

REDEEMING THE TIME

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

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Truly

BIBLICAL MISSIONS

The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions at 80

BY BRAD K. GSELL

On October 17, 1933, Dr. J. Gresham Machen and 25 other men and women joined together in the formation of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Modernism had invaded the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This soul-destroying philosophy of unbelief affected every aspect of the Church, not the least of which was its official foreign missions agency.

Missionaries such as Pearl S. Buck were spreading their false gospel on the mission fields, largely with the donations of Bible-believing Christians. Miss Buck declared in the May 1933 issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine: "What Christ is materially I do not know, and what if He never lived, what of that? Whether Christ had a body or not, whether He had a time to be born in His life and a time to die as other men have is of no matter now. Perhaps it never was of any matter." A number of missionaries under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had been signers of the infamous Auburn Affirmation, which declared to be mere theories many of the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God.

Also troubling was that this Board was recommending books to churches and laymen which contained serious heresy. One such book was *The Never Failing Light*, by James Hall Franklin. On page 10, Mr. Franklin stated: "Truly

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THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE in the Face of the Secularization of Christianity

In 1966, while serving as a missionary to Brazil, Dr. William R. LeRoy wrote a booklet entitled *Christianity Without God*. In it, he discussed the rising tide of secularism in our society and in the churches, and briefly, but ably, refuted the teachings of such theologians as Martin Buber, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Rudolf Bultmann.

Nearly a half century later, this move toward secularism, and the removal of all things supernatural, continues unabated. It has infected every level of society and has become the philosophy/theology de rigueur of many churches. Following is an edited version of the last chapter of this booklet, which is very relevant to the spiritual declension we see in the year 2013.

BY WILLIAM R. LEROY

President Emeritus

*The Independent Board for
Presbyterian Foreign Missions*

What can an informed and concerned Christian do about this new theology [involving the secularization of Christianity]? For one thing, he should not fall victim to this "theology of the world" routine in any way, but thoroughly repudiate it and separate himself from any local church, denomination, or council of churches which supports this new theology or any other liberal theology in any way what-

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"On the train, my time was mainly occupied in personal work among the passengers in three crowded cars and in distributing tracts, some three hundred of which were received with thanks. Three people gave me their names and addresses as desiring to accept Christ as Saviour."

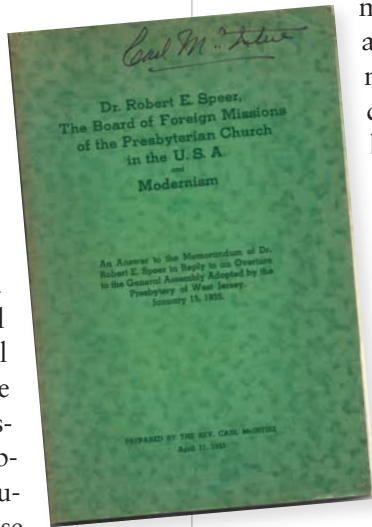
Dr. Albert Dodd, Independent Board missionary to China, written shortly after his 89th birthday.

TRULY BIBLICAL MISSIONS

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the light was shining in dense spiritual darkness when Jesus began teaching men of all races, of all religions and all classes to look up to the Unseen as their Father and to practice love and brotherhood as the sum total of his requirements of his children."

The evidence could fill volumes. On April 11, 1935, the Rev. Carl McIntire, pastor of the Collingswood, NJ, Presbyterian Church published a booklet documenting many of these things. It was titled: *Dr. Robert E. Speer, The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and Modernism.*



Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. passed the infamous Mandate of 1934, which ordered the members of The Independent Board to resign or face disciplinary action. In the ensuing years, Dr. Machen, Dr. McIntire and a number of other

men were put on trial and removed from the ministry and even the communion of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. A number of congregations lost their beautiful buildings, and contributions given by God's people, because they refused to bow to the apostasy of the denomination. The Independent Board has been despised by many. Over the years,

many have anticipated its demise. Some have even sought to sabotage its work in other countries. Yet, the Lord has remained faithful and the work continues to the glory of God!

The Independent Board was not started merely in opposition to Modernism. These men and women were willing to suffer great harm and humiliation at the hands of the PCUSA so that "truly Biblical missions" could be promoted and God's people would have a venue through which to support faithful missionaries who

would preach the true gospel of Christ (see article on page 7).

By the grace of God, The Independent Board has continued to faithfully adhere to its Charter (see box on

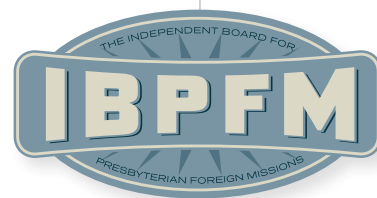
"Yet, the basic need remains the same: men are dead in sin and can only gain 'newness of life' through Jesus Christ."

page 5). Every year, each of its Board members must sign the following statement: "I hereby solemnly declare in the presence of God and of this Board (1) that I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, (2) that I sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in the form which it possessed in 1933, as containing the system of doctrine taught

in the Holy Scriptures, (3) that, approving the charter of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, I will faithfully endeavor to carry into effect the articles and provisions of said charter and to promote the great design of the Board."

Whether as ministers, teachers, medical doctors, nurses, etc., hundreds have served under The Independent Board to share the gospel, to make disciples, to train national leaders, and to relieve the pain and suffering of many. We rejoice that God has

deavor to carry into effect the articles and provisions of said charter and to promote the great design of the Board."



Judith Collins with Rendille "mamas" in Baalah, northern Kenya





Independent Board missionaries presenting their ministries at the 18th World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches in Serra Negra, Brazil, in January 2012.

preserved and blessed this faithful testimony now for 80 years!

The 21st century has presented us with massive cultural, religious and political changes. Technology has provided many new opportunities, as well as challenges. New doors are opening as old ones close.

Yet, the basic need remains the same: men are dead in sin and can only gain “newness of life” through Jesus Christ. The message that is needed also remains the same: “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

Men and women dedicated to this great work are needed as urgently today as they were at the time of the Board’s founding in 1933. Be sure to explore The Independent Board website (praysendgo.org) to learn of and pray for the work of the various missionaries, and the opportunities the Lord may have for YOU to use your talents in foreign missions service. Please feel free to contact me (or the Board office) if you would like to discuss how you can join in this noble cause for the Gospel of Christ. •

Brad Gsell is the president of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

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The Holy Spirit AND Foreign Missions

BY J. GRESHAM MACHEN

The secret of success in the conduct of the foreign missionary enterprise should constantly be borne in mind. Successful missionary effort is that which is born of the Holy Spirit, and nurtured and directed by His gracious influence. It is the prayer of The Independent Board that He may completely control its policies and programs. For:

1. The Holy Spirit is the Sponsor of Foreign Missions

The Lord Jesus has ascended into heaven. In this age, it is the function of the Spirit of God to promote and further the proclamation of the gospel to the far horizons of the earth.

2. The Holy Spirit is the Power for Foreign Missions

Our Savior told his disciples, “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

Ken Olson, missionary to Brazil, translates from French into Portuguese and English for a pastor from Cameroon.



THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSIONS

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earth” (Acts 1:8). A missionary organization may send forth workers into the field; it may erect imposing buildings in distant lands; it may ad-

“The Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of Christ in the hearts of His people, and quickens there a loving passion for the souls of the lost.”

vance the frontiers of Western civilization in the dark areas of the world. But if it is not empowered by the Spirit of God, it is doomed to failure.

3. The Holy Spirit Commissions His Workers

“How shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Romans 10:15). The Spirit calls missionaries. Unless a young person is clearly called by the Holy Spirit for missionary service, he should by all means stay at home. But if the Spirit has kindled within him the missionary flame, let him not quench that flame. The Spirit also sends forth His workers. In His own way, He prepares them for service on the field, clears the way for their departure, and gives them the glad assurance that they are in His holy will.

Gary Johnson, missionary to Kenya, confers with a Filipino pastor.

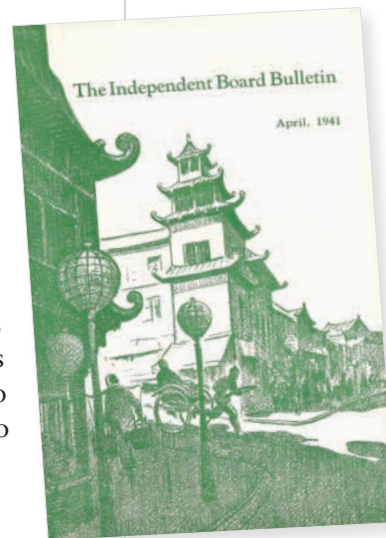


Photograph courtesy of the PCA Historical Center, St. Louis, MO

The Presidents of The Independent Board: TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): **Dr. J. Gresham Machen (1933-1936); Dr. Harold S. Laird (1936-1951); Dr. J. Gordon Holdcroft (1951-1972);** BOTTOM ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): **Dr. Lynn Gray Gordon (1972-1995); Dr. Earle R. White (1995-2005); Dr. William R. LeRoy (2005-2009).**

4. The Holy Spirit Applies the Gospel to the Lost

It is He who exalts the Lord Jesus Christ through the testimony of His servants. It is He who convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. It is He who brings the sinner to the cross, where the blessed transaction of faith and forgiveness takes place. It is He who opens closed eyes, breathes life into living death, begets “unto a living hope.”



hearts of His people, and quickens there a loving passion for the souls of the lost. He persuades and enables believers to give, yes, to sacrifice, that the gospel of redemption might be proclaimed where the name of Jesus is unknown.

May the Spirit of God raise up for every missionary enterprise that is loyal to the blessed Word of God a host of supporters who will count it a privilege to be partners at home in the work of spreading the gospel of Christ abroad. •

5. The Holy Spirit Supports the Work at Home

He sheds abroad the love of Christ in the

From the Charter...

of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions

... (a) The Corporation is formed for the purpose of establishing and conducting truly Biblical missions among all nations, in clear opposition to all forms of belief or practice which are contrary to the Bible or are indifferent to the necessity of acceptance of the doctrine that the Bible contains. Being convinced that the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in the form which they possessed in 1933, contain the system of doctrine taught in the Bible, the corporation is to encourage the work of all missionaries who shall truly believe and cordially love and therefore endeavor to propagate and defend, in its genuineness, simplicity and fulness, that system of religious belief and practice which is now set forth in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and which is involved in the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church government; and thus to perpetuate and extend the influence of true evangelical piety and gospel order.

(b) It is to act as an agency to receive and disburse funds to be used for foreign mission work which is true to the Bible and to the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and to the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church government.

(c) It is to provide a Board under which missionaries who are true to the Bible and to the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and to the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church government can serve without compromise with any form of unbelief.

(d) It is to encourage Presbyterian churches and individuals to support this Board because it stands without compromise for the Bible against all forms of unbelief and because it will not tolerate in the Board or among its missionaries rejection of, or indifference to the importance of, the doctrines set forth in the Bible.

(e) The Corporation does not contemplate gain or profit, incidental or otherwise to its members....



Miss Dorothy Roberts (left) and Miss Marian McNeil (right) returning to Kenya aboard the S.S. Tiger following World War II (1946).

Marian McNeil, Independent Board medical missionary, who served in Mwingi, Kenya

"As we approached the next village, our African friends told us we should talk to the women. We were just learning this tribal language and it was extremely difficult to hold a conversation, but we told the two women who were sitting near the door of their little hut that God loved them and asked if they knew Jesus. They hadn't heard of Him. We said that He is God's Son and came to this earth and died and His blood was the only offering acceptable by God as a sacrifice for our sins. The Akamba people believe in a blood sacrifice, but of chickens, goats, or sheep. Before we left, three accepted Christ as Saviour."

(left to right): Rev. and Mrs. Mark Kim, and Rev. and Mrs. Eben Yoon, missionaries at the Bible College of East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya





"A certain missionary, when calling on the Mohammedans in the bazaar, carried his Koran, and used that. Of course, he came home completely defeated.... Our weapon is the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds' (2 Corinthians 10:4)."

Dr. Sarah Hosmon, Independent Board medical missionary, who served in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates

50 Years in Guatemala

With this issue already dedicated to the anniversaries of two organizations, we rejoice to announce the **50th Anniversary of Rev. Hal and Mrs. Evelyn Ricker as missionaries to Guatemala under The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.**

A celebration of this event was held in Guatemala on Saturday, July 6, 2013, with several of their children present.

The Rickers began their missionary service in Brazil in the mid-1950s. Rev. Ricker first considered serving in Europe. Dr. Francis Schaeffer, Independent Board missionary and leader in the International Council of Christian Churches, had promoted Europe as an open mission field after World War II. However, the chosen country of Portugal denied Rev. Ricker a visa, after he spent a year attempting to

procure it. A "Macedonian Call" came from a church in Brazil (a former Portuguese colony), and Pastor Ricker accepted the call.

The future Mrs. Ricker worked for the company which owned the S.S. Brazil, which he boarded for his trip to South America. Her job took her to Argentina several times, with stopovers in Rio de Janeiro. They enjoyed their courtship on these brief occasions, and were married in 1956, both having a strong love for missions in their hearts.

On their next trip home, they received a new "Macedonian Call," this time from Guatemala. And, there they have served faithfully since 1963. We congratulate the Rickers on this milestone, and pray that the Lord would give us more faithful missionaries to carry on the work of Christ around the world.



Rev. and Mrs. Ricker with son David at the anniversary celebration.

We regret that we could only give our readers a taste of the glorious heritage of The Independent Board and its missionaries. Only a few of the wonderful missionaries could be mentioned and pictured in this issue.

Dr. K.C. Quek of Singapore and Hal Ricker reminiscing at the American World War II Memorial in Manila, the Philippines.



"BRETHERN, PRAY FOR US! The darkness is horrible, indescribable... Oh, hold up our hands, that many may see the LIGHT OF LIFE and be saved, even yet."



Miss Louisa Lee, Independent Board missionary, in a November 25, 1946, report from Kannauj, India.

(From *The Independent Board Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1935)

The Independent Board a Protestant Organization

Have you wondered why there is an Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions?

Compare the following passages, and you will understand.

What man teaches

"What does the agony on Gethsemane reveal except that Jesus saw human existence so beautiful that he could not bear to leave it?" (From *Women and Missions*, April 1934).

The first passage occurs in the official monthly magazine of the Woman's Committees of the Boards of Missions (including the Foreign Board) of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The last two passages are found in the Word of God.

The first passage is Modernism. The last two passages are the Truth of God.

That the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. allows such a heretical statement to appear (without comment) in its official magazine is a clear indication that it is willing to countenance Modernism.

Another example: (1) Nanking University is a union institution. (2) The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. cooperates with Nanking University (Minutes of Foreign Board, 1934, page 82). (3) Textbook on Religion at Nanking University: [Modernist Harry Emerson] Fosdick's *The Modern Use of the Bible* (December 1931, *University of Nanking Bulletin*, page 122).

It is such evidence as this that compelled loyal Presbyterians to form The Independent Board.

There are at least three classes of Presbyterians. There is the class of those who are "set for the defence of the gospel." There is, secondly, the class of those who are committed to the propagation of Modernism. There is, thirdly, the class of those who claim to believe the Gospel, but who are determined that, no matter how seriously Modernism pervades the Boards of the Church, peace must be maintained at any price — peace at the expense of purity of doctrine.

The members of The Independent Board take their stand with those who constitute class one. They are "set for the de-

What God teaches

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5).

"Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

"Our primary concern is that men everywhere, who are lost, dead in trespasses and sins, might hear the blessed Evangel of God's Grace, and come to know the Son of God as their personal Saviour and Lord."

fence of the gospel." As over against Modernism of all kinds, they insist that the Bible is the changeless Word of God. The Independent Board is a Protestant organization: it originated as a **Protest** against policies or teachings which contradict or minimize the everlasting Gospel of redemption through the blood of the Lamb of God.

But The Independent Board came into being not only to Protest against Modernism, but also to **Propagate the Gospel** to which its members have pledged their loyalty. Our primary concern is that men everywhere, who are *lost, dead* in trespasses and sins, might hear the blessed Evangel of God's grace, and come to know the Son of God as their personal Saviour and Lord.

Nor do we mean anything vague by this declaration of purpose. We believe that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We believe that "the wages of sin is death." We believe that God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We believe that the old, old remedy, outlined years ago to the Philippian jailer, is the *only* way of salvation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Believing thus, we are determined, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to send out missionaries who are pledged to preach that Gospel. •

Melody Bjur (left) and Paul Durand (right), missionaries to Chile, with Board President Brad Gsell



VICTORY in perilous times

BY MARK W. EVANS

German Reformer Martin Luther spoke of the strange struggle of sheep contending with wolves. Jesus Christ told His disciples, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matthew 10:16). The wolves surround the sheep and are confident of victory. Yet, they fail. Christ’s sheep have the sure promise, “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

How can believers prevail against enemies who are mighty with worldly power, wealth, and wisdom? Today’s circumstances are especially threatening to God’s people, as many churches, through compromise and apostasy, have joined hands with unbelief. Also, our government is in rebellion against God, His doctrines, His commandments, and His institutions.

In the midst of it all, the sovereign Christ is ruling over His and our enemies and still calling His sheep to Himself. His eye is upon His flock. He warned, “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

The Savior gives His elect the written Word of God, the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and the grace to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. He justifies, adopts, sanctifies, and will eternally glorify each one of His own. “If God be for us,

who can be against us” (Romans 8:31). God’s thoughts that are upon His people are without number (Psalm 139:17,18).

Consider some of the glorious blessings granted to those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb:

They Possess the Truth

The devil’s lie led to Adam’s sin. Adam partook of the forbidden fruit and brought his posterity under God’s wrath and curse. Satan continues his reign through falsehood. Only by sovereign grace, through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, can a lost sinner perceive the truth, repent of his sin and savingly believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (1 Corinthians 2:12,14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6). The Redeemer taught those who believe in Him, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, And the truth shall make you free (John 8:31,32). In our dark hour, bold assaults are made upon the inerrancy, verbal inspiration, authority, infallibility, perspicuity, and sufficiency of God’s Word. Every teaching of the Bible seems to have its zealous, implacable adversaries. So confused and unbelieving are numerous preachers that they justify grievous sins and deny or ignore fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

William Booth (1829-1912) said at the dawn of the 20th century, “The chief danger that confronts the coming century will be religion without

the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell.”¹ The old preacher was aptly describing what much of American “Christianity” has become.

Yet, the Lord has promised, “I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). He also said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). He teaches them the truth, what they are to believe concerning God and the duty God requires of man. That truth, revealed in God’s Word, is our treasured possession. It saves our souls, directs our steps, and provides the manna we so desperately need in this wilderness.

Through the proclaiming of truth, sinners are brought out of the devil’s kingdom into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah recorded the Lord’s promise: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

They Pray to the Living God

“... Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Prayer is the God-given weapon that moves heaven on behalf of the blood-bought children of God. E.M. Bounds said, in his book *Power Through Prayer*: “We cannot run our spiritual operations on the prayers of the past generation. Many persons believe in the efficacy of prayer, but not many pray. Prayer is the easiest and hardest of all things; the simplest and the sublimest; the weakest and the most powerful; its results lie outside the range of human possibilities — they are limited only by the omnipotence of God.”²

Jesus Christ, who never told a lie, said: “Ask, and it shall be given

you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

J.C. McFeeters, in his *Sketches of the Covenanters*, said of John Knox, “In prayer lay the secret of his power. He knew how to take hold of God, and prevail like a prince. The Queen Regent, who in those times mustered the forces of the government at her pleasure, said, ‘I am more afraid of the prayers of John Knox than of any army of ten thousand men.’” May the Lord raise up a new generation of believers who know how to besiege the gates of heaven with earnest, believing, importunate prayers.

They Labor Not in Vain

Despise not “the day of small things” (see Zechariah 4:10). Our efforts may seem ineffectual compared to the show of religious pretensions of apostate and compromising churches. Our duty is to serve God in the way He has taught us in the Scriptures, and to leave the results to Him. Today’s professing Christians who embrace the world and its techniques experience a hollow success through numbers, wealth, and outward display. They have a “form of godliness,” but are “denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5).

The Apostle Paul gave clear instructions concerning how to deal with such false believers: “From such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:5). Moses “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Until our Saviour returns, there will be “a reproach of Christ.” Many seek the world’s commendation by adjusting the objectionable elements of the Christian faith to the prejudices and whims of society. Such

travesties as approving abortion and condoning moral perverts, even ordaining them to the Christian ministry, testify to the awful apostasy from Biblical Christianity.

Our Redeemer is the Faithful Witness who revealed our sin and taught the exclusiveness of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. No prejudice, threat, or flattery could turn Him aside. He set His face like a flint, in spite of almost universal rejection, and did the will of the Father. He endured the infinite agonies of the

“Despise not ‘the day of small things’ (see Zechariah 4:10). Our efforts may seem ineffectual compared to the show of religious pretensions of apostate and compromising churches. Our duty is to serve God in the way He has taught us in the Scriptures, and to leave the results to Him.”

cross, tasted death, and arose in eternal victory, to save His people from their sins. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

They Have an Eternal Victory

The Lord’s people have reason to persevere when the victory is certain. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). Hugh MacKail, Scottish Covenanter, was captured by the soldiers of Charles II and was forced to suffer torture at the hands of judges filled with vengeance. MacKail’s foot was

placed in an iron boot, with an iron wedge forced between his leg and the boot. The wedge was slammed with a hammer eleven times, ripping flesh and crushing bones. Yet, the 25-year-old Christian refused to betray his brethren. He was imprisoned and soon received the sentence of death by hanging.

When the martyr was brought to the gallows, December 22, 1666, he exclaimed, “Now I leave off to speak any more with created beings and begin my communion with God, which shall never be broken off. Farewell, father and mother, friends and relations! Farewell, the world and all delights! Farewell meat and drink! Farewell, sun, moon and stars! Welcome, God and Father! Welcome, sweet Lord Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant! Welcome, blessed Spirit of grace, God of all consolation! Welcome glory! Welcome eternal life! Welcome death!”³ With these words, the youth was hanged and entered the presence of his Lord.

Even when the wolves seem to devour the lambs, their victory is actually their defeat. The believer triumphantly enters into the presence of His Savior and is forever with the Lord. The Lord’s people may suffer greatly, but “joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). The safest position for a human being is to be in the refuge, Christ Jesus. The faithful Shepherd of the sheep will keep His flock. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). •

¹The *Homiletic Review* (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, October 1902), 382.

²E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 196.

³J.B. Marsden, *Dictionary of Christian Churches and Sects From the Earliest Ages of Christianity* (London: Richard Bentley, 1854), 157.



A SWORD NOT PEACE

BY WAYNE VILLARREAL

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33).

Jesus tells us in these verses that whoever publicly acknowledges or openly declares Him before men, He will declare that one to His Father as being one of His own. There is no such thing as an undercover or secret disciple. The idea of “quietly living the Christian life” really does not square with the Scriptures. Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:27: “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.”

Regardless of the consequences that follow our public confession of Jesus Christ, we are to be vocal about our love for and allegiance to Him. Of course, we are to do this with a great amount of love and patience, so as not to bring reproach upon the name of our Lord and Savior. We can be certain, though, that no matter how much tenderness and longsuffering we practice in voicing our relationship with the Son of God, difficulty eventually will come knocking on our door. Philippians 1:29 says: “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

Earlier in Matthew 10, Jesus instructs His disciples to proclaim publicly that “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:5-7). He then warns them of the difficulty and persecution that awaits them as a result of their preaching (verses 16-23). In light of this, Jesus says to His disciples in verses 32-33: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

One of the true tests of discipleship occurs when one finds himself in the midst of difficulty as a result of his proclaimed love for and allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Those who consistently buckle under the pressure they receive from their brothers, or sisters, or parents, or husband, or wife, or friends, just may be proving that they have never become one of Jesus’ disciples. Will there be moments of weakness? Yes. We have Peter as an example. He denied Christ three times, but did he stay there? Once he was sifted or tested by Satan, Peter came out strengthening the brethren. We are told this in Luke 22:31-32: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

Jesus came into the world so that men could be reconciled to God (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14-16). In that sense, He came bringing peace. But the Bible is crystal clear. Christ plainly states that he came into the world bearing a sword. No matter how nice or gentle unbelievers may present themselves to be, the Bible tells us that they are haters of God, of Christ, and of those who are His (John 15:18-25).

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matthew 10:34-36).

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Luke 12:49-53).

Why is it, when it comes to those nearest and dearest to us, that it can be so hard at times to take a firm stand as a disciple of Jesus Christ? I believe our Lord answers our question when He says:

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37).

Christ demands that our love for Him be greater than the love we have for both family and friends. Unless one’s loyalty to Jesus Christ transcends even the closest of family ties,

he will turn his back upon Christ and side with family and friends, when a conflict arises. Jesus wants us to understand this. He is telling us this plainly so that there is no misunderstanding.

The time will come when we will have to choose between Christ and our earthly relationships, when the opportunity will present itself to demonstrate our loyalty to the Saviour. If we are truly His, and He is truly ours, *the choice we make will show that our relationship with Christ transcends all other human relationships. This isn't an easy cross to bear.* When we receive pressure from our loved ones to choose them over our beloved Lord and Savior and we choose to remain loyal to the Him, we are essentially saying that our love for Him is greater than our love for them. That's what Jesus Christ requires of all His disciples, and I believe that's why He says: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:38-39).

If we are not willing to pick up our cross and follow Christ, even if that means being rejected by our loved ones or being put to death, we are not worthy of Him.

If we are not willing to suffer or lose our life for Jesus Christ, then are we justified in saying that we are one of His disciples? Jesus says in these last two verses that No, we are not.

Scripture is so vividly clear when it records the words of our beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." •



The Rev. Wayne Villarreal is the pastor of Faith Bible Presbyterian Church of Trenton, MI.

Of Recycling and Religion

Why a Letter from the County Government Left Me Thinking of Far More Than Its Intended Purpose

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Recently, a letter came to our church from the County government requesting that our church help promote their recycling effort. Of course, recycling, if done properly, can be a very good thing. However, the communication struck me with two truths far more important than the need to recycle.

"The Separation of Church and State"?

This same government which actively seeks the aid of churches, is the same government which denied our church equal police protection (in the face of a frightening rash of vandalism), because we were a "religious" organization. (Thanks to the American Center for Law and Justice for reminding the County of our Constitutional rights and getting a reversal of policy.) This is the same government which assessed property taxes on our church for the first time in nearly 50 years. (Thanks to County Commissioner Bill James for quickly reminding the County Tax Assessor of our rights, and likewise getting a reversal.)

All levels of government are increasingly infringing on the "freedom of religion" guaranteed by our Nation's Founders. At the same time, they are more than happy to use churches, as if they were mere "community organizations," to do the government's bidding. Churches have always sought to be "good neighbors," but the hypocrisy of the government is astounding.

The Misuse of Sacred Things

The other thing which drew my attention was the County's misuse of the Biblical teaching on salvation and heaven to promote their earthly campaign, however meritorious that campaign may be. No harm was probably intended. The use of the

phrase "Heaven holds a special place ..." is ubiquitous. However, it very much militates against the Biblical teaching that we are all totally unworthy of heaven, save for the precious blood atonement of Jesus Christ.

All of us have heard the jokes about St. Peter meeting someone at the Pearly Gates. They are undoubtedly told to

add a little levity, with no harm intended. However, we should be careful. The answer to Westminster Larger Catechism Question 12 tells us that "God's works" are to "be holly and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing."

Puritan Commentator Matthew Poole says that the Third Commandment refers to "not only the proper name of the Lord, but [to] any of his attributes, ordinances, and works...."

Poole continues that we are not to speak of God's name or works "either in oaths or in common discourse, lightly, rashly, irreverently, or unnecessarily, or without weighty or sufficient cause." I would urge our county leaders to refrain from such things, and may all of us who name the name of Christ do the same. •



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THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE ...

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soever. The true church must be kept pure from all false teaching if it is to be faithful to the commands of Scripture and if it is to give a clear witness as to the true Gospel and way of salvation through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. This secular theology has its basis in unbelief and theological Modernism and it is clearly anti-Biblical and anti-Christ...

We believe that men should go into the world, but, first of all, as regenerated souls. Then, they should go into the world, *not* to show sympathetic concern for the social plight of man, but, first of all, to show the love of God by proclaiming the true message of salvation to lost sinners, and to win souls to Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, we need to understand that *resisting* apostasy is in *itself* a great victory, individually or collectively, whether we turn the tide or not, for we are obeying God, and this truth in itself should greatly comfort us in these days. This is another reason why all true Bible-believing Christians should separate from apostasy and close ranks today as never before in a united front against the forces of evil and this terrible wave of apostasy which is sweeping like a tidal wave over this sin-sick world and spiritually disease-ridden church of today.

Also, a true Christian should not yield to the false argument that under grace there is no more law. Christian freedom does not abrogate the Ten Commandments. Sin is a transgression of God's law and a rebellion against His will which separates man to eternal condemnation unless he receives forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

Preach the Gospel

We must preach the old, old message of John 3:16, of sin, damna-

tion, salvation through regeneration, repentance, faith, and personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. This message is still the only true, eternal, and unchangeable way of salvation for all men and is still the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," including the most *prejudiced* mind possible in a secular society. This is true, divine "intellectualism," for it is wisdom that "cometh from above" (James 3:17; Romans 1:16).

"... but we must, above all, trust fully in the power of God, through the Gospel, to break through the darkest mind and the hardest heart with the glorious experience of freedom and joy that comes through the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

If a choice would have to be made, I would rather be a great believer in God, and in His wisdom, than a great thinker of earthly knowledge. The former would take me to Heaven while the latter in itself would take me to hell.

Trust in the Power of God

Our understanding of theological and philosophical trends today can help us remove psychological barriers from the minds of men, but we must, above all, trust fully in the power of God, through the Gospel, to break through the darkest mind and the hardest heart with the glorious experience of freedom and joy that comes through the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This has been proved many times in the darkest parts of this world where Satan has dominated the religious life of the people, but by the simple, Spirit-filled preaching of the Gospel,

the chains of sin, superstition, and demonic influences have been thoroughly removed.

Be Willing to Pay the Price

We must not be afraid of the reality, the responsibility, and the increasing probability of having to stand *alone* in the coming "Secular City." Even though there is still a great host that has not bowed its knee to Baal, it is a relatively small group. The spark is still being preserved, however, even in the age of the "Protestant Deformation." Here and there, in small denominations, in individual churches, in small groups, the old principle of obedience to God's divine Revelation still persists. Where it does, there is still a true church and still a Lord.

Be Counted With the Faithful

If the Christian faith has anything to it, the church will survive, even though it be only a remnant, to greet her Lord at His Second Coming. But many who thought that they were in her, while espousing the principles of the secular mind, will discover to their sorrow the truth of His words, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father ..." (Matthew 7:21).

On the other hand, secular minded clergymen believe that the church will not survive as it is. "They believe the church can live again only when it abandons protective buildings, orthodoxy, bureaucracy — and takes its chances in the daily world of doubt.

"Holding itself aloof, they say, it [the church] no longer reaches deep into the human situation. Radical young theologians want to abandon the word 'God' because church-going millions use it as a nickname for superstition. Conservatives, shocked, fear that the 'new theology' degrades Christ to 'myth.' Result: a full-scale battle of the Bible over the purpose

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of the church and the living test of truth" (*Look*, July 27, 1965, p. 17, "The Battle of the Bible," by T. George Harris).

Pray for Revival and for Our Children

One of the real difficulties in the church situation today is that the laity as well as many ministers must be converted before they can be called "the people of God" and go into the world. What this nation needs today is a real Holy Spirit led revival and "back to the Bible" movement that will shake the very grass-roots level of our churches, to bring our people and society back to God. The fact that there is prophetic teaching concerning coming apostasy does not annul our responsibilities to pray and work toward Biblical revival and reformation of our churches.

We hear much today in liberal circles about the need for "church renewal," which really amounts to a denial and destruction of that which should be renewed. We have already shown you what they want to "renew." The renewal that the church needs today is a "renewal of obedience" to the will of God as revealed in His Word. This concerns salvation for our souls, dedicated Christian living, and separation *from sin unto* God.

Our responsibility as parents is not only to believe, but also to "live" the Gospel and to be ever prayerful and faithful to "train up" our children in the way that they should go: and when they are old, they will "not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). It is not enough to give them "guiding lines," for they will take the line of least resistance. This concept denies their sinful nature, but is prevalent today, and is contributing to our de-

linquent problem. In certain neutral areas they should have the right and be taught to choose, but in the essential areas of right and wrong, life and death, Heaven and hell, we are fully responsible to get them on the right path that leads to Heaven, and the way of righteousness. We have brought them into this world and it would be the greatest of injustices and crimes to neglect their spirit-

"Bible ignorance is a strong weapon in Satan's hand.... We must teach the whole counsel of God. A true understanding of the Gospel and of the enemies of our day is the best protection against the ways of thought which reinforce secularism. We must give the Bible and communicate its message in the language of the people without sacrificing the true teaching and dignity of the Scriptures."

ual and moral welfare. We will be doubly condemned if we do. May God have mercy upon us, and bless the Christian parents of tomorrow. They will have a tremendous task to fulfill in the light of the coming apostasy and its resultant influence upon our young people. May God give them, as well as all of us, the wisdom, the grace, and the courage to be firm, to be loving, and to be understanding in relation to our children. They are the hope of tomorrow, for God's true Church upon the earth and for the continuance of His testimony.

Be Militant

To offset the onrushing wave of apostasy that is coming upon us, we

must be more aggressive, more urgent, and even more radical at times (in the eyes of men) than the enemy is in his methods and planning. We must adopt "crash program" methods in view of the urgency of the hour. The curtain is coming down on the final chapter of Western civilization as we know it, and this is being caused by internal moral and religious bankruptcy. We must call out those who should come out of the apostasy, and we must conserve and strengthen those who do come out by faith, and channel them into the true Church of Jesus Christ. This calls for more boldness and dedication on our part in order that we might be effective instruments in His hands and always sensitive to His beckoning.

In Brazil, we have sought to adopt these methods in view of the urgency of the hour, and in view of the great advancement of apostasy and the ecumenical movement in that land where the modern missionary movement began a little over one hundred years ago by Bible-believing missionaries. Latin America is one of the last of conservative strongholds for missionary endeavor on the world scene, but now it is under violent and aggressive attack by the enemy of our souls.

Believe in God for Results

In spite of the possible philosophical and psychological barriers that a secular society may present to our Christian witness, man is basically the same in all generations, has the same essential needs, and we must believe in God's sovereign purpose that all of those of His choosing will respond to the truth. But from the human and prophetic aspect, we know that with increasing religious skepticism comes indifference, and apostasy will make the acceptance of the gospel more difficult and less desired on the part of the *masses*.

Man prides himself today on increased knowledge in every field of

science, but when you come to grips with reality, “contemporary secular man is no more of age today than he imagined he was during the Enlightenment or the age of the rational Romans — many of whom were just as sincerely puzzled and repelled by the witness of the Christians of the catacombs. Every society and age believes it has reached the pinnacle of understanding. The Christian knows that only God has this kind of understanding” (*Christianity Today*, March 26, 1965, page 16, “A Theological Fifth Column?” by Milton D. Hunnex).

Understand the Scriptures

A Christian is “in the world,” but he is not “of the world.” He is only a pilgrim in this journey of life, and works and serves his Lord with eternal, not present, values in mind.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1,2).

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:20,21).

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3b).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18).

Teach the Bible Thoroughly to Your People

We must reinforce our efforts to do away with religious illiteracy among our people. Bible ignorance is a strong weapon in Satan’s hand. We need a Bible taught and indoctrinated people to withstand the coming attacks of Satan. We must teach the whole counsel of God. A true understanding of the Gospel and of the enemies of our day is the best protection against the ways of thought which reinforce *secularism*. We must give the Bible and communicate its message in the language of the people without sacrificing the true teaching and dignity of the Scriptures. We are not to “secularize,” “humanize,” or “vulgarize” the sacred content of the Scriptures as the United Presbyterians did at their 177th General Assembly in Columbus in May 1965, when one of their brilliant, but spiritually ignorant, young men called Jesus “that guy” in a “devotional” message which this writer heard on that occasion.

According to the spirit of their writings, some of these religious secularists would like to refer to God as “good old God” which, in practice, means really “God emeritus.”

First, we had the *absent* God of the Deists, then the *doubtful* God of the liberals, then the *hidden* God of the Barthians, then the *mythological* God of the Bultmannians (existentialists), and now we have the *retired* or *non-existent* God of the secularists. What can the devil possibly think of next?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:3-7). •

REDEEMING THE TIME

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