

REDEEMING THE TIME

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

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Liberation or Bondage?

The World Council of Churches' false theology, promising to help the "oppressed," has instead brought unparalleled pain and suffering.

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Zimbabwe, in the southern part of Africa, has gone from being one of the most prosperous nations on the continent to one of the poorest. Under the repressive rule of Robert Mugabe, unprecedented hyperinflation made the country's currency virtually

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Robert Mugabe's tyrannical policies destroyed the currency and plunged Zimbabweans into deep poverty.

A Look at Church History: The Waldensians

Separated Unto Christ

BY MARK W. EVANS

Following the fall of Adam and Eve, God Almighty drew a permanent line of separation. He told the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). Not only does this ancient prophecy reveal the underlying theme of the Scriptures, it summarizes the greatest conflict of the ages. It also establishes that the sovereign God maintains a line of separation between those who belong to His Son, the

"seed of the woman," and those who belong to Satan. At the cross, the serpent bruised Christ's heel, but Christ crushed the serpent's head, sealing the devil's defeat and doom.

After His ascension into heaven, Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus and asked the question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul was not literally persecuting Christ, but he was persecuting those who were in Christ. Satan's "bruising the heel" includes his assault upon Christ's

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Essential Elements of CHURCH GROWTH

BY DAN SWAIN

This article is abridged from the Moderator's message to the fall 2009 meeting of Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, which met in Apollo, PA.

I have been thinking about the distinctives of Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church — such things as: absolute devotion to the Word of God, utter dependence upon the doctrines of divine sovereignty and grace; commitment to missions and evangelism; separation from heretical teaching and ecclesiastical bodies; conservatism and holiness in worship; and humility in recognizing that all of these are present in us only through the provision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

One of our other distinctives is closely related to these — the undeniable fact that we are a distinctively small body. Based on your perspective, you might say we are small either because of these other distinctives, or that we are small in spite of them. Are these distinctives a limitation to the growth of our denomination or a fulfillment of our purpose? The answer can be found in determining

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The King's College Names Catholic President

Many in the evangelical world were taken by surprise when the Board of Trustees of the King's College, in New York City, announced that it had unanimously approved the appointment of Dr. Dinesh D'Souza to serve as the school's fifth president, effective immediately. The choice of Dr. D'Souza came at the recommendation of "a professional search consultant" which had earlier been hired by the Trustees.

Dr. D'Souza certainly is gifted intellectually, being named by *The New York Times* as one of America's most influential conservative thinkers. He also is listed by the World Affairs Council as one of the nation's 500 leading authorities on international issues. "D'Souza is a model of the ideal King's College graduate," states the college website. Andy Mills, the interim president of the King's College, writes: "D'Souza is well-equipped to lead, inspire and equip students to address the issues of the world with a confident, articulate voice."

But, just who is this leader and inspirer of evangelical students? D'Souza's own website states that he

is "a believing Catholic but a poorly practicing one." The website later states that his Catholicism is one reason *Business Week* characterized him "as a sort of Indian William F. Buckley, Jr." It also states that he served as "editor of *Crisis Magazine*, a Catholic monthly publication of news and opinion." When questioned about all this by other evangelicals, D'Souza muddied the waters with vague statements about not having problems with "Reformation theology." King's officials, such as Provost and "Presidential Scholar" Marvin Olasky, who also serves as editor-in-chief of *World* magazine, strongly defended the choice of D'Souza. *World* was founded by Joel Belz, who continues to play a major role in the operation of the magazine. Belz is the former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in America and son of the late Rev.

Max Belz, who was a Bible Presbyterian pastor.

On Thursday, December 2, 2010, a special inauguration ceremony for President D'Souza took place at New York's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. As an aside, this is a very liberal church pastored for many years by the late Dr. John Sutherland Bonnell. Bonnell was an apostate known for his work to break down the walls between Catholicism and Protestantism. In 1966 he received a silver medal for his ecumenical accomplishments by Pope Paul VI, during a private audience. Billy Graham was famously criticized by the late Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones for having Bonnell on the platform of one of his Crusades in Great Britain.

Begun in 1938 by the late Dr. Percy B. Crawford, the King's College has been a prominent evangelical school through the years. Crawford was a 1932 graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, and



The King's College founder Percy Crawford (left) with Billy Graham (right) and songwriter Cliff Barrows.

became a minister in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. His wife grew up in Collingswood, NJ, and they were married by the Rev. Harold S. Laird, predecessor to Dr. Carl McIntire as pastor of the Collingswood Presbyterian Church. Laird also served as the second president of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

Crawford eventually left the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and had many Fundamentalists as speakers at his Pinebrook Bible Conference—such men as Laird, Merrill T. McPherson, Charles Woodbridge, Robert Ketcham, and such Bible Presbyterians as Roy Talmadge

Brumbaugh, J. Oliver Buswell and James E. Bennet. However, Crawford drifted from the Fundamentalist position and began more and more to take the broader New Evangelical position of Billy Graham.

Upon Crawford's death, the Rev. Robert Cook became the second president of the King's College and shortly thereafter was elected president of the compromising National Association of Evangelicals. Cook also had a popular devotional program on many Christian radio stations, which he always closed with: "Walk with the King today! And be a blessing!"

In the 1990s, the King's College ran into financial troubles, and closed for a few years. It was only resurrected with the financial backing of Campus Crusade for Christ, which until recently had a hand in the operation of the school. Presently the college leases space on several floors of the Empire State Building in New York City.

It is easy to see what happens when good men fail to take a strong stand against error. Compromise may start small, but almost always leads over time to serious error. Dr. Crawford and Dr. Cook could probably never have imagined that the college they nurtured over four decades would in 2010 be inaugurating a Roman Catholic to "lead," "inspire" and "equip" the student body. Will D'Souza be able to "lead" the students to true faith in Jesus Christ apart from works? Will he be able to "inspire" them to give their lives in defense and support of true Biblical Christianity? Will he be able to "equip" them to stand against theological error, such as is found in the Roman Catholic Church? We think the answers are self-evident. •

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Smooth Stones to Vanquish the Doubters

Was David the king and "sweet psalmist of Israel" or merely a fictitious character of "cultural identity"?

Archaeology has been a friend to Biblical Christianity. Many events recorded in the Scriptures, previously scoffed at by critics, have been shown to be factual by the archaeologist's spade.

The December 2010 issue of *National Geographic* has a lengthy cover story by Robert Draper discussing recent discoveries in Israel which relate to David and Solomon. Although certainly not giving credence to the Biblical record, Draper explores such finds as ruins of a palace in Jerusalem, believed by some archaeologists to be David's; and ruins at Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, attributed to Solomon by some. Also discussed are ancient copper mines being excavated showing that "a complex, centralized society existed in Solomon's time." This would certainly fit well with the Biblical account of Solomon's temple and its furnishings.

However, those intent on disproving the Scriptures seem to take delight in aggressively denying discoveries which appear to corroborate Biblical accounts. "In no other part of the world does archaeology so closely resemble a contact sport," observes Draper.

One of the aggressive liberal line-men in this contest is Tel Aviv University professor Israel Finkelstein, who Draper describes as the University's "contrarian-in-residence." Draper writes: "During David's time, as Finkelstein casts it, Jerusalem was little more than a 'hill-country village,' David himself a raggedy upstart akin to Pancho Villa, and his legion of followers more like '500 people with



sticks in their hands shouting and cursing and spitting..."

National Geographic, never an ally of the Bible believer, states that many "scholars" believed that "David and Solomon were simply fictitious characters." Nonetheless, the article candidly continues: "The credibility of that position was undercut in 1993, when an excavation team in the northern Israel site of Tel Dan dug up a black basalt stela inscribed with the phrase "House of David."

Critic Finkelstein is given the last word in the article, but not before Draper points out: "The proposition that a complex tenth-century B.C. [the time of David and Solomon] society may have existed on either side of the Jordan River has thrown Finkelstein's vision of the David and Solomon era squarely on the defensive. His many rebuttal papers and his sarcastic tone reflect that defensiveness, and his arguments at times seem a bit desperate." •

69th Annual Convention – American Council of Christian Churches



The Fall 2010 Convention of the American Council of Christian Churches was held October 19-21, 2010, at Hope Baptist Church in Hanover, PA. The Rev. Allen Harris was the host pastor.

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people. Those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ must battle with their ancient foe. Christ gives to His people effectual defenses against Satan's devices. Among them is the practice of separation from false teachers, compromisers, and their erroneous doctrines and unbiblical

practices (*cf.* 2 Chronicles 19:1,2; Hosea 4:17; Amos 3:3; Acts 20:28-30; Romans 16:17,18; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14,15; 2 John 9-11; Numbers 31:16; Revelation 2:14-17).

For ages, the Waldensian Church remained separated from Roman Catholicism and its false teachings. No one knows when these meek believers began to worship in the Alps, but evidence points to an ancient history. For centuries, the

papacy attempted to exterminate this Christian assembly. After severe persecution in 1488, the Waldensians experienced a reprieve from organized invasions instigated by the pope. Yet, Rome's "missionaries and inquisitors" continued the ghastly work of seizing individual Waldensians for torture and execution. Fear drove many to compromise. They found relief by agreeing to receive the mass, make confessions to priests, and present their infants

for baptism. J.A. Wylie, in his book *The History of Protestantism*, said that as they entered Rome's edifices, they muttered to themselves, "Cave of robbers, may God confound thee" (Vol. II, p. 446). The once bright light of a separated testimony became dim. While in this state of compromise, news came that there was a Reformation in Europe. Astounded, they sent representatives to Reformation churches and leaders. Deputies traveled to Switzerland and Germany in October 1530. In Basle, they presented a Latin document "containing a complete account of their ecclesiastical discipline, worship, doctrine, and manners."

In a letter, written in October 1530, the Swiss Reformer Oecolampadius, wrote: "We render thanks to our most gracious Father that He has called you into such marvelous light, during ages in which such thick darkness has covered almost the whole world under the empire of Antichrist. We love you as brethren."

The Lord's servant continued with a rebuke: "As we approve of many things among you, so there are several which we wish to see amended. We are informed that the fear of persecution has caused you to dissemble and to conceal your faith.... There is no concord between Christ and Belial. You commune with unbelievers; you take part in their abominable masses, in which the death and passion of Christ are blasphemed.... I know your weakness, but it becomes those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ to be more courageous. It is better for us to die than to be overcome by temptation" (Wylie, p. 446).

The Waldensians invited the Reformers to participate in a synod. The bold Reformer William Farel, and others, risked their lives to journey to the Synod in the Alps. The meeting ended in a Waldensian revival.

Wylie relates: "The ancient spirit of the Waldenses revived. They no longer practiced those dissimula-

tions and cowardly concealments to which they had had recourse to avoid persecution. They no longer feared to confess their faith. Henceforward they were never seen at mass, or in the popish churches. They refused to recognize the priests of Rome as ministers of Christ, and under no circumstances would they receive any spiritual benefit or services at their hands" (Wylie, p. 448).

The persecuted believers rebuilt their churches and rejoiced to see them full. The Lord of the harvest

The Scriptures reveal, and the history of Christ's Church testifies, that our King of kings separates His people from spiritual deceivers, their false doctrines and their sinful practices.

gave them a greater number of laborers. Surrounding regions received the Gospel. Wylie states, "In short, this venerable Church had a second youth. Her lamp, re-trimmed, burned with a brightness that justified her time-honored motto, 'A light shining in darkness'" (Wylie, p. 449).

Through these persecuted people, the Lord preserved His Word to the eternal blessing of countless souls. Wylie writes: "That Book which the Waldenses had received from the primitive Church — which their fathers had preserved with their blood — which their barbes [preachers] had laboriously transcribed and circulated — they now put into the hands of the Reformers, constituting them along with themselves the custodians of this the ark of the world's hopes."

The Christians of the Alps provide an important link to the Reformation. Their doctrine, worship, government and discipline agree with the teaching of the Scriptures and the beliefs of the Reformers. Their separation from

false teaching waned after centuries of persecution, but when they returned to the old paths, the Lord sent revival.

In spite of the papacy's deluge of error, God awakened the known world to His truth revealed in His Word. The Waldensian Church and the Protestant Church stood upon the foundation of God's Word and were separated unto Christ. By sovereign grace, they proclaimed the Scriptures, which separate truth from error and the holy from the profane. Their courageous, separatist stand provides a witness against our present compromising spirit.

The Reformation, like the Waldensian Church, may trace its revival to God's Word. When Martin Luther, learned from the Bible that salvation is free, Rome's house, built upon sand, began to fall. Papal defenders tried to vanquish the German monk, but he fled to the Scriptures. There he found the eternal truth. Pope Leo X turned to his ultimate weapon. In his mind, excommunication was a thunderbolt that never failed. He sent his Bull of Excommunication to Wittenberg, but, instead of terrifying the monk, it put fresh courage in his heart. Luther appealed from the pope to a "future Council." Before a notary public and five witnesses, he recorded his protest against the bull. Finally, on December 10, 1520, Luther, with hundreds of students and citizens formed a procession that marched through Wittenberg to the eastern gate, to a scaffold and a pile of wood, ready for the fire. A distinguished teacher put a torch to the logs and Martin Luther placed Romish books and documents in the fire. Wylie writes: "The flames fastening on them with their fiery tongues, speedily turned these monuments of the toil, the genius, and the infallibility of the popes to ashes" (vol. I, p. 316). Then, Luther held

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high the Bull of Excommunication and threw it in the fire. He addressed the pope with these words: "Since thou hast vexed the Holy One of the Lord, may everlasting fire vex and consume thee." The pope's Bull of Excommunication turned to ashes.

Luther exhorted his students on the following day: "Unless with all your hearts you abandon the Papacy, you cannot save your souls. The reign of the pope is so opposed to the law of Christ and the life of the Christian, that it will be safer to roam the desert and never see the face of man, than abide under the rule of Antichrist (Wylie, 316).

Rome had "launched her bolt" against the defiant monk. Wylie asked, "What was the result? To Rome a terrible and appalling one.

Our spiritual forefathers had the conviction and courage to separate from compromising doctrines and practices. We would do well to stay on the same road.

The monk, rising up in his strength, grasped the bolt hurled against him from the Seven Hills and flung it back at her from whom it came" (Wylie, p. 317).

The Scriptures reveal, and the history of Christ's Church testifies, that our King of kings separates His people from spiritual deceivers, their false doctrines and their sinful practices. The Lord Jesus told His enemies, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep." Then He comforted His people with these words: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:26,27).

As the Word of God went forth in the Reformation, civil and religious shackles fell off. God gave His Church the sacred Scriptures in an understandable language and sent His laborers into the fields to reap the harvest. The Scriptures separated the chaff from the wheat (Jeremiah 23:28,29).

Today, we face an appalling flood of evil. The liberals and apostates did not ruin the land. They could not have succeeded without the help of compromisers and moderates. The willingness to live with a corrupted gospel and a worldly church has lulled the professing church into a stupor. Sadly, even among Fundamentalists there are those who view separation as a temporary phenomenon that has something to do with the Modernist/Fundamentalist controversy, but is irrelevant to present needs. It is imperative that we understand that separation is a work of God. He will have a separated Church. Our immense privilege is to have a part in it. Separation began immediately following the fall of Adam and Eve, continued through the history of the Old and New Testaments, and through the history of the Church since the Apostles. Christ's Church did not drop out of the sky in the 20th and 21st centuries. Christ's Church cannot be severed from history. Our spiritual forefathers had the conviction and courage to separate from compromising doctrines and practices. We would do well to stay on the same road. •

This is the first of several articles Pastor Evans plans to write on the subject of Biblical separation in light of church history.



The Rev. Mark Evans is a minister in Faith Presbyterian Church, and is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC.

"Four in 10 Say They See Little Need for Marriage"

So says a headline in the November 18, 2010, *Charlotte Observer*. As moral decay deepens in the United States, the institution of marriage is under assault as never before.

The story is based on a new study by the Pew Research Center which "highlights rapidly changing notions of the American family." At the same time as many have lost their indignation to the concept of "gay marriage," "39 percent of Americans said marriage was becoming obsolete" altogether!

Don't expect things to get better soon. "About 44 percent of people say they have lived with a partner without being married; for 30-to-49-year-olds, that share rose to 57 percent. Most considered cohabitation as a step toward marriage."

Marriage is an institution that goes back to the very time of Creation. The Rev. Robert Anderson once made this point very clear in a sermon, when he stated: "The first man to walk the earth was a married man." Genesis 2:24 states: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

The New Testament likewise presents marriage as a fundamentally foundational institution. The Apostle Paul references the Genesis 2:24 passage in Ephesians 5:31, and compares marriage to the relationship of Jesus Christ with His Church. In the face of this degeneration, may we as Christians strongly uphold the institution of marriage and display Christ-centered marriages before those around us. •

Personal Reflections

BY BRAD K. GSELL

In October 2010, I had the opportunity to attend the 18th World Congress (Part 1) of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in Manila and Bacolod City, the Philippines. I had been urged to attend, and looked forward to observing the Congress and greeting many old friends. I was quite active in the ICCC a number of years ago, but had had little contact since attending the 11th World Congress in 1983.

Key elements in the founding of the ICCC in 1948 were the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) and the Bible Presbyterian Church. Sadly, when a number of legitimate concerns were raised and not resolved satisfactorily, these bodies (in 1970 and 1984 respectively) withdrew.

In recent years there have been encouraging signs that the ICCC has been attempting to deal Biblically with some of the problems referred to above. I have always believed that

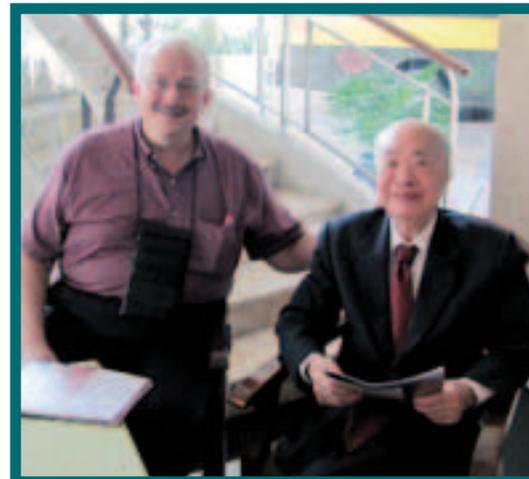
the idea of Bible-believing church bodies from around the world — Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, etc. — having a united witness “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,” was a great and noble vision of our forebears. Many Bible Presbyterian missionaries have found the local affiliates of the ICCC in the countries where they are serving to be a blessing and encouragement in their ministries. Also, I have known some of the ICCC national leaders in other countries and have found them to be true men of God.

I am glad that I was able to attend. The love displayed by the Filipino brethren was immense, and they, along with the officers of the Council, sacrificed to plan and organize a first-rate conference. To hear solid Bible messages and have fellowship with brethren from the far reaches of our planet was a great blessing. To see the ICCC Executive Committee members dealing with various issues in a gracious, Biblical and transparent manner was refreshing. To sit with fellow believers who came to Christ through the work of missions, and to hear them now talk

with excitement about their own mission outreaches, was a balm to the soul.

The next meeting of the ICCC will be held in São Paulo, Brazil, in February 2012. The members of ALADIC (the Latin American Alliance of Christian Churches) are already making plans. Please keep them in your prayers. •

Note: No expenses for this trip were taken from donations to Redeeming the Time.



Brad Gsell in Manila with Dr. K.C. Quek of Singapore. At 95 years old, Dr. Quek is one of the few remaining early leaders of the ICCC.





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what the Scriptures say about God's view of His church.

We are well aware that there is a great deal of interest today in the size of a church or denomination. We live in the day of the "megachurch," where churches with 1,000 or more attendees are becoming more prevalent. We see great emphasis on numerical growth, almost always at the expense of sound doctrine and truth.

As a result of the ever-growing liberalism and lack of faithfulness seen in the Protestant churches today, we may sometimes begin to feel like Elijah when he fled to the cave from the presence of Ahab: "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:9-10). The pastor, church, presbytery or denomination that persists in maintaining the foundational truths of the faith may feel, as did Elijah, that they are an endangered species in need of an Ecclesiastical Protection Agency to come to their aid.

In light of this situation, it is understandable that many church leaders may desire safety in numbers and implement steps to initiate church growth. But, considering how much damage has been done in the name of church growth, and the number of outrageous methods that are set forth as means of achieving it, one of the most frightening things that many congregations or sessions or deacon boards may hear is when a

church leader says: "I've just read a great book about church growth and it has given me some ideas." This is often the beginning of a slippery slope down which a church becomes irreverent or even irrelevant.

With that being said, I have an announcement to make. I've just read a great book about church growth, and it has given me some ideas that I would like to share with you. Now, lest you think I am being hypocritical, I want you to know that this book was written by a very well educated man, a doctor in fact. I have it on good authority that his ideas have been widely successful where they have been implemented; and, he has gotten some very good reviews from some very important people. The author is none other than Dr. Luke and his book is the only true textbook on the subject of church growth — the book of Acts.

The events in the book of Acts take place after the conclusion of Christ's earthly ministry, culminating in His death, burial and resurrection. The resurrected Saviour ministered among the apostles and was seen by many witnesses for 40 days. In Acts 1:4, Christ gives marching orders to the apostles to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They are given more information, and a great commission: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The chapter continues by telling how Peter spoke to the believers in Jerusalem. Acts 1:15 tells us that "the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty." I find this to be a startling piece of information in that the visible culmination of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the most populous city where his influence was felt, was a mere 120 souls! We know that Jesus' ministry was prevalent through-

out all the region. John 21:25 tells us: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." So, while the whole world could not contain the encyclopedia of Christ's works, one upper room could contain the entire Jerusalem church.

Historians place the population of the city of Jerusalem at the time of Christ to be somewhere between 25,000 and 50,000 people. During religious feasts the population may have swelled to over 100,000 or more. In light of this, to the modern church growth movement, this number of 120 saints would seem positively anemic. This would be the time for the megachurch wannabes to start brainstorming to come up with some type of seeker sensitive services or Guitar Hero praise bands. Maybe bring in some big time celebrities to liven things up. Certainly something could be done to get the numbers up. Rest assured that something was indeed in the works. The apostles had been given a tremendous mandate, to spread the gospel across the known world. Yet in the eyes of everyone present, there were no evident means to meet this end.

When considering this seemingly daunting statistic of a mere 120 believers being given the commission to evangelize the world, our minds may be drawn back to the days of Gideon, wherein he was faced with the task of defeating an army of at least 135,000 Midianites and Amalekites (Judges 8:10). Initially, to meet this force, Gideon mustered out an army of 32,000, according to Judges 7:3.

The problem with this match-up was that Gideon's army was outnumbered four to one. To human eyes, it was lopsided in favor of the Midianite force. But in human terms, it was also possible that Gideon's force could defeat the Midianites on their own without divine intervention.

The Good News...

"... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

Sixty-five years ago tomorrow marks the end of the battle of Iwo Jima in WWII. A Japanese force of just over 18,000 was outnumbered about six to one by an American invasion force of over 100,000. Yet, the Japanese held out for over a month. But, in Gideon's situation, God had every intention of sending divine intervention. God decided to even the odds in favor of the Midianites, by reducing Gideon's army to a ridiculously small force of only 300. It defies human wisdom that this battle could be won by Gideon. But we know that God delights in doing these kinds of things. 1 Corinthians 1:27-29: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Indeed, this is the reason given to Gideon for the whittling away of his army. Judges 7:2 tells us: "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."

When we analyze Gideon's situation, we discover five essential elements which were necessary to achieve the victory. These essential elements teach us how God accomplishes much with little.

1. Prayer — Communication with God

Gideon had a much greater advantage in this respect than we do, for he enjoyed verbal, two-way communication with God. In Judges 7:2,4,5,7 and 9, we see God speaking directly to and encouraging Gideon ("And the LORD said unto Gideon" is repeated four times). In

Judges 6:36-39, we see an example of Gideon speaking to God and seeking His will.

2. Servants/soldiers ordained by God and obedient to His commands

Judges 7:4: "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go." God selected the soldiers based on his own criteria, manifested through the testing he chose. Judges 7:17 states: "And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do." The soldiers were faithful and obedient to God's leading through Gideon.

3. Effectively wielding the Word of God

The weapons issued to Gideon's men evidenced reliance upon God's Word. Each man carried a lamp, reminding us of Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The battle cry of each soldier was "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

The trumpet is utilized all throughout Scripture to announce the presence of God and to serve as an audible representation of His power, as when the trumpet sounded on Mount Sinai when God brought His commandments to Moses (Exodus 19 and 20), or when the sound of the trumpet brought down the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:20). As the soldiers blew their trumpets and broke their pitchers they freed the light from the vessels of clay. This is reminiscent of the words of Jer-

emiah the prophet in Jeremiah 20:9: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

The most significant and indispensable component for the accomplishment of any of God's purposes is ...

4. The presence of His power and Spirit.

We see the true reason that this seemingly senseless battle plan worked. Judges 7:22 states: "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled..." It was the Lord who moved through the camp of Midian and set each man's sword against his fellow.

There is one other essential element that is interwoven with the four mentioned here. I will not discuss it just yet. For now, I will just refer to it as...

5. Element X

Returning to the book of Acts, we see these same five elements of God's plan yield fruit in the growth of the New Testament church. When we join the gathering in the upper room in Acts 1, we see the first two elements are already evident: 1. **Prayer.** Acts 1:14 says: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." 2. Acts 1:13 lists **servants chosen by God.** Then, Acts 1:24 tells us that "they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." They pray for God to reveal the replacement for Judas, based on God's own choosing.

In the beginning of Acts 2 we see the believers assembled together in

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a room. It was the day of Pentecost, the harvest feast which took place 50 days after Passover. Something amazing takes place. The Holy Spirit descends upon them and the disciples speak “with other tongues.”

Peter began to preach the Gospel to the assembled crowd. This pricked their hearts, resulting in the the crowd of men asking the question: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter must have thought “I’m glad you asked!” The third essential element — **effectively wielding the Word of God** — becomes evident by this point in the narrative.

When he had finished preaching (Acts 2:38-40), we are told in Acts 2:41 that “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

Here is the remarkable result of the preaching of the Gospel, prompted and empowered by the Holy Spirit. There was a 25 fold increase ($120 \times 25 = 3,000$) in the number of believers in Jerusalem in one day. It is a sign of our modern perspective that we are surprised by this. This is actually considered a very modest increase. In the parable of the sower and the seed we read: “But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:23). Here, the small-

est return is a 30 fold increase, five more than happened as a result of Peter’s sermon. The important thing to note, however, is why there is any increase at all. The increase of any gospel seed is dependent on finding good ground, so that the target audience hears it and understands it. How does such good ground come to exist? Does it improve itself? Is it naturally in such a highly receptive state? The answer must be “no.”

In it’s natural state, the unregenerate heart is only capable of manifesting the fruits of fallow ground. It exhibits the thorns and thistles of the curse.

It is only prepared to receive the gospel seed after it has been plowed under and broken open by the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as a shovel ready heart. The prophet Jeremiah is given the following message for Israel: “For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns” (Jeremiah 4:3). But, Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet because he is told the people will not hear God’s words to them. In this case, it is because they are incapable of obedience. They require the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jeremiah says “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing” (Jeremiah 10:23,24). He acknowledges that they cannot break up their own fallow ground.

Finally, God reveals to Jeremiah that He will do the work Himself: “And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land” (Jeremiah 12:15). Or, as we read in Romans 9:16: “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church



The Fall 2010 meeting of Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church was held in Charlotte, NC. The next meeting will be held in Kingsville, MD, on March 25, 2011.

There are at least 14 other specific references to the growth of the church in the book of Acts. The pattern of church growth established here and throughout the book of Acts is that the apostles or elders or deacons faithfully did what they were required to do and what they were selected to do. They prayed and effectively wielded the Word of God, teaching all of it, including the prickly parts. Yet, in each case, any growth that resulted was strictly the work of the Lord through the ministering of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the rest of the book of Acts, we see at each juncture of the growth of the church, that the same essential elements are present.

So, what if we see all four of these essential elements in our churches, in our Presbytery, right now? What if we have prayer, effective handling of the Word of God, obedient pastors, elders and deacons, and the presence of the Holy Spirit? Where is the growth? Why do we feel like a remnant as we read in Romans 11:5: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Where is the outward manifestation of God’s blessing upon His work? We seem to have all the elements. What is missing? Don’t forget about Element X.

ELEMENT X is simply God’s timing. It has been said that timing is everything. God has established His times for the work that He will accomplish. Galatians 4:4: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,”

Ephesians 1:10: “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”

God raised up Esther at a specific, foreordained time. Esther 4:14: “... and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Gideon’s attack was scheduled according to God’s timing. It had to wait until God had prepared the hearts of the Midianites to fear as a result of the dreams he sent. It had to wait until night, for the lamps would have little effect in the daylight. It had to wait until the changing of the guard. All of these events transpired exactly as God ordained, resulting in the victory.

In Acts 2, it was the time of Pentecost. The hearts of the people were prepared as they considered the fruits of the harvest — to have their hearts turned to the risen Saviour Jesus,

It is only the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit in His perfect timing that will bring about His desired result, whether it be the defeat of the Midianites, the foundation and growth of His church, or the growth of our presbytery and churches today.

“the firstfruits of them that slept.” There were God-fearing people gathered in Jerusalem from all parts of the world, prepared for the spearhead of the gospel into other lands. The apostles and the rest of the Christians were gathered together in one place. None were missing because they had been delayed in getting there or because they left early.

So, what is God’s schedule for the growth of this body? I wish I could answer that question. Romans 11:33,34: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the LORD? or who hath been his counsellor?”

Perhaps, like Gideon’s army, God is whittling us down to a sharp point, to be used for His work. Perhaps, like the apostles and believers

in Jerusalem, He is waiting until all the components of His plans are in place. Perhaps, as we see things moving in our day, He is waiting until the easy-believism of the megachurch has run its course. Perhaps He is waiting until the faith people place in their government runs short. Perhaps He is waiting until the age of prosperity and trust in financial security has run out. Psalm 119:126 says: “It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.”

What does this mean to us here today? Titus 3:5 says: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

It is not our works that bring about the growth of the church, but we are still required to be at work. If you are capable of faithfully preaching the Word of God, by all means, go ahead. If you are capable of faithfully serving in the capacity of an elder or deacon, by all means, go ahead. If you are capable in any way of speaking boldly the name of the Lord Jesus or faithfully serving the Lord Jesus in whatever your calling as a small, weak vessel, go ahead. But remember, it is not your service that will cause people to repent and to call on the name of Christ. It is only the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit in His perfect timing that will bring about His desired result, whether it be the defeat of the Midianites, the foundation and growth of His church, or the growth of our presbytery and churches today. May God do so, even now and may we be encouraged to continue in faithfulness until His will be done. •



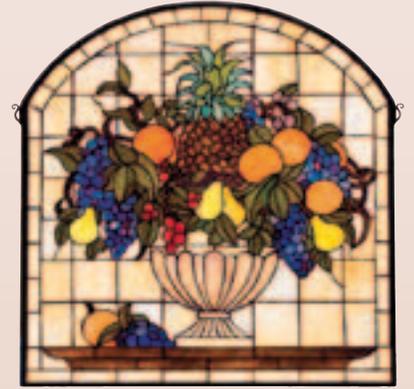
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The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23

Meekness

by Brad K. Gsell



In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul describes for us the fruit which is to be found in the life of every Christian. This is the ninth in a series of articles which will discuss these characteristics of the Christian life.

Of all the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5, none is viewed with such suspicion or even derision as is “meekness.” A man who lacks the courage of his convictions is often labeled “meek.” A recent *Newsweek* article on the Catholic abuse scandals stated concerning the victims: “In this case Jesus was wrong: the meek did not inherit the earth,” obviously misinterpreting the meaning of Matthew 5.

Indeed, the very definition of the English word “meek” has changed over the centuries. A spot check of several dictionaries produced such definitions as: “overly submissive or compliant; ... tame”; “deficient in spirit and courage”; “spineless or spiritless; compliant.” Often evoked is H.T. Webster’s comic strip character Caspar Milquetoast, who one dictionary describes as “a timid and retiring man named for a timid food.”

This is not the “meekness” spoken of in the Scriptures. Indeed the Apostle Paul entreated the Corinthian believers “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:1). This is the same Christ who boldly overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the temple and

spoke boldly against the deceit of the religious leaders of His day.

Likewise, Paul tells Timothy to flee the evil around him, and instead “follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” The very next thing he tells him is to “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:11,12). “Meekness” hardly means in these exam-

*“Put on therefore,
as the elect of God,
holy and beloved,
bowels of mercies,
kindness, humbleness
of mind, meekness,
longsuffering.”
(Colossians 3:12)*

ples to be “spineless” or “deficient in courage”!

In speaking to women, Peter doesn’t tell them that meekness is weakness, but rather that “a meek and quiet spirit” is “in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3:4).

W.E. Vine and C.F. Hogg, in their *Notes on Galatians* write: “The meaning of [the Greek word] *praiūtēs* is not readily expressed in English,

for the terms meekness, mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness and pusillanimity to a greater or less extent, whereas *praiūtēs* does nothing of the kind.... It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ‘meek’ because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.” *The Pulpit Commentary*, likewise, states that meekness “stands in contrast with that self-reliant, headstrong impetuosity...”

Puritan commentator Matthew Henry writes concerning Galatians 5: “Meekness, wherewith to govern our passions and resentments, so as not to be easily provoked, and when we are so, to be soon pacified....”

Henry gives a fuller discussion, which can hardly be improved on, in his comments on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5: “The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to his word and to his rod, who follow his directions, and comply with his designs, and are *gentle towards all men* (Titus 3:2); who can bear provocation without being inflamed by it; are either silent, or return a soft answer; and who can

show their displeasure when there is occasion for it, without being transported into any indecencies; who can be cool when others are hot; and in their patience keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of any thing else. *They* are the meek, who are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified; and who would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one, having the rule of their own spirits....”

The man who is meek in the Biblical sense will first be surrendered to his Lord. *The Pulpit Commentary* states: “Thus it is not meekness in the relation of man to man barely stated, of which Christ here speaks, but meekness in the relation of man to man, with its prior and presupposed fact of meekness in the relation of man to God.” Rebellion and self-assertiveness against God will NEVER be coupled with meekness toward men.

The self-asserting man may think himself set for happiness. After all, he thinks he is in control of his circumstances. However, the opposite proves true. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment: “Even in the Psalm from which these words [in Matthew 5:2] are taken, the promise to the meek is not held forth as an arbitrary reward, but as having a kind of natural fulfillment. When they delight themselves in the Lord, He gives them the desires of their heart: when they commit their way to Him, He brings it to pass; bringing forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day: the little that they have, even when despoiled of their rights, is better than the riches of many wicked, &c. (Psalm 37).”

Matthew Henry writes in a similar vein: “These meek ones are here represented as happy, even in this world. They are *blessed*, for they are like the blessed Jesus, in that wherein particularly they are to learn of him (Matthew 11:29). They are like the blessed God himself, who

is Lord of his anger, and in whom fury is not. They are *blessed*, for they have the most comfortable, undisturbed enjoyment of themselves, their friends, their God; they are fit for any relation, any condition, any company; fit to live, and fit to die.”

At another place, he writes: “Meekness, however ridiculed and run down, has a real tendency to promote our health, wealth, comfort, and safety, even in this world. *The meek* and quiet are observed to

live the most easy lives, compared with the froward and turbulent.”

Commentator Matthew Poole would concur: “...those who are of meek and quiet spirits, though they may not take so deep root in the earth as others more boisterous, yet there will be no worm at the root of what they have, and they shall enjoy what God giveth them with more quiet and certainty; and God will provide for them, verily they shall be fed (Psalm 37:3,11).” •

LIBERATION OR BONDAGE?

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worthless) and farmland formerly filled with abundance is now overgrown with weeds.

We should not forget that the World Council of Churches (WCC) bears a great deal of responsibility for this disaster. Following the Fourth World Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1968, the WCC established its Programme to Combat Racism. A report of the WCC Central Committee in 1969 called upon the churches to “become agents for the radical reconstruction of society. There can be no justice in our world without a transfer of economic resources to undergird the redistribution of political power...”

Soon hundreds of thousands of dollars were being distributed by the WCC to various Marxist and terrorist groups around the world, with the stipulation that “the grants are made without control of the manner in which they are spent...” The report continued that the WCC would not “pass judgment on those victims of racism who are driven to violence as the only way left to them to redress grievances and so open the way for a new and more just social order.”

The report continues, almost dismissively, in mentioning those in

“some parts of the Atlantic community” who expressed a “‘deep sense of shock and outrage’ and accusations that the WCC was ‘engaged in supporting campaigns of murder in Southern Africa.’” However, the WCC leadership was relieved that “a more realistic debate evolved” in which such “terms like ‘terrorists’ and ‘guerillas’ changed to ‘freedom fighters’ and ‘liberation movements.’” The liberals certainly love their euphemisms!

The WCC gave several large grants to Robert Mugabe’s Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe (PFZ), much of it coming from offerings taken from parishioners in North American and European churches. The most notable was in 1978, at the very time white rule was on its way out and a unity government was being established. The WCC grant came only a short while after the world was outraged when reports of ruthless murders of black nationals and foreign missionaries were laid solidly at the feet of the PFZ.

The late Dr. Carl McIntire, then president of the International Council of Christian Churches, wrote: “These groups carry the Communist line and are terrorists and murderers. In the false name of ‘liberation’ they commit dreadful crimes against the common man. They are a menace not only to freedom of religion and other

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freedoms but to culture and civilization as a whole.”

Even after Mugabe’s tyranny was observed and well known, many in the WCC leadership appeared to be unrepentant. Dr. Ralph Colas, executive secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches, attended the WCC’s 8th Assembly in 1998 as a member of the press. He reported that Dr. Konrad Raiser, then general secretary of the WCC, was asked to comment on the giving of these funds to the PFZ. Dr. Raiser responded: “I have never had doubt about the propriety and advisability of the grant.”

Liberal *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, writing on April 14, 2010, described the current situation: “The tyrannical, incompetent and corrupt rule of Zimbabwe’s president, Robert Mugabe, has turned one of Africa’s most advanced countries into a shambles.... Zimbabwe’s once-impressive system of schools and clinics has pretty much collapsed, along with tourism, agriculture and the economy itself.”

The theology backing such grants is known as Liberation Theology and has been espoused by many Roman



Dr. William LeRoy

served for many years as a Bible Presbyterian missionary in Brazil, where he encountered liberation theologians in action. Warnings he wrote several decades ago perfectly describe the situation in Zimbabwe

“Liberation Theology does not truly liberate man, because it does not deal with the real problem of man, which is sin and rebellion against God; and, therefore, it is unable to offer an adequate solution to man’s deepest problem....”

Dr. William R. LeRoy

in 2011. He wrote: “‘Liberation’ ... as used in socialist terminology and revolution, implies, in our opinion, the destruction of liberty. Applied socialism is totalitarian, by nature, for it implies a strong, centralized government, a controlled economy, coercive measures, controlling the lives of people at every level.”

Dr. LeRoy continues: “Liberation Theology does not truly liberate man, because it does not deal with the real problem of man, which is sin and rebellion against God; and, therefore, it is unable to offer an adequate solution to man’s deepest problem.... Liberation Theology does not liberate the poor — either from sin or from hunger — because there is lacking a basic spiritual quality in the hearts of these libera-

tion theologians, produced, only, by the grace of God.”

Should any think Liberation Theology to be a trend that has passed, the place it played in America’s last presidential election should not be forgotten. Our current president sat for 20 years in the pews of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s Trinity United Church of Christ (a WCC member) in Chicago. The Rev. Wright self-identifies himself as a disciple of James Cone, perhaps the most prominent leader of what has been called “Black Liberation Theology.”

The Rev. Wright was interviewed by Sean Hannity on Fox News. Wright admitted that his church’s beliefs closely paralleled the “Liberation Theology” movement as a whole. He stated: “The black value system, which was developed by the congregation, by laypersons of the congregation, 26 years ago, [is] very similar to the gospel (INAUDIBLE) developed by laypersons in Nicaragua during the whole liberation theology movement, 26, 28, 30 years ago, yes.” It is certainly easy to see why President Obama favors “redistribution of the wealth,” and increasing government control over the lives of our citizens.

Attempts to distort true Scriptural theology to align with the agendas of sinful man are ALWAYS dangerous. Certainly, Christians must continue to stand for equity and kindness for the poor. (Through the centuries, Christians have done more to help the powerless and destitute than anyone else!) However, unbiblical attempts to destroy liberty, make man a ward of the State, and have the government steal from the prosperous to give to those deemed to be less fortunate, must be strongly rejected. •



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REDEEMING THE TIME

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