracy.

Steve Schlissel extended Rush's vision by pioneering a new way for churches to relate to each other through his Council of Reformed Officers. His concept of an "ad hoc" presbytery offers a viable alternative to the concentration of power and money that has made most Presbyterian denominations little more than tempting targets for hostile liberal takeovers. However, Steve's method only works within established churches. To use his mechanism, one must belong to a church ruled by elders.

But there are thousands of families across the country who cannot find a good local Reformed church to join. Many have given up on the idea of belonging to a "real" church and have had to be satisfied with conducting weekly worship in their homes. In a way, this is Rush's fault; he gave us a vision for what the church is supposed to be, and helped make us dissatisfied with the *status quo*. What else were people to do but leave apostate and culturally irrelevant churches, even if that meant that a home church was the only option?

Of course, this is not a satisfactory long-term solution. As important as is the father's role as the family's spiritual head, the family and the church are distinct spheres of government. God has entrusted certain duties and responsibilities to the church that he has not given to the family. He has given the church gifts and graces that the family—no matter how godly—does not have. There are ministries to the family that the church and only the church can provide; and the family is poorer without the care and government of godly elders.

However, what alternatives are there when the only local churches available are pietistic, antinomian, Arminian and hopelessly compromised in worship and practice? How can a godly man submit himself and his family to the government of such institutions? On the

other hand, how can his family grow in grace and wisdom when deprived of the godly oversight of God's church? Therefore, though many people have been "going it alone" for years, they still long to be a part of a broader group of believers who share the same values, priorities, and theology. A many-stranded cord is hard to break; two walking together are stronger than one walking alone. We all need to be part of a broader church.

One solution is for families lacking a good local Reformed church to move where there is such a fellowship. However, it is not always possible for people to uproot their families and find employment in another section of the country. Furthermore, in today's mobile society, one might move to an area to join a church, only to find that the pastor soon intends to leave for another work!

I receive calls weekly from people around the country who want to belong to the kind of church we are building in Modesto. Each day, my email box is full of questions, queries, and concerns from godly families who struggle in intolerable situations. My heart goes out to them, and I have come to treasure some of these people greatly. Yes, I can help them resolve some of their present problems (and am honored to help do so), but they need a church, a local church, with elders to watch over them.

A number of these families have asked to join us as associate members. They are tired of going it alone; they want a council of godly elders to care for their souls; they want to be identified with a specific church. While we are pleased to offer them oversight, it does not solve the problem. They need a local church. Modern technology, as wonderful as it is, is not a substitute for personal, day-to-day contact. We decided that we had a responsibility to these precious saints to help them organize local churches to which they can belong.

It began with a number of families in the San Francisco/San Jose area (about 70 miles from Modesto) who were long-time *Chalcedon Report* readers. They were scattered in various tiny house churches or enduring antinomian-type traditional evangelical churches. We invited them to Modesto for our monthly, all-day seminar that Andrew Sandlin and I teach.

The response was explosive. Within three months, Reformed Heritage of Modesto had grown to more than five times its original size. By the end of the summer, we had more people attending from the Bay Area than from Modesto! But commuting two hours to church once a month does not meet the criteria for local church involvement. Therefore, with the help of a number of

godly leaders from the Bay Area, we organized Reformed Heritage Church of San Jose—one church, two locations.

The Bay Area members now meet weekly as a separate congregation. I share preaching duties three times a month with my predecessor, Reformed Heritage's pastor emeritus "Smoky" Stover. We will help provide the congregation with a full-time pastor next year. Meanwhile, on the fourth Sunday, both congregations meet in Modesto for an all-day service that includes the sacraments, worship and teaching from new books on which Andrew and I are collaborating.

However, the story does not end there. The folks from San Jose were just the beginning. In October, we took the first steps to help organize Reformed Heritage Church of Bend, Oregon. Again, long-time *Chalcedon* readers were struggling without a consistently Reformed church nearby. Several families were meeting weekly to worship and listen to Rush's and Steve Schilssel's tapes. Now, they have decided to join us as members, and we are helping them organize this small fellowship into a new Reformed church. News seems to travel fast; now, across the country, a number of other *Chalcedon Report* readers have also asked us for help in starting a good, consistently Reformed church in their area.

Reformed Heritage provides government and pastoral care for these fledgling works until they get off the ground. We supply teaching tapes, Bible study aids, training materials, and technical expertise to help them start a good church. We show them how to reach out to their neighbors, start home Bible studies that work, and minister to their community. In January we will begin video-taping each week's service so that our "daughter" churches can follow the order of service, watch the sermon, and make local applications. In this way, we can provide teaching for these groups until they are ready for all the responsibilities of being an organized congregation.

If there are any problems, cares or concerns, Reformed Heritage offers oversight, counseling, and guidance. Once the church is up and running and can support a full-time pastor, we will use Steve Schlissel's mechanism to ordain elders, adjudicate disputes, etc.

Do you see the vision? Rather than isolated households holding the enemy off alone, we are joining forces and extending the Kingdom.

Does this sound too ambitious for one small church to help organize so many others? Well, the Baptists, and Methodist circuit-riding preachers won a continent using a low-tech version of this same strategy. One man would minister to thousands of people separated by hundreds of square miles.

If you have been deeply influenced by Rush's work over the years and found yourself at odds with contemporary evangelicalism; if you want to be a part of a church that emphasizes the historic Reformed Faith without compromise; if your dedication to providing your children with a Christian education has made you an outsider; if you are tired of the bland, tasteless pabulum that passes for preaching; if you hunger to be part of a group of like-minded believers who are committed to advancing the kingdom, call us. If possible, we'll put you into contact with other like-minded believers in your area and help you organize a church. If you are a pastor tired of having to watch every word lest an enemy "out" you and destroy your career, talk to us. Maybe we can hook you up with a small house church that could be the beginning of something wonderful.

It is time to stop going it alone. One ember by itself, soon cools and dies. But many embers placed together can start an unquenchable fire. We need each other, and Reformed Heritage Church wants to help.

For more information on how you can become part of a Reformed Heritage church in your area, please contact Brian Abshire at Reformed Heritage Church, P. O. Box 578357, Modesto, CA 95357, Telephone (209) 544-1572, email Abshire@thevision.net. Visit our Website at RHCA.org. Call now and receive a free subscription to Reformed Heritage's *News, Views and Snooze-Letter*, an irreverent and slightly scandalous alternative to the normal boring church newsletter. We wanted to offer a special decoder ring and secret hand-shake but Andrew Sandlin said we were being silly again and nixed the idea.

Theonomy vs. Antinomism

In Matthew 5:18, Christ said, "Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the law, until all is accomplished."

What did he really mean? Was this a call to antinomianism or an affirmation of God's law?

Hear Andrew Sandlin and Bob George square off on this important issue!

This radio debate was presented on Cross Talk, hosted by Rich Agozino of KBRT AM 740.

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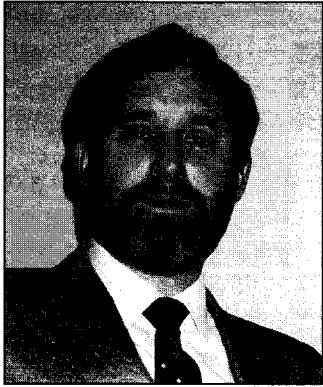
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Children and the Dominion Mandate (Part 2)

By Rev. William Einwechter

The Promise of Fruitfulness to Covenant-Keeping Man



One of the promises that God holds out to those who love him and keep his covenant is fruitfulness in regard to offspring. In the list of blessings and cursings in Deuteronomy 28, the blessing of fruitfulness is declared for covenant-keepers (v. 11), while the curse of barrenness is

avowed to covenant-breakers (v. 19). Psalm 127 says that children are an inheritance from the Lord and are his reward (v. 3), and then declares the man blessed who has his quiver full of them (v. 5). Psalm 128 begins by stating that the man who fears the Lord is blessed, and then goes on to list one of those blessings as being, "thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table" (v. 3). It is significant to note that both Deuteronomy 28:11 and Psalm 128:3 use the terminology of *fruitfulness* in reference to bearing many children. When you compare the original creation blessing of fruitfulness to the promised blessing of fruitfulness to covenant-keeping men and women, it is logical to conclude that the covenantal blessing of fruitfulness is a granting of the original creation blessing of fruitfulness to those who keep God's covenant. And since the original promise of fruitfulness was for the purpose of fulfilling the dominion mandate, it is also reasonable to conclude that the covenantal promise of fruitfulness is also for the purpose of fulfilling the dominion mandate. *In granting his people fruitfulness God is enabling them to fulfill the original dominion mandate.*

To better understand this connection, let us consider the wider Biblical teaching concerning the dominion mandate. First, the dominion mandate is not given to covenant-breakers, but only to covenant-keepers.¹ The original mandate was given to Adam and Eve before the Fall when they stood in fellowship with God. The dominion mandate was also given to believing Noah and his sons after the flood (*Gen. 9:1-3*), and as such it was given to covenant-keeping men. The dominion mandate is referred to by David (*Ps. 8*) as he reflects on the progress of covenant-keeping men to take dominion in the earth, an earth that

is filled with men who are in rebellion against God and who, instead of taking dominion for God and developing righteous cultures, are taking dominion for Satan (as his servants) and are developing ungodly cultures. David looks into this world and sees that wickedness abounds and all things are not under the feet of covenant-keeping men. Second, from the New Testament (*Heb. 2:6-8*) we learn that David's words are prophetic and point to the only One who can bring all things under the dominion and rule of righteous men, Jesus Christ. The dominion mandate is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and all who are in covenant with him by faith. Christ conquers sin and Satan, restores righteousness to men, and gives them the word of God and the Holy Spirit so that they can fulfill the original dominion mandate of ruling the earth in righteousness as God's representatives and develop the full potential of the earth for the glory of God the Father. As the Righteous Man, Christ is given dominion over all the earth by the Father, and he in turn gives the authority for dominion to his people (*Rev. 2:26-27*).

Therefore, since the original dominion mandate still exists; since the dominion mandate can only be fulfilled by covenant-keepers; since the blessing of fruitfulness in regard to fulfilling the dominion mandate is promised to covenant-keepers; then it follows that fruitfulness in procreation is still a vital aspect of the dominion mandate, and the command to God's people still stands: "be fruitful and multiply."

Dominion through Fruitfulness

The importance of fruitfulness to the dominion of the covenant people is illustrated in the nation of Israel while in Egypt. Israel went into Egypt as an extended family of 70 souls. Israel came out of Egypt 400 years later as a mighty nation numbering in the millions. The Bible records that God granted great fruitfulness to the Hebrew wives and that the nation grew dramatically (*Ex. 2:7*). The growth was so spectacular that Pharaoh grew fearful of their numbers and sought to limit their numbers by affliction and by killing the male babies at birth (*Ex. 2:9-11*). But all of his wicked schemes failed (*Ex. 2:12-20*). The growth of the Hebrew nation was essential for God's plan, and that growth could not be frustrated by Pharaoh. According to his covenant promise, the land of Canaan had been given to Israel, but the land was inhabited by many wicked nations. If Israel was to conquer the land and take possession of it, then Israel must also be a great nation, a numerous people. Israel could take dominion of the land only if the families of Israel were very fruitful and

multiplied so that men were available to conquer the land and families were available to fill the land. The dominion mandate for Israel in Canaan necessitated fruitfulness in the families of Israel.

The dominion mandate for the church also calls for fruitfulness in the families of the church. Children are set forth in Scripture as being essential to the continuity of the covenant and the propagation of God's kingdom, and fruitfulness among the covenant people is still a vital aspect of the dominion mandate. As Christians have large families and train their children in the fear of the Lord, the kingdom of God advances irresistibly. As Christian couples are blessed with fruitfulness, teach their children the law of God, and charge them to subdue all spheres of life to the authority of Christ and his word, the dominion mandate is in the process of being fulfilled. Children are as arrows in the hands of a warrior (*Ps 127:4*) shot into the midst of the cultural war between those who want to exercise godly dominion and those who promote wickedness; the more arrows discharged into this war, the greater the advance of righteousness.

The significance for dominion through fruitfulness is amplified when one considers that the ungodly despise fruitfulness, and, in following their love of death (*Pr 8:36*), are preventing conception through contraception and sterilization, and are killing their unborn children through abortion. To get a feel for the impact of fruitfulness among covenant-keepers on the one hand, and the planned barrenness of covenant-breakers on the other, consider the following: If a godly husband and wife have 7 children, and their 7 children each have 7 children, and so on for 5 generations, they will have 19,607 offspring. If an unbelieving couple follows the typical small family size of 2, and their children also have 2 children, and so on for 5 generations, they will only have 60 offspring! Score: covenant-keepers 19,607; covenant-breakers 60 in only 5 generations and only between two families!

This is not to deny the importance of evangelism to the growth of the church and the fulfillment of the dominion mandate;² it is only to emphasize the great power of fruitfulness for the advance of the kingdom of God.³

One sign (among others) that God is laying the foundation for a resurgence of the Faith in the world is the growing trend of Christians to have large families; this is particularly true of Christian home schoolers. John Perry observes:

Also of note, is the fact that Christian home schoolers tend to have large families. They have the conviction that, "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (*Ps 127:3*), and this leads them to seek the blessing of God in many children rather than following the cultural norm of one or two offspring. The rediscovery of this biblical truth of the blessing of large families (*Ps 127:3-5; 128:1-6*) has tremendous implications in an age when abortion and birth control are the norm for the unregenerate. Large Christian families could in time change the

face of the political and social landscape in America.⁴

Conclusion

The dominion mandate consists of three specific commands: be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue the earth. If the dominion mandate is still in force today, and we reconstructionists certainly believe that it is, then all three commands are still in force today. God is still calling his people to be fruitful in regard to offspring because this is vital to the fulfillment of the dominion mandate. If we preach "have dominion" to the church, then we must also preach "be fruitful and multiply" to Christian husbands and wives.⁵ The two cannot legitimately be separated, for dominion cannot take place without fruitfulness.

Fruitfulness is the result of divine blessing.⁶ It is a gift from God to us for his glory and our good. Children are God's reward, and they are intended as a gift of his love. Furthermore, the children of covenant men and women are central to his purpose of granting us dominion over all the earth through the authority and power of Christ our Lord. If we have imbibed the philosophy of the world concerning family size and have deliberately sought to limit our fruitfulness, may we now repent in humility before God and seek his forgiveness and his gift of fruitfulness. If we went astray and limited our family according to the wisdom of the world and our time is past for bearing children, may we also seek God's forgiveness and then do all we can to help our children and grandchildren succeed where we failed and encourage them seek the blessing of God in having many children.

¹ The dominion mandate is not primarily agricultural or technological, but ethical, *i.e.*, it calls men to exercise dominion in the earth according to God's law-word for the honor and glory of God. Man is to rule the earth as God's representative and develop the resources of the earth in accord with the Creator's will, *i.e.*, he is to develop the resources of the earth solely in reference to God's law as summarized in the two great commandments of the law: love of God and love of one's neighbor. Unregenerate man does not carry out any of his activities out of a love for God, and most often not out of a true love for his neighbor either. It is true that unregenerate man still retains to a degree the image of God, and, by nature, an impulse for dominion. But his reference is purely technological out of a motive for his own power and glory. Therefore, in the limited technological sense, unsaved man has contributed to the dominion mandate; God uses even the wrath of man to praise him. However, the dominion mandate as originally given can be addressed only to righteous men, and that is why it is never given to unregenerate men in the Bible and is ultimately transferred to Jesus Christ.

² Evangelism is absolutely necessary to the dominion mandate in the post-Fall world. In fact, the Great Commission and the dominion mandate are closely related. See Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission* (Tyler, TX, 1990), 7-14.

³ Perhaps the role of the church (as an institution) and the Christian family in the dominion mandate could be stated this way: the church is called to fruitfulness in regard to regeneration

and spiritual children, while the family is called to fruitfulness in reference to generation and physical offspring (of course, children born to Christian parents also need regeneration).

⁴ John F. Perry, "Home Schooling: A Paradigm for Effective Educational Reform in America," in *Explicitly Christian Politics*, ed. William O. Einwechter (Pittsburgh, 1997), 209-210.

⁵ For the record, so that it cannot be said that Einwechter does not practice what he preaches, my wife Linda and I have nine children.

⁶ The lack of fruitfulness is not necessarily a curse for a Christian couple, however it might be if they have followed ungodly practices in the past that may affect the ability to have children (e.g., contraception, sterilization, abortion, drug abuse, etc.). God's promise of fruitfulness to his people is a general promise that applies in most instances. Nevertheless, for his own

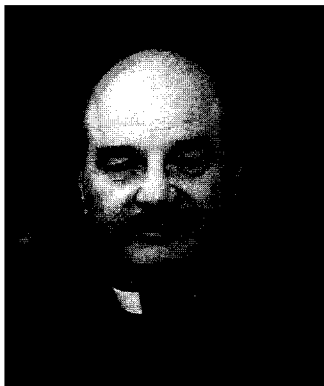
purposes that often remain hidden from us, God sometimes withholds fruitfulness from faithful covenant-keeping men and women.

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METHODS ARE PRIMARY

Christmas and the Fountainhead

By Rev. Ellsworth McIntyre



Thirty years ago, I worked my way through a Christian university selling radio advertising. I spent the Christmas break and all vacation time on campus. I had a wife and four children to support, so when classes were not meeting, I worked longer hours selling advertising to make my family

budget. As I came into the radio station from a long day on the road, I met one of our announcers. Chuck always had a big smile on his face. In his rich, baritone radio voice, he said, "Merry Christmas, Mac! I am really praising God today, because I have a double blessing. I am blessed once because I was born Jewish and blessed twice because I am born again. Isn't that great!" I was disturbed at this, but didn't know why. Chuck must have read my face, because he said, "What's the matter, have a bad day?"

I mumbled, "No, Chuck, it just never occurred to me. I always thought [I paused searching for a reason] no blessing came to us by our racial heritage."

"Ha! Ha! Get used to it. The Jews are God's master race." Chuck now burst into uproarious laughter. "Ha, ha! 'Master race, get it?'"

I smiled my best, phony salesman smile and retreated to my office. This incident came to my mind fresh and clear after thirty years when I read R. J. Rushdoony's recently published *Romans & Galatians*. The index of the book under the heading "natural privilege" cites many passages. For example, "Paul sees Israel as a chosen covenant people of God not as a blood line" (179). "Paul hates natural privilege and natural rights, because he sees it the deadly moral ailment of his own people whom he loves intensely. He sees it as a threat to the future of the church" (182).

The Apostle Paul warns the church to hate natural privilege and not repeat Israel's mistake. Christians tend to claim the good life, health, and prosperity that we enjoy in the Christian nations as our natural right. This is the same deadly moral ailment that cut fleshly Israel from the blessings of God. Chuck was, I believe, just making a joke, but behind the wisecrack of my Jewish Christian friend was the thought that he was entitled to natural rights and privileges because of his bloodline. This is an ancient deadly error, and the modern day churchman tends to practice the same sin. Therefore, we should heed the warning of God's law-word.

A Chosen People, Not a Chosen Race

Racism is not the message of Christmas. Entitlement by blood is a great mistake, because a chosen people are not the same thing as a chosen race. One is by supernatural birth into a covenant of grace; the other is

by natural birth into a bloodline. Bigots are wrong. The bloodline of the Savior is part of the Christmas story. On the mother of the Lord's side are two Gentile women, Rahab and Ruth. You and I can't choose our ancestors, but God the Father had the choice to bring his Son into the world as a pure blooded descendant of Abraham. God chose to break the bloodline. Why deliberately pollute the bloodline with Gentile blood? I believe it was important to rebuke racists who want to believe that blessings come by race, genes, or blood. The Bible teaches that blessings come exclusively by means of the covenant of grace. To the extent that we are tempted to credit our genes, we cut ourselves off from the fountain of life. Bigotry has terrible consequences (*Rom. 11:19 & 21*).

It is also dangerous for a church to teach foolish notions of an earthly "master race." By our ignorance or silence, we allow believers to curse themselves. It is not just a salvation experience that is at stake, but mortality (long life), morbidity (sickness), and wealth (both temporal and eternal riches). (See *1 Cor. 11:30*, *Ps. 1*, and *Ps. 75: 6*.)

Vultures and Carrion

Just let a man rise to prominence in his field, and his former teachers will gather like vultures circling over carrion. They dangle honorary degrees before the eyes of the *nouveau riche* or famous. The college is interested in donations and a piece of their graduate's estate, but also they want to tell the world, "Our most excellent liberal arts education wrought this great success and/or wealth. Send your child to us, and we will teach him the secrets of success."

The newly rich and famous will outwardly say a few words at commencement such as, "I owe a great deal to this great institution. Blah, blah, blah!" It all seems innocent enough. Who could be offended or hurt? No one perhaps, except the Lord Jesus Christ. Inwardly, the newly rich or famous has other gods than the one true God to credit with his success. He privately thanks his great Anglo-Saxon forebears who carried the lamp of freedom by virtue of their superior genes. He dare not say it outwardly, because the politically correct thought police will scream, "Heretic!" If, however, the newly rich and famous are born into a minority group, he is free to beam with pleasure and say, "I was the son of hated immigrants to this land, but my parents blessed me with values such as hard work and respect for the equity of mankind." Inwardly, the immigrant son thinks, "My race is just as

good as or better than yours, you bigoted fat cats. I guess I showed you! You pompous white guys failed to hold me down."

Celebrate the Chosen Man, Not the Chosen Race

If the newly rich commissions a ghost writer to write his biography, he will include much on his social and racial heritage and more about how hard he worked, but not a word about obedience to the law of God and the unmerited blessing that prospered his way. How can he? We can only know the source of our blessings by faith. The evidence of the eyes (scientific evidence) says that wealth comes by natural means. Science says it is superstition to credit supernatural forces for the success of our work. There is no parent or teacher to stand in the gap and teach the newly rich and famous the dangers of celebrating the blood of man instead of the blood of Christ. Failing to give God the glory for success curses our children and grandchildren.

Historians assure us that no family in American history has enjoyed a rising net worth beyond three generations. It was a Puritan proverb that a family went from shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations. Our blind children use our hard-won wealth and social advantages on a lifetime of dissipation and sin. As parents and teachers of the word of God, we should rededicate ourselves to teaching the *whole* Christmas story. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, was the *chosen Person*, and all of the promises of the Bible, particularly the promise, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee. . ." (*Gen. 12:3*), belongs exclusively to Christ (*Gal. 3:16*).

This Christmas, every parent who wants to strike a blow for racial harmony should teach this lesson to his children. If our children are blind to the Faith, they fall easy prey to every wolf in sheep's clothing that will massage their egos with stories of racial glory. There is no natural privilege, and it is a ghastly sin to allow such error to be taught in the name of Christ.

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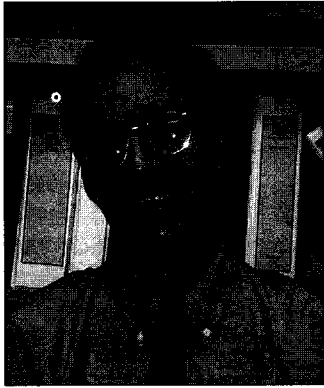
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Holy Fire: Remarks About Revival

By James Nickel



I have continually expressed concern over the revivalistic fads of both charismaticism (*e.g.*, Toronto Blessing, Holy Laughter revival) and fundamentalism (*e.g.*, the revival held every year at Behemoth Baptist Church down the street). Knowing this, a charismatic friend of mine recently loaned me a book

written by Dr. Michael L. Brown.¹ Dr. Brown is the recognized “theologian in residence” overseeing and promoting the “Holy Fire” revival at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. My initial response to reading this book was one of reluctance . . . “Must I waste my time reading this?” I eventually “bit the bullet” and began to read what turned out to be a fascinating and somewhat bewildering cacophony of revivalistic jargon, quotes from authorities on revival, grave warnings to critics of revival, and passionate exhortations to remove all hindrances to revival and “get right with God.”

Let’s dig into some of his comments and see what we can unearth. In the Preface, Dr. Brown announces this book is “meant to challenge the cavalier and the critical, while at the same time encouraging the cautious.” Note how he defines the critical:

The *critical* response dismisses the whole thing as either demonic, fleshly, or both. “This is *not* from above,” it categorically declares. It denies that God is in the waters at all, often without getting anywhere near the river. It has no need to investigate the facts; it is right. Often acting as a “ministry,” it is adept at critiquing whatever new thing God is doing, specializing in throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Note the logic here. Dr. Brown misrepresents those who express criticism of revival (as he understands it) by implying that they are against revival.² This, as they say, “ain’t necessarily so.” Those critical of modern revivalism (whether in its charismatic or fundamentalist expression) are not against Biblical revival; they are against pseudo-revival. They do not want to “throw out the baby with the bath water.” God’s doing a “new thing” does not mean that the Holy Spirit generates activity that is contrary to or cannot be established by his word.

Dr. Brown has conveniently established a straw man: If

you are critical of what he perceives God to be doing, then you are against revival. Note how he castigates critical people on page 13-14, putting them *all* in the boat of “religiosity.” Note the use of emotive and twaddling phrases like “religious spirits . . . it’s not to their theological liking . . . doesn’t fit into their denominational straightjackets . . . know-it-all judgmental spirit . . . spiritually stiff . . . critical believers who can only seem to pout.” Therefore, any attempt at “critique” is met with criticism. If, in my attempt to critique this book I must clothe myself with this drivel of straw, then so be it.

Revival and Orthodoxy

On page, 20 Dr. Brown makes the following tirade against orthodoxy:

Orthodox” critics should put up or shut up. Abstract, theological “truth” that tears down without building up is of no use at all. To quote James 2:18b, “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. Or, in the words of Ecclesiastes, “even a live dog is better off than a dead lion! (*Ecc. 9:4b*). Let’s see the fruit of your “orthodox” faith—in your ministry, in your church, and around the world. The gospel gives life.

Orthodox means “straight talk” or “true glory.” Should we not desire the “glory that is true?”³ If this is so, then what is so bad about it? Dr. Brown seems to imply that orthodoxy is a dreaded thing and that “orthodoxy” and “soundly asleep” go together like the proverbial horse and carriage (see page 33). Again, Dr. Brown is guilty of fabricating a straw man and then demolishing his creation.⁴ Many of those dreaded “orthodox” believers have the *deeds* to back up their faith. They have “put up” and thereby do not need to “shut up.” Look at the manifold expressions of obedience to Christ around the world: charity ministries, Christian schools, home schools, evangelism, missions, etc. Dr. Brown, look at what God is doing in the world! Expand your vision! Look beyond the borders of your charismatic world! God’s orthodoxy (glory that is true) is being manifested through the faithful obedience of his people around the world.

Is it possible that Dr. Brown’s diatribe against orthodoxy is a subtle (probably unconscious) way to circumvent a full-orbed commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture as the standard for life and practice? I hope not. But, throughout the text, Dr. Brown seems to imply that you need to forget doctrine and come get the blessing that God has for you. On page 33, he does say that God could never refresh his church through a “rank heretic.” And, he does list non-

negotiable points of absolute essentials (e.g., “inspiration of Scripture, nature of God, person of Jesus, His virgin birth, His atoning death, His resurrection, salvation only through Him, the resurrection of the saved and the lost, to name just a few”). But, and more importantly, Dr. Brown *never* acknowledges that Scripture is to be the standard whereby all things (including revival) are to be judged.⁵

For example, on page 220, Dr. Brown sets up an epistemological test case with these questions:

What happens when godly leaders come to opposite conclusions and made their conclusions known publicly? Then who do we follow? How do we know who's right?

He then gives an example of two men who came to different conclusions based upon their respective experiences. Then he makes some sweeping statements: “Using the Bible alone as a guide, it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions here,” and “it is impossible to prove *from Scriptures* alone that twentieth-century tongues are or are not from God.” You know where this is leading . . . you cannot make a judgment about revival or experiences based on Scripture alone. You must follow your own inward convictions and feelings.

Is not Scripture sufficient? Is 2 Timothy 3:16-17 lying to us? Does not Scripture train us to be a “man of God *fully* equipped for *every* good work?” If we just follow our inward convictions, then we will open the door to subjectivism and deception. Dr. Brown has to circumvent the authority and sufficiency of Scripture in order to validate what goes on in Brownsville’s revival meetings. I believe he is sincere in this (not trying to deceive his readers). But, as a theologian and doctor, he has no business playing around with the sufficiency of Scripture.⁷ Telling a good story to illustrate his point or giving a personal testimony (proof or disproof of tongues) does *not* suffice! We are dealing with the Faith, the unity of the Faith (*Eph. 4:11-13*), and Christian living. We are sanctified by truth, not inward feelings! (*Jn. 17:17*). A test of our love for Christ is whether we obey his objective word, not whether we say, “Jesus is so sweet to me.”⁸ God’s pure word always has and always will set the standard for life and practice. The Holy Laughter and Holy Fire “revivals” have laid bare the *glaring* deficiency of modern charismaticism: the leaders of these respective movements (and those that follow them) have absolutized subjectivism and narcissism in the guise of “experiencing the blessings of the Holy Spirit.” Concomitant to this is the curse of antinomianism. To them, being “spiritual” (or “open to the Spirit” or “following the leading of the Spirit”⁹) is more important than being “Scriptural.” It is no wonder, then, why Christians who are committed to Scripture as the standard for life and practice look at the majority of their charismatic brethren askance! The crying need of the hour is that God would revive the church and renew her in her God-given mission of studying and applying the “glory of

truth” as revealed in his holy word. Oh, by the way, fulfilling this mission does require of us hard work . . . something most in the church find unappealing.¹⁰

Revival and Revivalism

On page 30-33, Dr. Brown quotes Charles G. Finney as an authority on revival. He also mentions elsewhere that Finney has his “critics.” You cannot help but hear Finney speak through Dr. Brown, though. He has drunk deep from the well of Finney’s theology¹¹ and from others who also have absorbed his teachings.¹² Unfortunately, Dr. Brown has not paid heed to a book written by Iain Murray entitled *Revival & Revivalism*.¹³ (Beware! He is one of those dreaded “orthodox” people!) In this book, Murray shows Finney’s real motives behind introducing his view of theology and his “new measures” of revival. He did not like and was not willing to submit his mind to the Biblical Calvinism of the day. He twisted this belief and portrayed it as a horrific monstrosity. The truth is—under Biblical Christianity, God refreshed his people with revival many times before Finney came on the scene (something Finney never mentions in his writings). Before Finney, revival was considered a supernatural and miraculous work of the sovereign Spirit of God. After the leaven of Finney’s *Revival Lectures*¹⁴ permeated the evangelical church, revival became revivalism . . . something that man can promote and work up by hype, manipulation, technique, and creating the appropriate atmosphere. Those at Behemoth Baptist have the audacity to “advertise their revival meetings” where the story-telling evangelist, with decision cards in hand, makes stirring and weepy “altar calls.” Those at First Church of Charismatic “fall under the power” as the evangelist cries, “Take another drink!” or “Belly up to the bar!” or “Now Lord! More! More! Fire! Jesus! Fire! Now! Fire!”

Revival and Pietism

The titles of Chapters 8, 9 and 10 are “God Wants All of Me,” “Conviction,” and “Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory” respectively (pages 81 to 118). Dr. Brown exhorts the reader give “your all” to God and warns the reader of the sin of “not loving God enough.” He then documents the “unspeakable joy” that comes to the heart as a result of revival.

I do not question Dr. Brown’s sincerity in these exhortations, but he does make some abstruse misrepresentations. In essence, he is guilty of absolutizing piety (a common malady infecting many Christians). Who can argue with the exhortation to “love God more” and “repent of sin”? But, unless we carefully define these phrases, we will be left with nothing more than good feelings about “the altogether lovely Jesus” (page 103).¹⁵ If we don’t put the button in the right hole at the start with these issues, then the “joy unspeakable” shirt will flap wildly in the breeze of “every wind of doctrine.”

Devotion to God can never be defined subjectively.¹⁶ The danger of being theologically non-devotional or

devotionally non-theological is always present. We are never to put a wedge between the heart and the head.¹⁷ We all need to love Jesus more, as Dr. Brown's passionately pleads. Question: How is this "more love to Jesus" to be evidenced? What are the positive marks? On page 229, Dr. Brown unveils his understanding of those marks of true revival:

Has Jesus become more precious to His people? Has He become more highly exalted in their eyes? Do they believe in Him more fervently, love Him more deeply, and long to commune with Him more and more? Then the Spirit did the work!

Note the phraseology used: precious . . . highly exalted . . . fervently . . . love deeply . . . long to commune. Where is obedience to his law-word a test of our love for Christ?¹⁸ It is not either/or here. Yes, we should love Christ with a passion. But, that passion must be reflected by adherence to his revealed word (all of it, not just the sections that charismatics like to emphasize—the Gospels and Acts *included*). What about Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Romans, etc.? **Let us be whole Bible Christians** (the Gospels and Acts included). We must OBEY it! ALL of it! Dr. Brown proudly announces that "the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has remained extremely conservative in its view of Scripture" (page 229). Note that you can be a conservative Christian (believe the Bible to be inerrant and infallible) and not obey all of it. This is where we need teaching on "the whole counsel of God." Unfortunately, Dr. Brown has a myopic view of the "whole counsel of God." This flawed vision is caused by Dr. Brown's charismatic glasses. These glasses see the "whole counsel of God" in the primary context of the charismatic gifts and manifestations (*i.e.*, the "Full Gospel"). There is so much more to "God's counsel" than this! (see *Heb. 5:12-6:3*). To borrow a phrase from J. B. Phillips, "Your view of God's word (and God) is too small!"

In the chapter entitled "Conviction," Dr. Brown talks much about the Holy Spirit and quotes from many "authorities" on revival.¹⁹ He does mention God's word a couple of times. *But he never defines what sin is.* Sin is lawlessness (*1 Jn. 3:4*). In fact, the first time Dr. Brown mentions God's law is on page 227-228 and that is in the context of "hell-fire" preaching. He never exhorts the reader to ponder the requirements of God's law and our duty, as Spirit-empowered Christians, to obey it.²⁰ We are not just "sinfully sick" and in need of healing refreshment from God's Spirit; we are covenant (law) breakers. In Biblical revival, the Spirit of God will take his holy law and pierce our entire lives with it.²¹ The law exposes much more sin than Dr. Brown mentions.²² Doing drugs, watching "R"-rated movies, divorce, etc., are symptoms of a deeper problem—we are antinomian rebels.

To give Dr. Brown credit, on page 230 he makes a passing remark about restitution.²³ Most Christians are shamefully ignorant of this teaching of Scripture. This was

made evident by the recent controversy in Christian circles over the execution of born-again Christian and Houston axe murderer, Karla Faye Tucker. I am amazed at how few Christians realize that God's forgiveness of sin (in this case murder) does not necessarily authorize a release from civil punishment. One Christian told me this, "Did not Christ come to set the prisoners free? Karla Faye is a prisoner and the state of Texas, by Christ's authority, should set her free!"²⁴ I could not believe how that person could apply that Scripture to this situation! This Christian also said, "We need to be simple in our reading and interpretation of Scripture." This is nothing but an excuse for not wanting to work hard at rightly dividing the word. With Karla Faye Tucker's execution, we have some good, but grim, evidence of widespread Biblical illiteracy in the church (no surprise, though).

Revival and Reformation

On page 231-232, Dr. Brown attempts to validate the Finneyan theology by quoting from a magazine article:

Finney spent six months in Rochester and converted hundreds of residents—lawyers, doctors, judges, tradesmen, bankers, boatmen, workers, master craftsmen—to born again Christianity. He scorched their consciences and urged them not to follow the selfish ways of the world. Finney angrily denounced the evils of selfishness and deliberately aimed his message at the wealthy and powerful. . .

Having converted the affluent, Finney's final step was to get them to direct their energy and wealth into beneficial philanthropies. He was amazingly successful. Rochester embarked on a church-building boom. Rochesterians went on to establish a university, organize charities and self-help agencies, build a public school system, fight against slavery (the city was a station on the Underground Railroad, which smuggled slaves into Canada), form unions and a reform prison system. Rochester became a city where love for one's fellow man was more than an empty phrase.²⁵

To which Dr. Brown adds his hearty amen: "That's what you call lasting fruit! One hundred sixty years have passed, and the effects of the revival are still being felt. How's that for proof?" These remarks engender as many questions about the fruits of Finney's efforts as apparent "proof in the pudding" answers! For example, what does the Bible say about charity, education, unions, prisons, and the philosophical underpinnings that motivated the Abolitionist movement? Some of the Rochesterian activities may have reflected obedience to the commands of Scripture while other activities may have reflected disobedience to the commands of Scripture. The only way to determine this is to thoroughly "understand the times of the nineteenth-century" in the light of God's full-orbed word. Dr. Brown, in his zeal to document the veracity of Finney's revivals, turns a blind eye to this important point.

To illustrate this further, consider the education issue. Is the public school system to be seen as the fruit of Biblical revival? To answer this, one must understand the Bible's teaching on epistemology (how do we know what we know?). Without Biblical faith, knowledge is impossible. One cannot know a fact truly (e.g., $2 + 2 = 4$) unless one presupposes Biblical faith and its revelation of the Creator of all things (including a world that reflects mathematical relationships and the human mind that has the ability to think mathematically). If one rejects Biblical faith, he still must live in the world created by the God of the Bible. He still must "live and move and have his being" in God's world, not in any other kind of world (e.g., the "chance" world as the theory of evolution posits). An unbeliever must borrow from the Bible (as much as he does not like to) in order to live in this world. His knowledge of the world is consequently short-circuited; it is a pseudo-knowledge. The Christian who establishes his epistemology self-consciously upon Biblical revelation is the only one who can truly know anything.²⁶

One fruit of Biblical revival is the emphasis and practice of Biblical Christian schooling (whether day schooling or home schooling). This quiet revival (I prefer the word *reformation*) has been an increasing and enduring one for the past 30 years.²⁷ Do not Christians need to repent of sending their children to a place that denies God and rejects his word of authority? Do not parents understand that sending their children to "Rome" will make them "Romans"? Are not parents double-minded in their faith when they excuse their actions by saying that they are sending their children to public schools as Christian witnesses? Do not parents understand that Biblical faith speaks to all the disciplines? Do not parents understand that they are responsible to train their children (*Dt. 6:6-9*) in the Faith that speaks to all of life?

Dr. Brown says, "If it does not ultimately affect society, it is not revival." He goes on to say (pp. 235-236):

In revival, the Holy Spirit moves deeply and widely, supernaturally and powerfully. He goes into the homes and the schools, into the places of business and the places of sin, and He brings the sense of the reality of God. He brings conviction! It is impossible to flee from God during revival.

To this I add some questions. What is meant by the "sense of the reality of God"? Just how is revival going to "affect society"? What is meant by saying that the Spirit moves "deeply and widely, supernaturally and powerfully"? Dr. Brown's answers are as short-circuited as his views on "loving Jesus more."

Note carefully the following words:

Abortion, statism, euthanasia, socialism, secular capitalism, relativism, pornography, drunkenness, sodomy, feminism, egalitarianism, materialism, nihilism and other flagrant, pervasive instances of law-breaking threaten to unravel the social order. The church is hardly less antinomian, worshipping

religious entertainment, cheapening the gospel, despising (or monopolizing) the tithe, profaning the sacraments, slandering church leaders (or members), oppressing the weak, neglecting the poor, and omitting the "weightier matters of the law" (*Mt. 23:23*). The family suffers the two-pronged onslaught of internal disunity and external distraction. Internally, wives are pressured by man- (and woman-) hating egalitarian feminism, husbands by irresponsible and unloving "macho-ism," and children by two-income (and thus two-job) households and godless TV and other "entertainment." Externally the godless state requires the parental tithe of the children to God-hating government schools, subsidizes immorality in its several "welfare" programs, extorts a level of taxation that requires two-income households, and prosecutes parents intent on godly child-rearing. The dominant culture in almost every sphere is at war with Christ and his faithful.

As a result, from superficial sectors of the modern church rise whiny, hollow calls for "Holy-Ghost revival." This usually denotes stunning (and often entertaining) public repentances, emotional hot flashes from the balcony, multitudinous "born-again" experiences, and expanding church budgets (or at least long-term mortgage payments). The logic seems to be that if we can just get the saints "fired up for Jesus" and a number of former sinners packed into the church pews, evil will miraculously subside.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The entrenched evil of the modern secular age will not be dislodged by spine-tingling pulpiteering or weepy altar calls; it will be overthrown by a wholesale reformation of the most searing kind, plumbing the depths of all of modern life and society, reinstalling the Christian Faith and Biblical law in all areas of life.

The only solution is *theonomy* (the law of God), or, more specifically, *biblionomy* (the law of the Bible). *A "revival" that does not re-orient man in the very core of his being to the entire word of God is futile, a chimerical solution.* Man must be saved not principally from his sinful ailments, *but from his covenant-breaking.* And he will be saved from his covenant-breaking as he is sanctified by the Holy Spirit to more faithfully obey and apply God's law. When a significant segment of society trusts Christ alone for salvation and his law-word for sanctification—sanctification in all areas of life, not merely individual life—true reformation will penetrate the land.²⁸

As Sandlin so eloquently and prophetically declares, covenant-breaking can only be fixed by radical reformation—a return to obedience to God's law-word as it applies to all of life. This is the only kind of reformation that will bring healing to cultures. Sin will not be driven from the land by some subjective sense of the "reality of God's presence" or by "laughing or lying on the floor for six hours." Sin will be expelled from cultures²⁹ by the Spirit-empowered godly work³⁰ of faithful Christians over the "long haul."

Revival and Eschatology

On page 249, Dr. Brown announces that “the time is short.” The implication is that we need to get to business and get to it fast. We have no time to argue over doctrine, etc. We cannot miss this opportunity! We need to get into the “flow” or we (and America³¹) will miss out. He pleads, “Now—not never.”

On page 254, he says:

Forget about date-setting prophecy books and Second Coming speculation. Forget about trying to figure out exactly where we stand on the end-time eschatological calendar (or else make sure that you write in pencil!). Forget about even wondering whether these verses in Revelation [*Rev. 19:15* - *JN*³²] have anything to do with the United States specifically.

A few words later he confesses that “we are getting closer to the end of the age.” It is obvious that the underlying “last days” mania still governs Dr. Brown, no matter what he says to the contrary.³³

God will give us the time to complete his assignment for us (in our own lives and in the life of the church in history). Succumbing to the “time is short” mentality frustrates long-term planning and obedience to God. Those who cry “Revival now! At any cost!” are the ones who will miss out on this glorious opportunity!

Question: How many people would flock to Brownsville if sound teaching takes place—teaching that instructs God’s people how to radically restructure the individual, the family, the church, and society in terms of God’s authoritative law-word? People are not coming to Brownsville for teaching; they are coming to Brownsville to meet “Jesus” in the context of some new or extraordinary experience. But, there should not be a dichotomy here! Teaching sound doctrine will result in transformed lives (*Rom. 12:1-2*). People will then have the wonderful experience of considering and implementing objective truth, not some isolated “jumping, jerking, blow you to the floor” feeling to revel in, or try to add to.

There is a glorious future ahead of us, in time and on earth, for the kingdom of God. It is important that we understand what the Bible teaches about the goal of the Gospel (*e.g., Is. 11:9; 65-66*) and work this perspective out in our day-to-day lives. Let us not import emasculated, powerless, and defeatist views into the text of Scripture.³⁴

Conclusion

I would recommend that every charismatic begin a serious reading and study program; to embark on the wonderful and illuminating journey of reforming yourself in truth.³⁵ First, read two books by the late Reformed scholar and pastor Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.³⁶ Dr. Lloyd-Jones confesses that he is a “Bible Calvinist,” not a Calvinist by system. His God-centered perspective is refreshing and his warnings clear. Second, read Iain Murray’s *Revival & Revivalism*.³⁷ Third, expose your mind

to God-centered theology.³⁸ This God-centered teaching will unmask the narrow and shallow foundation (a mile wide but an inch deep) of modern charismaticism and evangelicalism. Only the holy fire of God’s uncompromising truth will change lives by his Spirit for his glory.

You cannot discount Dr. Brown’s heart-felt passion for revival. He is an example of a man zealous for revival “at any cost.” Biblical Christians want revival, but not “at any cost.” Dr. Brown’s plea for “revival now or never” is superficial at best. At worst, this “either/or” scenario is bogus. Biblical Christians want revival, but not at the expense of throwing out the sufficiency of Scripture and sound doctrine. Biblical Christians want revival, but not at the expense of being castigated as having a “religious spirit” by charismatic zealots who ridicule anyone who dare criticize a supposed “move of God.” Biblical revival “at any cost”? Yes! Any kind of revival “at any cost”? No!

I leave my readers with some “food for thought” as a conclusion:

- God always brings revival in a way that will glorify him, honor his word, and thereby further his kingdom on earth. God will revive his people as they commit themselves to reformation—in the individual, the family, the church, and the world. Why revive a people not committed to the love of truth? Why revive a people who would just continue in their man-centered and erroneous ideas and practices? Reformation is a precondition of revival. Many books have been written that spell out how this reformation is to be worked out (note the books put out by the Chalcedon Foundation over the past 30 years as one example). God has called many ministries to do the groundwork for reformation and to model it . . . the training and instruction materials are available. If and when our Sovereign God is pleased to send the fire of revival, it will be only after the church has done the preparatory homework of preparing the altar.

- In the past 30 years, a “quiet” reformation has taken place—as evidenced by the commitment of Christian families to Biblical Christian education. Through this, God is preparing future generations of church and societal leaders.

- Biblical revival will never find focus in a man, a ministry, or a church (he will use men, ministries, and churches—but they will not call attention to themselves or to what they are doing). There will be no need to make “pilgrimages” to specific churches in order to “catch the wave.”

- There is much confusion and disorder in the church at large (in doctrine and practice). As a precursor to Biblical revival, God’s Spirit will clean out what is false and establish what is true (*1 Cor. 11:19*). God will send a strong delusion to those who do not love the truth (see the principle illustrated in *2 Thes. 2:9-12* and the clear warning in *2 Tim. 4:3-4*). The Holy Spirit of God will send “a

famine for His word” in the land as a way of sifting out the false from the true (*Am. 8:11-12*).³⁹ Note the subjective temper of the revivalistic fads of charismaticism. Note the stress on change by mindless experiences in the guise of seeking God’s blessings.⁴⁰ This emphasis yields a perilous harvest. The crop consists of weeds of neglect—a disregard of God’s authoritative and uncompromising word, a laxity regarding the systematic study of Scripture, and a lack of commitment to regulatory standards reflected by adherence to sound doctrine. Instead of producing a love for truth, these fads result in famine for *hearing* God’s word. In this context, I do not dismiss the recent revival trends promoted by the leaders of charismaticism as merely “demonic, fleshly, or both.” You can discern the work of the Sovereign and Almighty God, but not according to Dr. Brown’s thesis. Let me explain this using a Biblical illustration (see *Jer. 4:11-12*). God’s Spirit is blowing like the wind and in God’s hand is a winnowing fork. He is tossing the grain mixture into the air and letting the wind of his Spirit blow the unwanted chaff away. What remains on the threshing floor are the heavy, fruitful ears of grain. As James I. Packer says, “He is sorting us out; the division between authentic Bible-based Christians and those who aren’t such is going to get deeper and deeper as time goes on.”⁴¹

• God will use persecution and tribulation to purify his people (as much as I do not like that idea). What does this mean? What are the ramifications? Western civilization (post-modern and post-Christian) is at the brink of collapse. God is shaking the humanistic world order now (a reflection of the judgment can be seen in the leaders we have—including church leaders). It may take time for it to collapse (like the Roman Empire) or God may “pull out the rug” all at once (the spin-off of the Y2K bug⁴²). As God’s judgment works itself out in time and on earth, God will revive his church in the midst of it—his kingdom will triumph through his judgments. When his judgments intensify, he will shut the doors in Toronto, Brownsville, or any other place that claims to be the repository of “revival.” It will be time for “his truth to triumph through us.” It will be revival then . . . not *at any cost*, but at great cost.

For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Is. 26:9).

*O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid;
O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3:2).*

¹ Michael L. Brown, *From Holy Laughter to Holy Fire: America on the Edge of Revival* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1996), 278 pages.

² On page 31, Dr. Brown approves of the equation: criticism = carnality. What about carnal reasoning? Carnal reasoning is thinking that is not willing to submit doctrine, practices, and methods to the entire word of God. “To the law and to the

testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (*Is. 8:20*, NKJV).

³ In fact, a good definition of revival is the return of the church to the “glory that is true.”

⁴ In the nineteenth century, revivalist Charles G. Finney also used this argument (put up or shut up) to silence his critics and it was an argument from silence. Why does Dr. Brown not want to consider the many ministries that have “put up”? Is it because many of them do not share his views on revival?

⁵ Those who try to make such judgments are labeled by Dr. Brown as “heresy hunters” or “religious hypocrites” or “faultfinding, stiff traditionalists” (more straw men to bash). On page 49, he says that the outlook of these straw men is “always negative.” There is a legitimate place for judging. On what basis? Scripture. And, there are legitimate ministries that, by God’s grace, do build up without embracing the presuppositions that buttress modern-day revivalism.

⁶ “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be *complete*, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*, NKJV). Emphasis added.

⁷ Even though he defends his position with an impressive resume of 25 years as a student of Scripture (221).

⁸ Listening to rhetoric about “sweet Jesus” gives me a “sugar overdose.” Good Doctor, I need a shot of insulin, please!

⁹ To be “led of the Spirit,” according to Romans 8, means to be free from sin as master in your life. It has nothing to do with subjectivism or guidance. As a parenthetical note, practical matters of personal guidance (Whom should I marry? Where should I live? What church should I attend? Where shall I go to school? What vocation shall I choose?) are much easier to prayerfully discern when a person really knows Holy Writ.

¹⁰ Offer a class in your local church on “How to Study the Bible” and see how many people show up. On page 37, Dr. Brown applauds the “unschooled” miracle ministry of Smith Wigglesworth (“God’s Word is the only book he read”) comparing him to Peter and John (*Ac. 4:13*). Peter and John were schooled (in the seminary of Jesus)—much more than Mr. Wigglesworth (but, according to Dr. Brown, I am being “spiritually stiff” with this “judgment”). We *need* trained and skilled theologians in our day. The faith is simple; its implications complex. Paul appreciated and used “the books and parchments” (*2 Tim. 4:13*). God wants men and women of learning, schooled in the Spirit, who passionately obey his word and apply it to all areas of life. Our generation of microwave Christians want instant blessing, instant power, instant solution to problems . . . push the “power button” and in 60 seconds we are “cooked” and “on fire for Jesus.” Microwave Christians are ignorant and lazy (my apology if I have inadvertently created a false “straw man”). The book of Proverbs (*v. 2:1-5*) speaks about obtaining wisdom and knowledge by hard work. We cannot have knowledge without the precondition of humble, diligent, and prayerful study.

¹¹ For a reprint of the unabridged text of the complete 1878 edition of his *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, see Charles G. Finney, *Finney’s Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, 1994).

¹² Dr. Brown refers to the late Leonard Ravenhill (died in 1994) as his mentor in the faith. I have personally heard Mr. Ravenhill speak and can verify that here was a man whose passion in life was for revival in the church. Mr. Ravenhill also drank deep at the well of Finney’s theology.

¹³ Iain H. Murray, *Revival & Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Carlisle, PA, 1994). Murray also documents the disheartening long-term “fruits” of the Finney revivals. Even Finney acknowledged

- serious problems in his lesser known work entitled *Letters on Revival*. This book was reprinted under the title *Reflections on Revival*, com. by Donald Dayton (Minneapolis, 1979). For a detailed investigation of the theological roots of modern revivalism, see Cal Beisner, *Evangelical Heathenism? Examining Contemporary Revivalism* (Moscow, ID, 1996).
- ¹⁴Charles G. Finney, *Revival Lectures* (Old Tappan, NJ, n.d.).
- ¹⁵A sincere love for the Lord without the ability to define who the "Lord" is or what "loving the Lord" requires and a bubbly enthusiasm for the Christian life. Note, I am not negating the place of joyful emotion in the Christian life.
- ¹⁶God will not ask us on judgment day how we feel about him. In the final analysis, God will judge us all by this standard: "Did you do what I said?" (*Mt. 7:15-27*). A careful reading of this passage will reveal what good fruit is and what it is not. It is not good works; it is not "signs and wonders." Good fruit is truth ("these sayings of mine") and obedience to it.
- ¹⁷"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (*Pr. 23:7*, NKJV).
- ¹⁸On page 228, Dr. Brown does say this: "God's purpose for mankind is to get himself an obedient, holy people, recreated in the image of his Son. If the end result of a revival is a godly, devoted Bride, then the work was from heaven!" What is important to note again is the lack of objective definition and the focus on subjective devotion. Devotion to Christ is evidenced by obedience to his full-orbed word (*Jn. 15:9-17*) and reflected by love of the brethren and commitment to sound doctrine (*Rom. 6:17; 16:17; Eph. 4:11-16; Tit. 2:7*).
- ¹⁹I found it fascinating to observe how Dr. Brown culled quotes from so many authorities (e.g., Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, George Whitefield, A. W. Tozer, Charles Spurgeon, and, of course, Finney) in order to support his revival thesis. Some of these men would "turn over in their graves" if they knew what Dr. Brown was trying to endorse with their writings!
- ²⁰Note the emphasis on obedience to the law in Psalm 1 and Psalm 119 and the fruits of such obedience. The Holy Spirit writes God's law on our hearts (*Heb. 8:10*) so that its righteous requirements might be fulfilled in us (*Rom. 8:4*).
- ²¹On page 246, Dr. Brown approves of this definition of Holiness: "Holiness is pure love." This smacks of perfectionism (what Finney embraced). The law is holy (*Rom. 7:12*). God, by his Spirit, makes us holy positionally by setting us apart to him in salvation and progressively (but not perfectly) as we work out our salvation by obeying his law. Love is reflected by obedience to God's law (*Rom. 13:8*). Dr. Brown does say that holiness "is grounded in the Word of God" but he never explains what this means (he is adept, though, at using all of the standard charismatic and evangelical buzz words). He says holiness is a "radical change" without defining radical or change.
- ²²A short list of items that God's law deals with would include: how we vote, how we educate our children, how we spend our money, how much debt we incur, what we do with our elderly parents, and how we structure our families and churches.
- ²³Sadly, he refers to restitution in the context of a fictitious person who "shrieks, shakes, lies motionless for six hours."
- ²⁴Note, this person is an ardent supporter of the "Holy Laughter" and "Holy Fire" revivals. However, one cannot reason inductively in this case and conclude that all such ardent supporters of the revivalism of charismaticism are that ignorant of the Bible.
- ²⁵John S. Tompkins, "Our Kindest City," *Reader's Digest*, July 1994:55.
- ²⁶"In Your light we see light" (*Ps. 36:9*, NKJV). "The fear of the Lord is the foundation of all knowledge" (*Pr. 1:7*, NKJV).
- ²⁷Sorry, this "revival" has not been accompanied by "shrieks, shakes, and jerks"—just a lot of hard work.
- ²⁸Andrew Sandlin, *A Postmillennial Primer* (Vallecito, CA, 1997), 46-47.
- ²⁹Not completely, but substantially.
- ³⁰Supernaturally affecting all of life—deep and wide.
- ³¹There is a tendency among American Christians to ignore the state of the church in the world.
- ³²Dr. Brown understands Revelation 19:15 as a final eschatological battle. This is a popular notion among modern evangelicals. The truth is—Christ has been judging the nations with the sword of his mouth ever since he sat upon the throne at God's right hand. He is doing the same now.
- ³³See Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness* (Brentwood, TN, 1991).
- ³⁴As an introduction, read *A Postmillennial Primer*.
- ³⁵My advice: Put all the books written by your favorite charismatic or "Word of Faith" author on the shelf for one year.
- ³⁶*Joy Unspeakable: Power & Renewal in the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL, 1984) and *The Sovereign Spirit: Discerning His Gifts* (Wheaton, IL, 1985).
- ³⁷Also read Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Carlisle, PA, 1971).
- ³⁸I would highly recommend, as an introduction, Douglas Wilson, *Easy Chairs, Hard Words: Conversations on the Liberty of God* (Moscow, ID, 1991).
- ³⁹Note especially Amos 8:12, "They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it." Anyone with any cognizance of the charismatic scene will find in this verse an uncanny application. Note the great multitude of people who have been globe-trotting across the ocean, trekking to Toronto, bellying up to the "Holy Ghost bartender," and migrating to Brownsville with the goal of getting "the blessing" or "the word of the Lord." One astute charismatic pastor has labeled all this somewhat frenzied activity as a "charismatic nervous breakdown." See also Proverbs 1:20-33.
- ⁴⁰I am not negating the fact that God, in his gracious sovereignty, can truly bless some of these people. But, unless these people ground themselves in God's word and become sound in their understanding of the Christian Faith, they will either fall by the wayside or be useless to God and to the long-term furtherance of his kingdom (see *Mt. 13:19-23*).
- ⁴¹James I. Packer, "At Last, A Reformed Study Bible," *Reformed Quarterly*, Winter, 1995: 17.
- ⁴²See Edward Yourdon and Jennifer Yourdon, *Time Bomb 2000* (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1998).

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Shadchan, Shadchan (Matchmaker, Matchmaker)

By Steve M. Schlissel

How the Jews Do It

According to Leo Rosten, "In Eastern Europe, the *shadchan* [matchmaker] performed a very important social function. Not only did he scour communities for eligible boys and nubile girls; he was the prime source of news/gossip as well to *shtetlach* [villages] bereft of newspapers, radios, travelers." Thus the famous matchmaker in *Fiddler on the Roof* was given the name "Yenta," a Yiddish noun denoting a gossipy woman.

While modern media has effectively retired the reporter function of the *shadchan* in America, many orthodox Jews continue to rely on matchmakers to arrange a *shiduch* (be careful how you say this Yiddish word for "marital match") for their children.

And after years of waiting for some other solution to come along for what seems to be untold thousands of Reformed singles, I reckon the time has come to bring this service to the Reformed Christian community. Yes, the gossip you've heard is true: I'm hanging out yet another shingle: *Schlissel Family Service, Shadchan to the Reformed Community*.

This new service has been foisted on me, as it were, by God's providence. In our twenty-four years of marriage, my wife and I have been instrumental in getting I-can't-tell-you-how-many couples to the altar. Praise the Lord! And our reward, to this point, has been the simple joy of seeing sacred human covenants made within the grand Covenant of Grace. Not one divorce in all those matches, blessed be God. And children? So many arrows in those new covenantal quivers, it'd take us a spell to count.

But it appears that a more formal approach in helping singles find their match is warranted, if not demanded, by circumstance. Thousands of perfectly wonderful Reformed people are passing their years alone while carrying a deep desire to be married. For many, there just isn't a convenient, dignified or effective alternative to a *shadchan*. A recent experience brought this truth home to us.

How This Got Started

A woman about whom we care deeply (she had been converted, by the grace of God, under our ministry) had passed the big "four-oh" and was still unattached. The tick-tock of her biological clock was becoming painfully loud. She took various steps to improve the likelihood of meeting Mr. Right, including using an Internet matching service ostensibly for Christians.

Well, if she didn't know before how elastic the word "Christian" is today, how loosely it is applied, she soon found out. Crackpots came knocking on her electronic door

from across the country. And you thought New York and California had a monopoly on weirdoes? Not even close. The bitter part of this pill, though, was that all alike called themselves Christian, yet most seemed not to have even the vaguest idea that being a Christian involved a genuine commitment to Jesus Christ and, minimally, *an attempt* (even faking it would have been an improvement for most of these guys) to live according to his word. And when our friend tried to talk doctrine with any of these "prospects," the responses ranged from complete disinterest to ignorance to casually tossed about heresy.

What's a forty-ish, God-fearing, fun-loving *Reformed* woman to do?

"Pastor Steve, you gotta help me."

That was four months ago. By the time you read this, our friend will be married to a man I matched her with. The wedding is set for November 25; the ring is on her hand, the hall is booked, the dress is bought, and our heroine told me last week, "I've never been so happy in my life. I am *so* happy."

Yes, thank the Lord. And we were glad to be of help. But no sooner had we arranged this marriage than we got an e-mail from Michigan: "Is it possible for you to help me find a Reformed woman to marry?" Then another inquiry from Louisiana, then another from Pennsylvania.

"Jeannie," I say to my match sent from heaven, "it's time to do this right."

"Amen," says the wiser half of the Schlissels.

Here's How It Goes

And so here we are: Schlissel Family Service is officially accepting applications. There is finally a *shadchan* for Reformed Christians. This is how it works: You call or write or e-mail me for an application. Women fill it out and return it with a registration donation. Men fill out their questionnaire and return it with a heftier registration fee.

Both men and women must meet certain minimum criteria before they are accepted as clients. For example, they must be members of well-ordered churches. Also, men must have the means to marry, women must be of noble reputation. Further, multiple references are required by Schlissel Family Service, *and they are checked*.

Shortly after the application is received by us (as soon as God permits, perhaps within a month, but *guaranteed* to be within a year or the "regi" is returned), the man is provided with information about a special Reformed woman. The man is provided with this information only *after* the woman has been told about him and has granted permission for him to initiate contact.

Further, female clients of Schlissel Family Service are

encouraged to use covenant heads as their representatives. A covenant head is someone the prospective suitor should contact first. Ideally, of course, this would be her Christian father, but there are circumstances wherein it might not be possible, or perhaps even desirable, to have a Daddy serve in that role. In those cases, an older brother, an elder, or a close Christian friend might be the only, or the better, choice. In any event, it is up to the woman to decide *if* she'd like to be contacted and *how* she'd like the first contact to be made. Providing guidance for both man and woman is part of the *shadchan's* job.

In addition to the respective registration amounts, male applicants promise to pay a fee on *engagement* to someone whom we arranged for them to meet. That fee is refundable only if the woman breaks the engagement, for she does not promise to pay it; the man does. Moreover, the man, as the soon-to-be covenant head of a new household, must demonstrate all along the way that he is trustworthy and a man of his word. What beauty is in making a woman attractive, integrity ought to be in making a man so: character, strength, consistency, dependability, reliability. Men as covenant heads may not "toy" with the emotions of those who are coming under their authority. To beg for her hand in marriage, to have that granted, and then to break faith, is to play the cad. It is a mark of our current lawlessness that breach of promise is a crime no longer prosecuted in civil courts, and a sin not even reckoned as

such by most churches. Bible students will recall, however, that the equivalent of the modern "engagement" in Biblical times was one in which the "troth" was pledged.

Yes, much more can be written about this whole subject, and perhaps I'll steal space in this periodical from time to time to tell you how it goeth. Minimally, I'll have to see to it that the wedding picture of our above-mentioned friends appears in these pages. But for now, I'll leave the writing to *you*—I invite you to write to me for an application.

For a variety of reasons, multitudes of Reformed believers from twenty-one to seventy-one, find themselves in circumstances with no visible match on the horizon. But your match may be one in *our* sights, and we invite you to join in this perfectly sound method of matchmaking for the Reformed community. You want a match made in heaven. Perhaps God ordained that very match to come to earth via Brooklyn.

Matchmaking for Reformed Singles

For an application, contact:

Schlissel Family Service

2662 East 24th Street

Brooklyn, NY 11235-2610

718-332-4444

Reformed.Matchmaker@usa.net

Attention Covenant Youth!

We intend to begin a new feature in the *Chalcedon Report*. Every month we would like to publish a brief article by young Christians (no older than 20) either home schooled or in a Christian day school. The article should be 500-1500 words and be on a topic in line with Chalcedon's Vision Statement.

Chalcedon will pay \$50.00 for any article published.

Please send submissions to Susan Burns c/o Chalcedon,
P. O. Box 369
Vallecito, CA 95251
e-mail address sburns@goldrush.com

1999 Auburn Avenue Pastors' Conference

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224 Auburn Avenue, Monroe, LA 71201
318-323-3061

Westminster Biblical Missions (WBM)

Compiled by Susan Burns



In 1973, Reformed believers in Korea and Pakistan recognized their need for training so that they could fulfill the mandate of Matthew 28 in their respective nations. A small, but visionary, group of elders saw the great potential of this unique opportunity: Instead of using conventional methods such

as sending American missionaries to evangelize, plant churches, and disciple the nations, they would train indigenous Christians so that they could effectively obey their Lord in fulfilling the Great Commission in their homelands. To accomplish this work, Westminster Biblical Missions (WBM) was established.

The organization was so named because of its unwavering, unflinching, stare-in-your-eyes commitment to the Reformed faith à la the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. With this Rock-solid theological grounding, WBM strives to be Biblical in its approach to missions and the completing of the dominion mandate. Like their brother Paul, the men of WBM are committed to planting and multiplying Reformed churches in foreign fields by training nationals to stand in the Faith, defend the Faith, and spread the gospel.¹ WBM offers practical "how to" training so that elders in foreign lands can establish self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating national churches. This approach keeps national churches from becoming dependent on foreign support that can cease if a country chooses to close its doors to foreign missionaries, or if American churches and denominations wane in interest. Furthermore, once the work is established, WBM is free (like the apostles) to offer help in new fields.

Key to establishing strong churches is a firm grounding the Faith. Thus, false gospels and ideologies must be exposed to the light of Scripture. This results in antithesis and draws the battle lines. Whereas other missionary agencies tremble at the thought of the dreaded "C-word,"² the men of WBM frankly oppose false gospels wherever they are found. In many foreign fields, these false gospels are often the teachings the ecumenical apostasies of the pseudo-Protestants in the World Council of Churches. WBM's General Secretary, Rev. Dennis Roe explains, "The ecumenical movement is everywhere today, and missionary agencies which do not confront its liberal

social gospel on their fields are not faithful to Christ. It is a great delusion to think that mission work can advance without discipling or, if discipling be recognized, that it can be done without contending against the claims of false gospels and ideologies which, in the name of Christ, are seducing the hearts and minds of men."

Meet the Gideonites

WBM has a board which oversees its constitutional, personal, and financial matters. Its staff is headed by Rev. Roe who serves as General Secretary. The fields are administered by field secretaries: Rev. Earl E. Pinckney oversees the Pakistan ministry; while Dr. Robert S. Rapp supervises the work in Korea and Hungary/Romania. They have been with WBM from its beginning and have given pivotal guidance to the mission during its history. Rev. Alexander David, a Pakistani national, oversees the Pakistan Village Ministry; he also translates Reformed writings into the Urdu language. Other gifted leaders working with the mission are Rev. Sardar Ahmed Din in Pakistan, Dr. David Kim in Korea, Rev. Imre Szoke in Hungary, Dr. Bill Higgins and Dr. Max Lathrop in Mexico.

The principals in this mighty band of warriors bring over 200 years of missionary expertise to WBM. Although the laborers are few, their efforts have been rewarded by a hundred-fold harvest wherever they have labored.

Dr. Maxwell Lathrop not only helped found Wycliffe Bible Translators; he was one of the first translators to serve the organization. Through Wycliffe, he labored for 45 years among the Tarascan Indians of central Mexico. Dr. Lathrop was in the third graduating class at Westminster Theological Seminary and had the privilege of studying under Machen and Van Til. He provided the Tarascan Indians with their first written alphabet and written language. This resulted in a translation of the New Testament in the Tarascan language. After leaving Wycliffe, Dr. Lathrop continued to work among the Tarascans by establishing the Tarascan Missionary Society. He was approved as a WBM missionary in 1992.

While a child, Rev. Sadar Ahmed Din became a Christian through the testimony of American missionaries. After working for the American Embassy in Lahore and the Fullbright Foundation, he devoted himself to full-time Christian work. Din's ministry involves helping local pastors and congregations. Because of the high illiteracy rate in Pakistan, Din developed a ministry that uses the Bible to help people learn to read. In addition, Din translates solid Reformed literature into

the Urdu language. He has completed translating *The Five Points of Calvinism* by Edward Palmer, and *The Attributes of God* by Arthur Pink. He and his late wife, Nasim, established a Christian day school. He also teaches a Sunday morning Bible study which has had as many as 150 people attending. Din currently serves as the director of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Pakistan. He has often risked his life to help the church in Pakistan.³

In the 1950s, Rev. Earl Pickney and his wife, Marion, were accepted by the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions to serve in Portugal with Francis Schaeffer. In God's providence, they were refused visas and subsequently assigned to Brazil where they served for seven years. The Pickenys have served the church for decades in various capacities. Rev. Pickney founded a church in Pennsylvania and pastored others in Nebraska and Florida. He worked with Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship while in Florida, and taught at Clearwater Christian College, and also at Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tennessee (where he also served as Academic Dean). Health conditions precluded him from serving long stints on the mission field. However, he served in Chile briefly and was one of the principals who established WBM in 1973, serving as its first general secretary for seventeen years. He became involved in the work in Pakistan and has made over thirty trips there during the years.

Dr. Robert S. Rapp began his missionary service in 1961 in Brazil. In 1967 he became involved in South Korea. The South Korean Christians quickly recognized his commitment to the Faith as well as other skills. They asked him to establish a seminary. This seminary, which began with 12 students, now numbers over 650. Rapp has written numerous articles and booklets over the years promoting missions and exposing the World Council of Churches. His two-volume textbook, *Biblical Theology*, is used throughout Korea as a standard reference work. His writings have been used by Presbyterians and 25 other Korean denominations. While in Korea, Rapp published a booklet which exposed the Marxist influence of the

World Council of Churches. He has helped WBM establish the theological program used in Pakistan. He is currently using his gifts and abilities to establish a center for Reformed theological education in Central and Eastern Europe. Currently, this school in Miskolc, Hungary (the school is named for Karolyi Gaspar—a 16th century reformer, Bible translator and educator whose life and work led to the formation of the Hungarian Reformed Church) is making an impact in Northeastern Hungary.

Dennis Roe, a minister in the Reformed Churches in the U. S., has served as General Secretary of WBM for almost 10 years—this in addition to pastoring in Carbondale, Pennsylvania, and currently in Grass Valley, California. A veteran of the Vietnam War, he serves as chaplain for the 25th Infantry Association. He is also chaplain for the Third Squadron, Fourth Calvary Association. As General Secretary for WBM, he oversees all of WBM's mission fields and missionaries. This past year he traveled to Pakistan to speak and lecture at WBM's Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Pakistan and to the Karolyi Gaspar Institute of Theology and Missions in Hungary where he took part in licensure and ordination examinations.

The Fields of Harvest The Tarascan Indian Ministry

The Tarascan people live in a 700-square mile region about halfway between Mexico City and Guadalajara. One of the more prominent features of the Tarascan land-



Tarascan Indians at worship.

scape is Lake Patzcuaro, where natives still earn a living fishing with their world-famous "butterfly-nets." In 1935, the Tarascans saw an American paddling around that lake in a dug-out canoe, learning their language by talking with the people he met there. In five years, Dr. Max Lathrop finished the first translation of the Gospel of John. In following years he completed the whole New Testament and parts of the Old Testament. During that time many Tarascans came to faith in Christ. Using his unique resourcefulness, Dr. Lathrop introduced the Tarascans to new-crop hybrids with the help of universities in the States. He made looms so they could weave their beautiful fabrics, and had a hand in the development of several industries. He spearheaded a massive literacy campaign that earned him the recognition of the Mexican government, and had a hand in founding numerous schools in Tarascan. At the height of the work, there were 40 "Christian centers" spread abroad through the territory.



Dr. Rapp and the first ordinands of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Hungary and Central Europe.

Due to Dr. Lathrop's age and health, he has not been able to minister on site to the Tarascans in five years. As a consequence, there has been some deterioration in the work. There are only 2 groups that have not dwindled in size or been assumed by Pentecostal groups. There is a real need to strengthen the works that remain, and God has graciously raised up a man to do that—Dr. Bill Higgins of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. Bill will actively generate support for this work, and travel to the field as time and resources permit.

On a recent visit to Mexico, Bill and Dr. Lathrop discovered a Tarascan leader teaching in a seminary in Mexico City. They hope to employ him to set up an extension of the seminary in Tarascan for training church leaders. This seems to be match made in heaven the man already knows the language and culture, as well as being Reformed in his theology. Bill helps to raise funds for a scholarship for a Tarascan pastor to study at the seminary in Mexico City. He also helps reprint Tarascan literature—hymnals, tracts, primers, and dictionaries. He hopes to raise a one-time gift of \$800.00 to set up a simple store which will provide a Tarascan pastor with a means of support and enough free time to minister effectively in his congregation. The remaining projects can be funded for approximately \$450.00 a month for a period of only three years. It is another loaves-and-fishes scenario for those willing to part with a little of their income.

Pakistan

From WBM's early involvement in Pakistan, they learned of one Pakistani Christian who consistently took a strong stand defending the Faith—Sardar Ahmed Din, an elder in the Lahore Church Councils. He spent many evenings preaching in the slums of Lahore and took strong stands against any who denied the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, and other fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Din also took a strong stand as the World Council of Churches sought to bring its liberal influence into Pakistan. His desire to defend historic Christianity eventually became known to WBM, who began to work with Din and two Presbyterian groups that had separated from their parent churches because of those churches' involvement with the WCC and other liberal, ecumenical groups.

The first thing WBM sought to do in Pakistan was establish a seminary to train pastors. In 1988, WBM was able to purchase two acres of land on the outskirts of Lahore in an area where there are several Christian communities. By 1989 a building was constructed and dedicated for the Lord's work with the seminary as the main activity. WBM promised to sponsor the seminary and provide all financial resources. Dr. Rapp, who was experienced in seminary work, set up the curriculum. The first class began April 25, 1994; there were 25 students. This number has fluctuated through the years, and currently, an average of 10 students attend. The seminary

accepts a student only upon the recommendation of his pastor. He is then examined to discern if he has a call to the ministry and meets the entrance requirements. A student must have completed the equivalent of high school education by American standards. Students choose areas of service or are assigned one for their weekend ministries. Graduates have gone into various groups with a good number remaining with the Lahore Council of Churches. The indigenous Lahore Church Council (LCC) now has thirty pastors, almost all of whom are graduates from this seminary.

WBM encourages the pastors by giving each monetary gifts at Christmas and a new bicycle every five years. Bicycles are a pastor's primary mode of transportation to visit his congregations. Often a pastor will have five or six villages for which he is responsible. The seminary provides a center where pastors gather each month for fellowship and additional training. One student received special training in the organization of Sunday Schools. Since his graduation in 1995, he has worked among the churches to help them establish educational programs.

Because the literacy rate in Pakistan was so low among Christians, WBM also agreed to sponsor literacy centers developed by Din. Originally, 25 centers were begun. Currently, WBM is seeking funds to train teachers to head additional centers. This project would require only \$25.00 per month for each new literacy center.

The Pakistani work is growing — not only in number of pastors and churches, but also in its financial commitment to winning Pakistan for Christ. For example, each year a five-day convention is held at the seminary. The number attending has grown from 600 adults in 1992 to 2500 in 1998. Children's meetings are held in conjunction with this convention. An average of 450 children attend each evening. This is an ambitious and costly event for the Pakistanis because those who travel to the convention stay at the seminary and are fed by the hosting group. In addition, the Pakistanis have to pay for rental of tents and chairs. In 1998, the total cost for the Pakistanis was over \$3,000.00. WBM offers its help for this large event by providing speakers for the convention at no cost. In addition to providing instruction, the conventions provide a bridge of fellowship to Christians who often live in isolation from each other. In Pakistan, Christians suffer persecution and are routinely discriminated against in school, work, and society.

The children of Lashore face many dangers. Many, as young as 3, are left alone all day while their parents and siblings work. The streets in the village lack sanitation, with open sewers all over. There is also danger from deep holes in the streets. Often, the smaller children are physically abused by older ones. Most of the Christian children in the area would never have an opportunity to attend school, and those who do are discriminated against and refused permission to use fountains and bathroom facilities used by the Muslims; they are also often subjected to pressure to convert to Islam.

To provide protection as well as a Christian education, Din and his late wife, Nasim, started a school in the seminary facilities. The school began in 1992 with only seven students. As of October 1998, the school had grown to over 1100 students, ranging from nursery school to ninth grade. There is a long waiting list for admission. A dedicated Christian faculty and staff provide excellent training for these children. Three other schools, with a total of over 300 students, have also been established.

Because of the poverty of the parents, a minimum charge of about eighty cents a month is required for each student, with discounts when there are more than one in a family. Among the provisions made in the school is a snack including such things as milk, toast, and at times an omelet. Many of the children come to school without any food because their family has none or because the parents and older children leave for work as early as 5:00 a.m. The school's ministry to these children has resulted in their families (many who are Roman Catholic) being open to evangelization.

Karolyi Gaspar Institute of Theology and Missions

The sudden collapse of the godless communist government of the Soviet Union in 1989 created a wonderful opportunity for mission work. At this time, the Lord led Robert Rapp to Hungary. The goal was to establish a school for training nationals in theology and



Rev. Jonathan Merica and the Karolyi Gaspar Institute

missions. Of all the countries in the former Soviet Empire, Hungary is the only one with a strong historic connection to the 16th century Reformation. The connection still exists in the form of the Hungarian Reformed Church which has largely abandoned this great heritage and become a member of the World Council of Churches. Nevertheless, there are bands of believers looking and praying for a revival of the Reformed Faith in their midst. In addition, there are large numbers of Hungarian people living in the surrounding countries of Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and Croatia. Thus

Hungary is the key to missionary work in the rest of Central/Eastern Europe.

With this vision, Rapp traveled to Hungary in 1990. Two years later the Karolyi Gaspar Institute of Theology and Missions was formed in Budapest. In 1994, the school relocated to Miskolc, Hungary. Students at Karolyi Gaspar receive a Levite Diploma after two years of satisfactory work. After four years, they may receive a Diploma which qualifies them to be a missionary pastors or teachers. To date, 13 students have completed the program, nine of whom are working as full-time evangelists and church planters. As a result, new churches are being started in Hungary, Romania, Ukraine and Serbia. Seven are already formed; another five will likely be started in the next few months.



Students of the Karolyi Gaspar Institute

The 1995-1996 Student Yearbook recounts some of the services provided by the students as they train at the Seminary: "[W]e started work in the Mezősegyfalva area of Transylvania. It was an unforgettable experience—to invite people to come to church, to preach the Gospel and to teach the Bible. . . . We have had experience serving in many congregations in Miskolc and neighboring villages, teaching in high schools, preaching at the Old People's Home, working with orphans, conducting youth Bible studies, and working among alcoholics and homeless people."

In addition to the class work and mission work, the students have also learned from the persecution they have received at the hands of the Hungarian Reformed Church and some of its American pseudo-Reformed allies. Nevertheless, having prevailed from trial to trial and from fire to fire, the first seven graduates of Karolyi Gaspar go forth to their callings. Szoke Imre will begin his fifth year of studies and be trained for administrative duties. Curcubet Gabor will preach to the Romanians in Moldova. Gereb Geza will work in Cluj-Kolozsvár with a Reformed mission group who ministers to alcoholics. Kovas Kalman and Laszlo Lehel will plant churches

among Hungarians and Gypsies. Kovacs Ferenc and Jozsa Istvan will oversee all student ministries in Transylvania and other parts of Romania. They will make contact with Reformed churches, recruit students, provide and distribute gospel literature, organize evangelistic meetings, and maintain regular communication between the students and WBM. These first graduates are the vanguard of Reformation in Central/Eastern Europe.

Korea

WBM's mission strategy in Korea has paid off in numerous ways. Currently WBM's works there are completely self-supporting and WBM's relationship is as a consultant. In fact, this work has matured to the point that the Koreans are helping WBM in other fields of labor! For example, they recently gave \$10,000 for the work of WBM in Hungary. Also, there are a number of graduates of Westminster School of Theology (founded by WBM) serving on mission fields around the world.

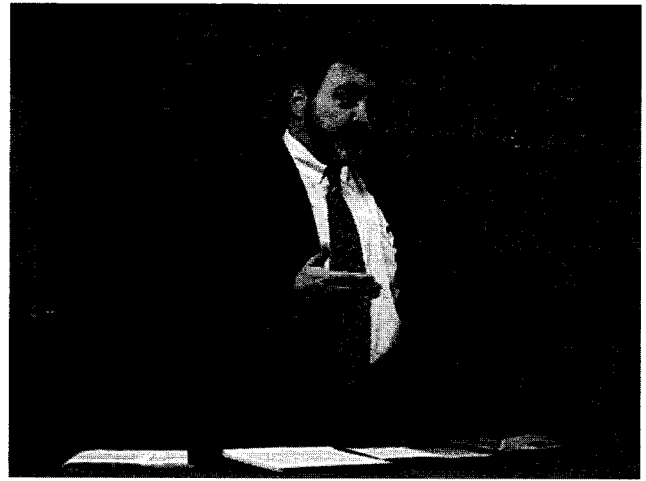
Westminster School of Theology began in 1967, with only 7 students. Now, over 650 are enrolled. Of the 1,315 graduates in the four-year Basic Pastor's Course, over 850 are currently serving in full-time ministry (most as pastors). Graduates have pioneered over 600 churches in South Korea and are presently working as missionaries in 19 other countries. Most of the churches pioneered by students of WST belong to the Chang Shin Korea Presbyterian Church which has 43,000 communicant (adult) members and 19,000 children.

Throughout its 30 years of service in South Korea, WTS has often been threatened with closure because it did not have an educational license granted by the Ministry of Education. Each time the threats were made, God graciously provided special licenses which were briefly recognized by the government. At each revocation of these special licenses, the school's future would hang in a perilous balance. In November, 1997, WTS was awarded a provisional license by the Ministry of Education and in September 1998, WTS received a permanent license from the Ministry of Education insuring that the school can continue to equip the saints for years to come.

This mighty work of God in South Korea continues under the bloody shadow of North Korea—a godless communist country that remains committed to the doctrines of hell in spite of the evidences of communism's worldwide failures, and in spite of the growing evidences of God's judgment against the government of North Korea. The U. S. State Department has expressed concern that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons. In the meantime, there is widespread famine in North Korea—the result of massive flooding in some areas and drought in others.

A Message from Dennis Roe

Westminster Biblical Missions needs your help in carrying out its part in Christ's Great Commission. We



Rev. Dennis Roe teaching in Hungary

seek men and women of God who share our vision to glorify God through the discipling of the nations to Christ. We want you and your church to understand our work. We are in a spiritual battle. Therefore, we urge you to pray for us that we may remain faithful in our calling, courageous in proclaiming the whole counsel of God, and ready to enter new doors the Lord may be opening for us. We also ask you to give sacrificially to support our fields and the work of our staff at home. You will never find a better place to invest your missionary dollars. WBM will see to it that your gifts go in their entirety to the fields and projects you designate. We need dedicated churches which will stand behind us. Christ has ordained his church at home to build his church abroad.

Westminster Biblical Missions, Inc.
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Carbondale, PA 18407

¹ For more on this approach to missions, see John L. Nevius' book *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (1885). Rev. Nevius (1829-1893) was a Presbyterian missionary to China.

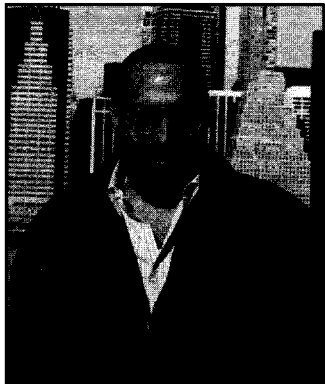
² "Controversy"!

³ Din's son, John, had completed three and a half years of college in Pakistan when fifteen Muslim students brutally beat him for over an hour. After his recovery, when he sought to return to college, these students threatened to kill him. Unable to complete his education in Pakistan, he came to America and graduated from California State in 1991.

Susan Burns is a native Virginian and graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary. Her work has been published in over 25 publications. She co-authored (with George Grant) Perot: The Populist Appeal of Strong-Man Politics and served as the news editor and investigative reporter of The Presbyterian Advocate. She is Chalcedon's administrative assistant.

All I Really Need to Know I Learn in the Bible (Part 1)

By Steve M. Schlissel



We have been trying to prove that thinking of our one Bible as if it were really twain—an “Old Testament” bound with a very different “New Testament”—is not at all helpful, nor is it true to the Bible’s own testimony concerning itself. The Bible is a unified revelation diag-

nosizing the universal problem of man, setting forth God’s unique solution, variously administered.

Unfortunately, the bipolar view of Scripture has come nearly to dominate even the believing ecclesiastical landscape. In America, at least, it has swallowed up virtually all evangelicals and a good deal more of the Reformed than one would have expected in view of our confessions to the contrary. It is our fervent hope that all may be brought to appreciate what Adolph Saphir, a Jewish Christian minister of the last century, called the divine unity of Scripture.¹ Sooner or later someone must address the latent and patent dispensationalism operating today under the Reformed banner.² But for now I will deal with but two implications of the last two letters. I suspect all Reformed professors would agree with these:

Implication #1) There is essentially just one covenant, and #2) that covenant is and has always been in Christ.

Because of their continued rejection of proposition #2, my “brethren according to the flesh” (unsaved Jews) must be viewed as covenant-breakers. No Bible-believer is surprised by such an assertion.

But because of their disagreement with proposition #1, my Baptist brothers, I’m sorry to say, would not be included under the heading of “Reformed professors,” however Calvinistic they might be in their soteriology. For the Reformed Faith, to this writer at least, is heart and soul a matter of covenant.

Now speaking of heart and soul, though I was raised a “practicing” Jew and ordained a Baptist, today I am neither. Nevertheless, my soul is bound with the Baptists who recognize the need for the appropriation of the real blood atonement found in Christ. But my heart is genuinely knit to my Jewish kin who— isn’t it a marvel?—still recognize that God redeems a real people, not merely a pile of

persons. Tragically, though, both Jews and Baptists break the unity of the Bible, albeit in different ways.

Allow me to treat the propositions in reverse order. First, that the covenant has always been in Christ. (this month) I will attempt to prove this by following a single thread in Scripture: the covenant requirement of blood.

At-One-Ment

Religion, to be worth anything, must be obsessed with the idea of atonement. For the word *religion* means “a binding together again.” Since it is our sin which has separated us from God, a religion, to be of value, must reveal the way past our sins back to God. If it cannot reveal a way back to the true God, it shouldn’t have the name *religion*. It might as well be called sport or pastime or hobby. Religion, properly spoken of, is the means whereby we who are separated from God are brought back to him, *re-covenanted* with him unto life and fruitfulness.

This way to be bound once again to the true God, maker of heaven and earth, the Bible alone discloses. Its message is one throughout: the way back is not by self-effort or self-atonement, but by God-provided atonement, a provision so perfectly gracious that it demands our very lives in service in return.

The need for atonement is as basic to fallen man as the need for food is to created man. And just as man must find his food outside himself, so true atonement comes only from outside man. Devouring one’s self is no act of nourishment, nor is the quest for self-atonement ever successful. Food and atonement come from outside.

Most men willingly move toward a source of food, but our spiritual problem is such that we, by (fallen) nature, want no part of a God-provided atonement. God must compel us to accept his gracious provision. And his gracious provision is the only one the Scripture offers. The idea of self-atonement is an invention of man fleeing the true God (*Gen. 3:7,8*).

Atonement involves a covering of our sins, an effective dealing with them, which leads to reconciliation with the true God. Atonement removes God’s wrath against sin and satisfies his demand for justice. Since sin requires death as its penalty (*Gen. 2:17*), an atonement must somehow involve death.

God has revealed that the way back to himself, the means of atonement, is by a substitute which he himself must provide (*Gen. 3:21*). There must be a death: the sinner’s or the substitute’s. The sinner appropriates the

substitute's death by faith. We cannot hide our sins, but God can cover them through a blood substitute.

This truth has not gone altogether unnoticed by Jews. Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler, writing on "Atonement" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, expresses this powerfully, while making an astonishing admission: ". . . the blood, which to the ancients was the life-power of the soul, forms the essential part of the sacrificial Atonement [Rabbi Kohler here references *Lev. 17: 11*, which we shall get to]. This is the interpretation given by all Jewish commentators, ancient and modern, on the passage . . . The life of the victim was offered . . . as a typical ransom of 'life by life'; the blood sprinkled by the priest upon the altar serving as the means of a renewal of man's covenant of life with God."

Precisely. From the beginning God has made it plain that atonement will be had only *his* way, and that way is through blood. The Bible is a bloody, bloody book.

Review: We have sinned. Our first parents sinned. Their first instinct was to "atone," or "cover" themselves at the point of sin's manifestation (*i.e.*, their shame), by their own fabrication. God, from the beginning (it cannot be emphasized too strongly, since the Bible *never* speaks of any other way as efficacious), sets forth the only means of atonement, of covering: a God-provided substitute who must die in the sinner's place.

The gracious God, therefore, rejected Adam and Eve's self-covering and himself provided garments of skin for them, coverings which cost the life of another (*Gen. 3:21*). Along with that covering he gave them a promise of the Messiah-to-come (*v. 3:15*). Word and "sacrament," promise and picture, from the beginning.

Watch the River Flow

At the creation a river flowed from the Garden (*Gen. 2:10*). After the fall another river flowed: this one of blood.

In the first acts of religious worship, we find that Abel, who brought a bloody offering, was accepted, while Cain, who brought a bloodless offering, was rejected. We understand full well that offerings other than bloody ones were/are acceptable to God, but only *after* the bloody offering is rendered. This is the uniform testimony of Scripture. First the sin offering in the Tabernacle/Temple, then the other offerings. First Passover by blood, then Unleavened Bread. First atonement, then acceptable service.

Thus it says, "The LORD looked with favor on Abel *and his offering*, but on Cain *and his offering* he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry." And to this day sinners are indignant when told that God does not accept their worship. But worship that does not begin at the point of death (by substitute) is not acceptable.

As mentioned, Israel's birth as a nation was in blood. They were spared the judgment which fell upon the Egyptians in virtue of the sign of blood which God instructed them to put on their houses (*Ex. 12:7, 12-13, 21-27*). When the covenant was ratified at Sinai, it was with sprinkling of blood, on the altar, on the people (*Ex.*

24:6, 8). The altar was consecrated by blood (*Ex. 29:12*). The priests were consecrated by blood (*v. 20*). Their garments were consecrated by blood (*v. 21*).

The service of the tabernacle was filled with blood: "bring the blood"; "sprinkle the blood"; "pour the blood"; "put the blood"; "take the blood"; "offer the blood"; over and over and over.

It would be hard to miss the fact that the central truth of life is this: we can be re-bound to God only through the forgiveness of our sins obtained by means of a God-provided atonement in blood. But to make the fact inescapable, God told Moses to write down the single most important religious truth in the Tabernacle/Temple system: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for *it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul*" (*Lev. 17: 11*).

The religious activity around which Israel was organized as a redeemed nation was drenched with blood:

Daily blood offerings (*Num. 28:10-4*); Weekly blood offerings (*vv. 9-10*); Monthly blood offerings (*v. 11*); Annual blood offerings (*Lev. 16, 23; Num. 29*); When the ark was brought to Jerusalem, blood (*2 Sam. 6:12-13*); When the ark was brought into the Temple, blood (*1 K. 8:3-5, 62-64*).

The entire Old Testament, religiously speaking, is a river of blood from Eden on. Israel's call and constitution did not negate the need for a blood-based way to God: it highlighted it. *It screamed it!*

Rightly does St. Paul say, "And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (*Heb. 9:22*).

Indeed. Now, where does all this blood lead? Christians have a ready answer.

Blood on the Tracks

"Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption . . . For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—he then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. Now where there is remission of [sin], there is no longer an offering for sin" (*Heb. 9:11-12; 24-26; 10:14,18*). One might say that the Old Testament taught Israelitish Christianity while the New teaches Universal Judaism. The system is complete in Christ. Apart from him, yes, apart from him it is altogether inexplicable. But *in him*, ah!, in him. . .

Atonement is had through faith in his blood (*Rom. 3:25*). We are bought with his blood (*Ac. 20:28*). We are justified by his blood (*Rom. 5:9*). We have redemption through his blood (*Eph. 1:7*; *1 Pet. 1:18-19*). God made peace through his blood (*Col. 1:19-20*). His blood speaks in and from heaven (*Heb. 12:22-24*). We are consecrated by his blood (*Heb. 13:11-12*). His blood purifies us from every sin (*1 Jn. 1:7*). We are set free by his blood (*Rev. 1:5*). We are made into a people, a royal priesthood, by his blood (*Rev. 5:9, 10*).

Jesus doesn't overturn the Old Testament religion; he completely and entirely justifies it, vindicates it, gives sense and glory to it. Apart from him a modern observer might view it as just shy of barbaric. But in him it is spectacular grace on every page, for every page speaks of him. Abraham told Isaac, "God himself will provide the lamb" (*Gen. 22:8*). Yes, yes, yes! The theme of Scripture! And now it is done! "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (*Jn. 1:29*).

Yes, of the world. And, as we labored to show you in the last column, here is the critical issue, here you will find what is new in the New Testament. *The Gentiles are joined to Israel*, and that not through a blood rite (circumcision), for with the blood once for all shed, God requires no more blood in rites.³ No, the Gentiles are joined through faith in *his* blood, and they enter via water.

United By His Blood

It is important to get this straight. With the coming of Jesus—his birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, enthronement—the Jewish people are *commanded*, with all signs and authority, to believe in him. The penalty for unbelief is excommunication from the covenant.

"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up His servant, He sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways' . . . Moses said. . . 'Anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from among his people'" (*Ac. 3:23-26*).

Unbelievers in Israel would be cut off. But Israel wouldn't get smaller: it would get incomparably *larger*. Because added to Israel would be all Gentiles who recognize in Jesus the Author of forgiveness (*Lk. 24:47*).

That Gentiles are becoming Israelites is made plain in Ephesians 2. Speaking to Gentiles, Paul says, "Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise,⁴ without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.⁵ His purpose was to create in Himself one new

man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross . . . He came and preached peace to you who were far away [Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [Jews]. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, *you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household*, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone."

And Peter, after applying titles to the church which had originally been given to distinguish Israel (chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation), says, "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God" (*1Pet. 2:9-10*).

What we find in the Bible, then, is the story of blood running in torrents throughout, "religious blood," blood by which God's people are reconciled and re-bound to himself. But the rivers terminate at Christ's sacrifice. Within that very generation they disappeared altogether when God in Christ ordered the destruction of the Temple.

No Exit

What would unbelieving Israel do now? Without Christ and without a Temple, they fabricated—one might say they formalized or refined—a religion whereby man may be reconciled to God without blood.

At first, the strain showed. Rabbi Kohler writes: "The cessation of sacrifice, in consequence of the destruction of the Temple,⁶ came, therefore, as a shock to the people . . . It was then that Johanan ben Zakkai declared works of benevolence to have atoning powers as great as those of sacrifice . . . This view, however, did not solve satisfactorily for all the problem of sin . . . Hence a large number of Jews accepted the Christian faith in the Atonement by the blood 'shed for many for the remission of sins'."

Rabbi Kohler admits that it may have been in response to this movement by Jews to "Universal Judaism" that "Jewish teachers strove to develop and deepen the Atonement idea."

What was added may have deepened Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai's formula, but it bankrupted the Biblical formula. To works of benevolence was added the invention that God does not require blood: His fatherly disposition and forgiving mercy, they said, is enough to bridge the gap. (That would come as a huge surprise to Adam, Abel, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, and a few million other, more faithful covenant keepers of old.) And as if to completely displace God's revealed religion with that of man's, to good works were added repentance, prayer, the study of Torah and your own suffering.

How well Paul explains all this! "But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away [only] in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart" (*2 Cor. 3:14-15*). But there is hope!⁷ "Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (*v. 16*).

Paul sums up unbelieving Judaism, indeed, *all forms of unbelief*, in Romans 10:3: "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

God's Witness to Messiah in the Talmud

God has not left himself without a witness, even in this systematic unbelief. In the tractate of the Talmud called Rosh Hashana, at section 31b, a most remarkable discussion is found.⁸ They are talking about a thread of scarlet which, they say, used to be fastened on the outside of the door of the Temple court, after the High Priest had performed the service on the Day of Atonement. If the scarlet cord turned white the people would rejoice, taking this as a sign that their sins had been forgiven through the atoning blood. If it remained red, they were sad.

To prevent mood swings among the people, a rule was made that it be fastened to the inside of the door. The people still peeked in to see it, however, and still had their mood determined by its color. A rule was therefore made that half the cord be fastened to the rock (used in the ceremony) and half between the horns of the scapegoat (the *azazel*) which was sent into the wilderness.

In the discussion which follows, recorded in the Talmud, you can read, "and it has been further taught: 'For forty years before the destruction of the Temple the thread of scarlet never turned white but it remained red.'"

Forty years prior to the destruction of the Temple brings us to the crucifixion of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Jesus said, "It is finished." And when he had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two.

God "testifies" through the Talmud that the efficacy of *all* offerings find their source in Messiah Jesus. His blood had flowed backward, in type, throughout the Old Testament, and that flow met its source at Golgotha. There the sacrificial system met its purpose and was overtaken.

And from there the people of God would be redefined. They would not, however, be redefined as though suddenly being composed only of elect, adult individuals. No, they were a body, a group—aged, middle-aged, young, newborn—following Jesus Christ, the hope and Messiah and King of Israel. There isn't a breath of suggestion to the contrary in all of Scripture.

The Divider at the crossroads of the Testaments is *Christ*, not covenant. Those who believed *continued in covenant*; those who did not were broken off. *It has always been Christ*. In the Old, discipleship began at circumcision; in the New it begins at bloodless baptism. In both Old and New the initiatory sign is the beginning of discipleship.

The difference from Acts 8-11 on is that Jews, as such, would no longer hold *exclusive* claim to status as God's people. That would now be shared with a superabundance of Gentiles, Gentile believers *and their children* entering as uncircumcised equals, joined to God's own.

The Jews violate the unity of Scripture's testimony by fabricating a new so-called means of atonement. But my Baptist brethren break Scripture's unity by fabricating a new people who compose, as it were, a childless church.

Power to the People

Needless to say, these respective errors are of an entirely different magnitude. Don't anyone accuse me of believing otherwise. I only mention them together because they stand as a sort of yin and yang of wrong thinking about the structure of the Bible. One rejects the testimony concerning the blood, the other rejects the testimony concerning the people.

To the Jews who postulate that God no longer requires blood, I say, "Show me where he has said that." To the Baptists who say that children of believers are no longer in covenant with God and therefore not entitled to the sign and seal of it, I say, "Show me where God has said that." Each proposition is equally arbitrary.

For the fact of Scripture concerning this matter is as clear as light can make it: God has never—we shall repeat this for effect—God has *never* made a covenant which did not include the offspring of those with whom he made it. The idea of such is totally foreign to Scripture, an invention of man as totally at odds with his revelation (in degree, not kind) as the notion that good deeds take the place of a blood substitute. He never says, "I will be your God and you will be my person."

(Next month, we will conclude by considering God's witness to the covenant in the Bible.)

¹ Saphir was a brilliant and pious man. He was converted under the ministry of the famous Scotsman, "Rabbi" John Duncan. Mr. Saphir, I think, might disagree with some of my views.

² One thinks of the fabled conversation, variously attributed, but which I first heard alleged to have been between Van Til and Machen. Walking on the Westminster Seminary grounds, Machen whispers to Van Til, "You know, Case, you and I are the only *truly* Reformed people on campus.... And I'm not so sure about *you*."

³ It is important to remember that, for all their talk of blood in the Mass, Romanists don't have any in their service. They have wine which they *make believe* turns to blood, an act of imagination altogether unnecessary, vain and culpable.

⁴ Paul could just as easily have said, "promises of the covenant."

⁵ Obviously those laws which required or reinforced separation between Jew and Gentile, *per se*.

⁶ Just in case you are not clear on this, sacrifice had to cease with the Temple's destruction for God had explicitly restricted sacrifice to that altar. See Deuteronomy 12.

⁷ I attempt in a sermon on Romans 11 to prove that this hope remains alive. This sermon may be ordered from Covenant Media Foundation: 1-800-553-3938.

⁸ I checked the Talmud myself after reading of this in a now out-of-print book by Dr. Henry J. Heydt, *The Chosen People Question Box II*. Dr. Heydt also referenced an article, *Azazel*, in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* [no edition or date], Volume II, p. 367.

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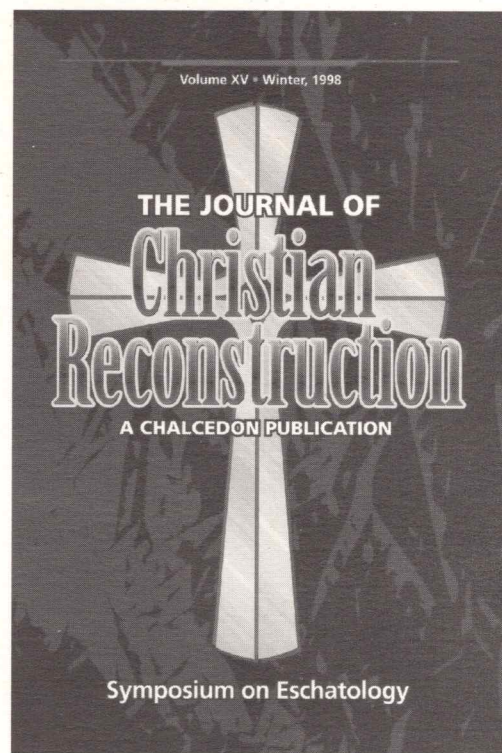
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