Looking to the Future Without Forgetting the Past

What to Expect in the Days Ahead
What now? What can you expect from my leadership? Where do I expect the Lord to lead IFCA International?
Rev. Les Lofquist
IFCA International
Executive Director

Evaluating the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church
What? Another view of the rapture? How many more can there be? With pre-trib, post-trib, mid-trib, partial-trib, and now the newest contender "pre-wrath" it seems that there are almost as many positions as there are recipes for meatloaf. Which one is correct? At least there's one good thing we know about this situation: they can't all be right!
Paul Karleen

The Battle for the Bible
Far be it from this writer to assume a stature that would qualify him to move in the fields of theological thought pursued in The Battle For The Bible, by Harold Lindsell, the gifted editor of Christianity Today. There are others far better qualified to set forth these facts by reason of their ability and experience. I only offer a few observations which, I trust, will prove helpful.
Dr. Jack Murray

The Lure of Reconstructionist Theology
A small, but vocal, group of theologians are beginning to make their presence felt in American churches. Equipped with powerful arguments and an unyielding determination, they are taking their flawed, but ever so appealing, message to Bible-believing Christians. They are the reconstructionists, or as they are sometimes called, theonomists.
Jarl K. Waggoner

The Challenge of Missions in a Changing World
The story has been told about the Aboriginals in Australia who, when introduced to the account in Genesis said, "If we were in the garden of Eden, you wouldn't have this mess today. We would've thrown away the fruit and eaten the snake."
Rev. Joel Mathai

The Challenge of Preserving Integrity
In my estimation, one of the greatest challenges facing the church today is to reject the pressure to reflect the culture we live in. We live in a pragmatic world that constantly cultivates in us an appetite for what is nice, and accepting rather than what is honest and true. This climate has thinned our skin and caused many of us not to do anything that would "offend" someone.
Rev. Robert Crummie

The Challenge of Maintaining
Postmodernism is like a rising tide, blurring the character lines that were once clearly imprinted in our culture. Objective knowledge is unaccepted, the absolute is rejected, and the authority of God's Word is laughed off as foolishness. As a result, this generation is left adrift without an anchor.
Dr. Les Ollila
The Reality of Persecution
The request to share my thoughts in the well-know Christian magazine "Voice" coincided with special spiritual experience in my life. On January 23, 2000 God gave me the special opportunity to participate in a joyful service in Belarus.
   Dr. Alexander Firisiuk

The Incursion of Reformed Theology
There appears to be resurgence in Evangelicalism of Reformed Theology. Actually, it may be more accurate to say that there has been an incursion into dispensational circles.
   Rev. Chris Bauer

Cooperate, Compromise or Conform?
Have we come to the place where Christian organizations operating off of the church grounds must compromise their beliefs and conform to the latest thinking of those who would remake God in their own image?
   Dr. Timothy Tatum

Facing the Future
The question I ask myself concerning the challenges that the church is going to have to face tomorrow addresses "Is the church discerning enough to foresee the results of the seeds being sown in the church today, or do Christians even care?"
   Dr. Richard Gregory

FEATURES...
Chaplains' Diary

Tragedy Aboard the Aircraft Carrier Enterprise
I think that you may have heard about the accident that occurred on the flight deck of ENTERPRISE on the night of 14 April. Late in the evening of the 14th an E2 landed on the flight deck, a propeller aircraft, which was the last aircraft to be trapped...
   Chaplain Bert Moore
WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE DAYS AHEAD

Rev. Les Lofquist

On Tuesday, June 27 at the Annual Convention in Minnesota, I was installed as Executive Director of IFCA International. This was the culmination of a year of transition in the Home Office where I served alongside Dr. Richard Gregory in training and preparation for this day.

What now? What can you expect from my leadership? Where do I expect the Lord to lead IFCA International?

For the more immediate days ahead, Dr. Gregory will be moving to Auburndale, Florida with his dear wife, Carol. Although he is now retired from the position of Executive Director, I asked the Executive Committee for authorization to retain Dick as Managing Editor of the *Voice* magazine. I am so pleased they agreed with this move and saw the wisdom of keeping Dick on staff in this part-time capacity. He and I have developed a wonderful relationship and work so very well together! I look forward to our endeavors on the *Voice*, Dick as Managing Editor assisting me as the Editor.

I have also asked Carol to serve as my liaison in negotiating the Annual Conventions. She has been uniquely gifted by God for this kind of ministry and I would be foolish if I failed to utilize her in this capacity. The Lord has significantly used Carol over these past 13 years in securing the locations for our Annual Conventions at the most incredible prices and I am happy she will continue in this role.

I am grateful for the way God has used Dr. and Mrs. Gregory in their ministry with IFCA International since 1987. But I am especially grateful for the opportunity I have had to work with them over the last ten months and that I will still get the benefit of their insight and experience from their "retirement cottage" in Florida.

But what about my role, my goals, my vision for the office of Executive Director? What can you expect from me?

You can expect that I will respect our heritage. We cannot build for the future if we forget the past. Our IFCA forefathers were men greatly used by God and built something seventy years ago that still stands today. I have spent many hours this year in our archives researching photographs and minutes of meetings as well as visiting and interviewing older men. This was out of respect for God's work in the past generation and out of concern for the future generation. The stones of remembrance in Old Testament history represented the past ("look what God did") as well as the present and future ("and He can still do it today or tomorrow"). Look at all the past tense verbs in the Psalms and see their relationship with the present tense and future tense. I intend to honor what God did through the IFCA in the decades before my installation as Executive Director.

You can expect that I will cultivate a majestic view of God. In a day when churches are increasingly emphasizing the horizontal dimension of the Christian life (relationships with others, growth and fulfillment of self), I want to call our churches to the vertical dimension of the Christian life (a lofty understanding of the royally majestic and awesome God). I will implore us to recognize our culture's idols and reacquaint ourselves with the Majesty on high who says "I am the LORD, and there is no other; beside Me there is no God" (Isaiah 45:5). And as I lead IFCA International, I too will submit to His sovereign direction of our Fellowship.

You can expect that I will be a Scripture-driven leader. As a leader, one must choose not only where to lead but the means by which to attract a following. The Corinthians followed leaders who relied upon the means of superiority of speech, persuasive rhetoric, and the force of an impressive personality; Paul relied upon the Word of God, the crucified Christ, and the Spirit's power (see 1 Cor. 2). He demonstrates...
that it is better to be Scripture-driven and Spirit-empowered than propelled by borrowed secular forces. Our standard is the Word of God. We must never use it selectively, nor substitute for it the methods or opinions of men.

You can expect that I will be global-minded. In an inwardly turned society, our churches must have an outward focus. Just as bifocal glasses have a far-view and a near-view, our churches must have the same dual view: the Gospel across the sea and across the street. **God's church is a global church and we must not yield to the temptation to retreat into a "remnant mentality"** (fewness, littleness, sameness). Because our God is infinite we should take on goals and objectives worthy of a lofty view of God who wants to be glorified in all the earth.

You can expect that I will be a team-builder. The accomplishment of ministry is never done alone. New Testament leaders were in plurality in the local churches. Paul wrote to Timothy that the ministry always involves training others who in turn would train others (2 Timothy 2:2). By its very definition, *koinonia* involves fellowship, community, togetherness which is quickly undone by the self-interests of others (most especially the leaders). For all of these reasons, I will have to rely upon our IFCA International team to accomplish the mission, vision, and goals so clearly articulated in "Our Vision for the 21st Century" (the IFCA International Vision Statement).

Please pray for me, my family, and all of us in IFCA International that God would grant us His success, in His time, by His enablement, for His glory. And may He allow IFCA International the privilege of continuing to stand for Him in the days ahead.
EVALUATING THE PRE-WRATH RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH
By Paul Karleen

What? Another view of the rapture? How many more can there be? With pre-trib, post-trib, mid-trib, partial-trib, and now the newest contender "pre-wrath" it seems that there are almost as many positions as there are recipes for meatloaf. Which one is correct? At least there's one good thing we know about this situation: they can't all be right!

If you haven't heard of the pre-wrath rapture, you probably will soon. Its main vehicle is *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* by Marvin Rosenthal, former General Director of Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry. It is also featured prominently in *Zion's Fire*, the magazine promoting Rosenthal's new mission organization, Zion's Hope. *Rosenthal's thesis is this:*

The rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ will occur, not at the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel, but sometime after its midpoint, just prior to the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord will be a time of wrath from God upon the inhabitants of the earth. Church-age believers will go through the first half of the seventieth week "three and one-half years" and more, but will be spared the time of wrath.

The book is forcefully written and graphically attractive, with many two-color diagrams. Here are some of Rosenthal's claims:

- The rapture occurs on the very same day on which the Day of the Lord begins.
- The restrainer of 2 Thessalonians 2 is Michael the Archangel (cf. Daniel 12:1).
- The coming of Christ "begins before the end of the seventieth week and is consummated after the end of the seventieth week."
- Disagreement over existing rapture views suggests that all are fatally flawed.
- The pre-tribulation rapture holds out the false hope of an imminent rapture.
- "Within two years many men will be teaching the pre-wrath Rapture. Within five years it will be a recognized position. And, if God pleases, within fifteen years it will become a major position of the believing church, if God gives that many years."

Following are four guidelines to help in evaluating this or any view that claims to fit the Bible:

- Correspondence to biblical facts
- Accuracy concerning the biblical languages
- Attention to the context of words, phrases and verses
- Sound logic, that is, reasoning that conforms to the canons of contemporary formal and informal logic

THE METHOD OF ARGUMENTATION

Joining many bad arguments never makes a good argument, but put together enough weak claims and anyone can be fooled. Rosenthal presents his position by adding one conclusion to another in a chain-like effect, writing in such a way that, if the reader accepts each part, he is likely to conclude that the pre-wrath position is valid. But many partial truths do not make a whole truth. The total of anything can be no better than the quality of each of its components.
There are many complex arguments in *The Pre-Wrath Rapture*. It would take a very long book to analyze each one in detail. In this article I will analyze a few of the key issues. Let's look at some of the links in the Pre-Wrath Rapture chain. Numbers in parentheses are references to pages in the book.

**PROBLEMS WITH THE FACTS**

**WHEN DOES THE WRATH OF GOD BEGIN?**

According to the pre-wrath view, God's wrath on the earth doesn't start until the Day of the Lord, after the six seals of Revelation 6, and after cosmic disturbances. The Church is raptured just before the beginning of wrath; since, according to 1 Thessalonians 1:10, believers of this age are not appointed to wrath. In addition, the "tribulation" is only the first part of the second half of the seventieth week and contains no wrath. It is very important to the pre-wrath position that wrath not begin until after the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel, after the tribulation, after the first six seals, after the cosmic disturbances and after the rapture. A simple chart of the pre-wrath view (below) will help at this point.

**DOES THE BIBLE REALLY TEACH THAT THERE IS NO WRATH DURING THE "TRIBULATION" OR BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD?**

Rosenthal looks (I believe correctly) to the Olivet Discourse and Matthew 24 for events of the seventieth week of Daniel. We know that he views Matthew 24 and Luke 21 as parallel in their description of these events (152). Rosenthal pointedly says: "Wrath is restricted to the latter part of the seventieth week, specifically the Day of the Lord period" (172). But what does Luke say? In 21:23 he records Jesus' words as follows: "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that nurse children, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people."

**HERE IS WHAT WE OBSERVE**

1. If we were to look at a harmony of the Gospels, we would see that Luke 21:23 is parallel to Matthew 24:19-22. They describe the same time period. Matthew refers to this time as one that has "great tribulation" (v. 21). While there are some who take Luke 21:20-24 to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the language of Luke and Matthew is so strikingly similar here that both must be referring to the same period, the seventieth week. This is especially so because of Luke 21:22, where Jesus says that He is speaking of the fulfillment of all things, undoubtedly a reference to the Old Testament predictions of the end times. In addition, for our evaluative purposes here, we should note that Rosenthal places Luke 21:23-25 in the seventieth week (152).

2. It is significant that Luke 21:23a and b are connected with the word *for* (the Greek word ἐν), which provides an explanation. Verse 23b gives an explanation of the events of 23a and must take place at the same time, not sometime later. The "woe" exists because of the wrath. Thus we find that Luke teaches that there will be wrath during the time that Matthew describes as having "great tribulation."

3. Rosenthal says that the Day of the Lord, in his view the only time of wrath, will be a period for chastening and purifying for Israel (175). Note that Luke 21:23 has "wrath upon this people" --wrath coming on Jews. Luke uses the same word as is used in Revelation and normally translated "wrath", and the word that Rosenthal takes as describing the wrath of God. Luke puts it (using the same word) before the cosmic events of the sixth seal. So Luke teaches that "in those days" (which Rosenthal takes to be the "tribulation" of Matthew 24:19 [205] there will be wrath on Israel.

4. Rosenthal says that the Olivet discourse is sequential in progression (60). He also asserts by his chart (152) that Luke 21:25 is parallel to the sixth seal, and therefore before any wrath. But Luke 21 has wrath before this.

So Luke says there will be wrath during the period; Rosenthal says there will not be wrath. It might be helpful to lay the main elements out sequentially, comparing Luke and Rosenthal's view of Matthew 24.
Pre-wrath view of Matthew 24

Luke 21 is tribulation Matthew 24 is tribulation (assumes the Olivet discourse is chronological)

v.23a woe on mothers v. 19 woe on mothers

v. 23b wrath on Israel v. 21 tribulation

v. 25 cosmic disturbances v. 25 cosmic disturbances, opening of the sixth seal as prelude to the Day of the Lord, then the rapture and the beginning of wrath on Israel.

Wrath does not begin until here

The text of Luke is clear. There is wrath during the period where Rosenthal places the "tribulation," during the period where he places the six seals, before the seventh seal, before his cosmic disturbances, before where he places the rapture, and before his Day of the Lord starts--all places where he says there cannot be wrath.

The timing of wrath is the cornerstone of the pre-wrath position. In fact, Rosenthal tells us his most important purpose for writing: "The objective of this volume is to demonstrate that the Day of the Lord is the time of divine wrath" (35). Luke's Olivet account thus undermines the crucial element in Rosenthal's argument. He cannot restrict wrath to the Day of the Lord and be true to the Bible.

PROBLEMS WITH CONTEXTS

ARE THERE BLESSINGS DURING THE DAY OF THE LORD?

Contexts are always very significant for biblical understanding. If we don't pay attention to the surroundings of biblical passages, we can easily get biblical information wrong. It turns out that this is exactly what Rosenthal does. He asserts that the Day of the Lord is exclusively a time of the outpouring of God's wrath, not of God's favor on Israel: "There is no blessing associated with the Day of the Lord in the texts that describe it" (128).

Noting that some Bible teachers say that the Day of the Lord will include the millennium, Rosenthal indicates that while the ending point of his Day of the Lord is not crucial to his argument, he does want to show that the Day of the Lord contains no blessing and does not include the millennium. Does the Bible really teach this?

Joel 2:30-3:2 comes right in the middle of a passage that Rosenthal cites as describing the Day of the Lord (119). In the pre-wrath position, the cosmic signs come just before the Day of the Lord. Joel describes that in 2:30-31. The next thing Joel has is blessing! In addition, 3:1 is explicit that blessing comes during the same time period. There is no justification for relegating this to another time. The blessing is part of the same Day of the Lord. It may come after judgment, but it is within the Day. Here is an overview of the passage:

2:30,31 cosmic signs

2:32 salvation

3:1 restoration of Judah and Jerusalem's fortunes "in that time"

3:2 judgment on the nations

There is no escaping the meaning of Joel here. By looking at whole contexts, we see that blessing comes during the same time period as the cosmic signs and judgment on the nations. This is an impossible
sequence for the pre-wrath position! Other passages that demonstrate the same thing are Zephaniah 3:8-13a, Isaiah 34 and 35, Haggai 2 and Zechariah 12-14 (perhaps the most telling).

PROBLEMS WITH LOGIC

2 PETER 3 AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

Although early in the book Rosenthal asserts that he will not attempt to erect any straw men and then argue against them, he does just that in his discussion of 2 Peter 3, misstating the position of the pre-tribulationists. Most pre-millennialists interpret 2 Peter 3:10-13 as describing events before the millennium (the coming "as a thief") and after it (reshaping of the heavens and earth). Their position is that the Day of the Lord extends from the rapture through the creation of the new heaven and new earth and has components of judgment as well as blessing. But recall that one of the main supports for Rosenthal's view that the Day of the Lord cannot cover the period of the millennium is that it cannot contain blessing, which he acknowledges is part of the millennium. After stating the pre-tribulational view, Rosenthal brings in his assumption that the Day cannot extend through the millennium and says that in order to account for the two components (judgment and blessing) the pretribulationist must then be forced to espouse the view (which Rosenthal himself has created) that there are two "Day" eras.

Then Rosenthal states that the phrase "Where is the promise of his coming?" (3:4) makes no sense if applied to a "Day" before the millennium and a separate "Day" afterward. This "two Day" view is not the position of the pretribulationist. Rosenthal creates that position, and then argues against it. When he believes he has shown that it is false, he concludes that he has shown that his own view is "right" that 2 Peter 3 must refer to the one Day of the Lord that he thinks occurs during the seventieth week of Daniel. Thus Rosenthal creates a straw man, attempts to disprove it, and then asserts that his position is vindicated. This is a very evident logical fallacy.

PROBLEMS WITH FACTS AND CONTEXTS

THE FIRST FIVE SEALS OF REVELATION 6

In Revelation 5 the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ in metaphor, seizes the scroll from the One who sits on the throne (God the Father) and in Revelation 6 begins to open the seals contained in the scroll. The face-value interpretation of the seals is that they contain or are events that transpire on earth, or events in the spiritual realm that touch on events on the earth.

However, not only does Rosenthal insist that the seals are not under Christ's control, since that would make Him responsible for events associated with the Antichrist, he also believes that the seals are not events and do not contain events. Instead, he says, the seals represent God's protective security over believers during this time: God is protecting them until the rapture. He argues that since seal in Ephesians 1:13 represents the security of the believer as brought about by the Holy Spirit, so, too, in Revelation 6 the seals portray God's protection of the believer from any harm that God does not want to touch them.

Throughout the book, Rosenthal appeals for the use of contextual, grammatical, historical, and literal interpretation. Here is the clearest example of his violating his avowed standards. It is exegetically indefensible to automatically transfer the meaning of a word in one text to a usage in another text without examining the context. His interpretation runs totally counter to the text of Revelation 5 and 6. The seal of Ephesians 1:13 is the Holy Spirit Himself and is explicitly described as a provision for keeping the believer secure in Christ. In Revelation 6, the seals are multiple, vary in their content, and are never associated with the work of the Holy Spirit. Most importantly, the seals themselves are "opened." As each seal is opened, something happens. Thus the seals contain or are events. Jesus opens them, thus demonstrating His control of the events.
Revelation 6 is another key passage for the pre-wrath view, since it is so involved with deciding on the starting point of the Day of the Lord (see 176). Rosenthal must keep the seals from coming directly from the hand of God and from containing any judgment from Him. His interpretation allows him to keep the seals from being of the same character as the trumpets and bowls, namely, judgments from God. But under a face-value interpretation of the seals, they are actually judgments unrolled as the scroll is opened. Rosenthal's theological misunderstanding and contextual and factual errors show up clearly here.

MORE PROBLEMS WITH THE FACTS

NOAH AND THE FLOOD, AND THE COMING OF CHRIST

Rosenthal attempts to counter any suggestion that the Day of the Lord begins some time after the rapture. Some dispensationalists have posited this in order to account for the appearance of Elijah (Malachi 4:5) and the appearance of the Antichrist (159). Rosenthal maintains that the rapture, the start of the wrath of God and the beginning of the Day of the Lord all come at the same time--after the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel and after the "tribulation" period. One of the supports he uses for this is Jesus' mentioning of Noah in Matthew 24:37-39. Rosenthal states, "The Lord teaches that on the very day that Noah entered the ark, God's judgment fell."

Please look at the text of Genesis 7:1-10 and notice when Noah entered the ark and when the floods came. The two events were seven days apart. Rosenthal claims they occur on the same day! Look carefully also at Matthew 24:38-39: Jesus says that people kept on eating and drinking until the day Noah entered the ark. It does not say that the flood came the day Noah entered.

Premillennialists hold that the Bible describes a coming of Christ to receive His Church and a coming in glory after that. The time interval between these has been debated. However, Rosenthal does something unusual with these two events: he collapses them, asserting that Christ 1) takes His Church from the earth before the Day of the Lord, 2) remains on the scene and 3) gloriously judges the nations and establishes His Kingdom. In addition to failing to deal with the differences between 1 Thessalonians 4 (a coming for believers to meet them in the clouds) and passages such as Zechariah 14 (a coming to the earth on the Mount of Olives in power and glory) the author is unable to portray what Jesus is doing while He is "present." Here is what he says, "This coming commences before the end of the seventieth week, and is consummated after the end of the seventieth week (Revelation 19:11)" (110). He gives no Scripture for this. Where is Jesus and what is He doing? The silence on this is deafening!

PROBLEMS WITH LANGUAGE

MICHAEL AS THE RESTRAINER

In 2 Thessalonians 2 Paul indicates that the Day of the Lord cannot begin until a "restrainer " is first removed. This is a crucial point for Rosenthal, since under his system he must account for the removal of the restrainer, but, wanting to keep the Church present throughout the period, must also have the Holy Spirit present. Thus his system automatically rules out the Holy Spirit as the restrainer (many interpreters hold that He is the restrainer), and Michael (Daniel 12:1) gets the job of abandoning Israel: "The Bible is explicit that the archangel Michael is the personage who will step aside" (257). "Michael, Israel's great prince, shall stand up . . . from helping Israel during the time of the Great Tribulation (v. 1a)" (267). Aside from the fact that no reason is given in Scripture for such an act (i.e., why would protection stop), there are serious linguistic problems with this.

Rosenthal asserts that the Hebrew verb amad can mean "stand still" (258). In some of its occurrences in the Old Testament it does. But the author goes further and says that "stand still" means "stand aside," i.e., act passively and allow something to happen. Here are the facts.
1. According to Brown, Driver and Brigg's *Lexicon*, the standard scholarly Hebrew lexicon, *amad* never has the meaning "stand aside."

2. "Stand still" and *stand aside* are not at all the same thing. Allow me to give an example. If I am taking a picture of my children and one wiggles, I might say, "Stand still." But if I say, "stand aside," my child would move out of the picture. These are two different verbs and two different actions!

3. Rosenthal cites one Hebrew scholar who gives the meaning of *amad* as "stand still." Citing one commentator for the meaning of a word is hardly convincing. What do the others say? What are the possible meanings for the word? Furthermore, the author changes the commentator's conclusion from "stand still" to "stand aside" or "be inactive" (258).

4. According to my count, the verb *amad* occurs thirty times in Daniel. In none of its occurrences can it mean "stand still passively to allow something to happen." In fact, in the latter chapters when a new personage is introduced to the narrative, the verb is often used as equivalent to our "come on the scene."

5. The face-value interpretation of Daniel 12:1 makes a connection between the standing of Michael in 1a and the deliverance of Daniel's people in 1c. Michael stands up to save Israel. His standing and the deliverance both occur "at that time." The emphasis of the verse is on protection, not abandonment.

While there are many more reasons for rejecting Rosenthal's interpretation of Daniel 12:1 and the identity of the restrainer, these points show that he demonstrates serious errors in working with biblical language.

**CONCLUSION**

Rosenthal discusses many other points connected with the seventieth week of Daniel. They include the meaning of Revelation 3:10; the nature of imminence; the presence of the Church during the seventieth week of Daniel; the extended periods of time in Daniel 12 (rarely dealt with); the timing of the coming of Elijah and the revealing of the man of sin before the Day of the Lord.

There can be no question that Rosenthal has wrestled with significant issues in biblical interpretation. But the pre-wrath rapture is not justified in its claim to be the true explanation of the unfolding of the seventieth week of Daniel and of associated events.
Far be it from this writer to assume a stature that would qualify him to move in the fields of theological thought pursued in *The Battle For The Bible*, by Harold Lindsell, the gifted editor of *Christianity Today*. There are others far better qualified to set forth these facts by reason of their ability and experience. I only offer a few observations which, I trust, will prove helpful.

First of all, I am grateful that Dr. Lindsell has written the book, and I am very sure the book needed to be written. My first acquaintance with the author was in the ’30s during our college days at Wheaton, Illinois. I have always been grateful that I was a college student during that time when the fundamentalist-modernist controversy came to a climax. Our college president was Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., the distinguished Presbyterian scholar and author of *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. It was during those days when Dr. Buswell, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, Dr. Peter Stam, Jr., Dr. Merrill T. MacPherson, Dr. Harold S. Laird, Dr. Carl McIntire, and others were deposed and unfrocked as ministers of the gospel by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. I greatly admired Dr. Buswell during those college days even though many were unhappy because some of the college constituency were being alienated by Dr. Buswell's militant stand for the truth. Many distinguished defenders of the faith were brought to the chapel services and a lasting impression was made upon my life. Faith Theological Seminary was organized as a result of this controversy in 1937, and it was my privilege to take my training at Faith Seminary from 1937-1940. In 1941 during a visit to Columbia Bible College, I can distinctly remember a rather heated conversation with Dr. Lindsell who was then on the faculty of that college. By that time some of us had been branded as "separatists," and Dr. Lindsell predicted that my principles of ecclesiology would one day put me in a closet as the sole occupant! I emphatically disagreed, of course. Now, 35 years later, we have a book by the same Dr. Lindsell entitled *The Battle For the Bible*, which could be entitled *The Confessions of a Neo-Evangelical*!

Now I know I am treading on questionable ground when I use the term "neo-evangelical." This term has been so misused that it is scarcely possible to use it at all without some misunderstanding. Most common, ordinary evangelicals use it to describe anyone who is to their left and that area is rather vast! I use the word as it was spelled out in the Foreword of Lindsell's book, written by Dr. Harold John Ockenga, where he states that neo-evangelicalism was born in a convocation address he delivered in California and that Lindsell and others became supporters of that viewpoint. After reading Lindsell's book, however, I can only say that Ockenga's Foreword does not enhance the book in any way. After reading the Foreword I almost did not read the book! I am glad I did, however. The disparity between the Foreword and the book itself is most evident. After reading Ockenga's Foreword, it is my opinion that many who repudiated the name neo-evangelical will now repudiate the term "evangelical" itself because they are convinced that what Ockenga is writing about has very little resemblance to historic evangelicalism. The so-called burgeoning evangelical branch of Protestantism and evangelical theological revival has a hollow sound.

Of what value has either if Biblical inerrancy is not maintained?

How can we fight a good fight and finish the course if we do not keep the faith?

What good does it do for the anchor man of a relay team to break the final tape if he has dropped the baton in the process?

The content of the book itself puts Ockenga on the spot when the author states that the movement away from the historic standpoint has been most noticeable among the so-called neo-evangelicals. The author calls this a change of position with respect to the infallibility of the Bible. Now, remember, this is not
my accusation. I did not make it. The author of the book did, and I certainly agree. I am seeking to make a humble evaluation of the book. It seems to me that the book is a form of acknowledgment and confession that the National Association of Evangelicals, Fuller Theological Seminary, Christianity Today, and Harold John Ockenga, along with others, have failed to stem the tide of the movement away from historic Biblical inerrancy.

Inasmuch as Fuller Theological Seminary is prominent in this book, I would offer a few observations. The name of Charles E. Fuller is on my diploma as a graduate of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. He was chairman of the board of that institution when I graduated in 1933. Along with others I have always held that name in highest esteem. According to the book we are discussing, Dr. Fuller agreed to furnish the funds for the new seminary bearing his name and Dr. Ockenga was to direct its operation from its founding in 1947. In a convocation address Dr. Ockenga repudiated "separatism" but called for a reaffirmation of the theological view of fundamentalism. From the book it is clear that this new seminary was to be founded as an apologetic institution standing for full Biblical inerrancy, premillennialism, and world missions and evangelism. But as early as 1962 it became apparent that there were men on the board and on the faculty who did not believe in the full inerrancy of the Scriptures. Fifteen years is a relatively short time for the maintenance of the doctrinal creed of this institution. Remember, Ockenga called for the recapture of theological leadership; but instead of the recapture of theological leadership, the very seminary he helped to establish denies inerrancy in a brief fifteen years.

When Ockenga repudiates the ecclesiology of fundamentalism, he calls for the repudiation of separatism. Lindsell writes-

"No one wants division or schism. But this possibility must be weighed against another possibility: that of the purity of the church. Peace at any price is always possible. There is no place in the world where peace may not be had with the Communists. All men need to do is to capitulate to their demands, and peace, their peace, will come. But peace at the price of theological purity for the church is too high a price to pay. We must by all means strive for both peace and purity. But when peace is threatened in the struggle for purity, it is a necessary risk that cannot be avoided."

I can envision J. Gresham Machen looking with an approving smile over Lindsell's shoulder as he pens the lines above. Machen himself wrote fifty years ago -

"The warm and vital type of Christianity emanated from Princeton-the Christianity that not only proclaims the gospel when it is popular to proclaim it, but proclaims the gospel in the face of a hostile world, the type of Christianity that resolutely refuses to make common cause, either at home or on the mission field, with the Modernism that is the deadliest enemy of the cross of Christ, the type of Christianity that responds with full abandon of the heart and life to the Savior's redeeming love, that is willing to bear all things for Christ's sake, that has a passion for the salvation of souls, that holds the Bible to be, not partly true and partly false, but all true, the blessed, holy Word of God-this warm and vital type of Christianity ... is disconcerting to the ecclesiastical leaders; and so Princeton Seminary, from which it emanates, must be destroyed. Such has often been the fate of those who have felt compelled to warn the Church. The ecclesiastical machinery rolls smoothly on, and the Church proceeds to destroy that wherein its real safety rests."

For Ockenga to call for a repudiation of separatism is to isolate only one segment of the total area of the question of the peace and purity of the visible church. It is obvious in any church polity—whether it be episcopacy, the presbyterian, or the congregational—that a man who holds to the purity of the church must either actively engage in controversy to keep out any force that would destroy that purity or work for the expulsion of any false force which is already in that church. To refuse to be so engaged is to resign oneself to work within the framework of what we call the inclusive church and abandon any attempt as useless to purify the body. The alternative is to set up continuing church structure in the polity of one's
choice with a determination to maintain church purity. The latter alternative is that which Ockenga calls separatism. To quote Dr. Machen again:

"In discussing 'the future of evangelical Christianity,' we do not mean the ultimate future. The ultimate future, according to the great and precious promises of God, is sure; if evangelical Christianity is true, it cannot ultimately fail.

"But the future of which we are speaking is the immediate future. The gospel will triumph in the end; but meanwhile we are living in a time of conflict when we need to ask what it is God's will that we should do.

"In that time of conflict, an epoch will unquestionably be marked by the reorganization of Princeton Seminary, if such reorganization is finally authorized by your General Assembly next May. What we shall have here is not merely the destruction of a single institution, but an event typical of a mighty movement of the times. The end of Princeton Seminary will, in some sort, mark the end of an epoch in the history of the modern Church and the beginning of a new era in which new evangelical agencies must be formed."

Dr. Machen wrote these words in 1927. In 1929 Westminster Theological Seminary was founded. In 1933 the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was organized on the same issue. In 1936 the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was established, and in 1937 the Bible Presbyterian Church was organized. I do not want to create the impression that this was just a Presbyterian problem. Similar "separatist" churches, mission boards, seminaries, colleges, publishing houses, and other agencies were being formed as a result of the same controversy in Baptist, Methodist, and other church circles. Time and space will not allow a full discussion of these. I must confine myself, for the most part, to the Princeton tradition.

It is my contention that the "separatism" and ecclesiology which was repudiated by Dr. Ockenga in 1948 is the movement which has remained faithful to whole Biblical inerrancy, while the movement away from the historic viewpoint has been most noticeable among those named neo-evangelicals. The book, The Battle For the Bible, is a source of documentation for this contention, even though it may not have been intended to be! The better "track record" is in favor of the movement Ockenga repudiates.

Ockenga stated that he was a student of Princeton Theological Seminary when Westminster Theological Seminary was organized, and he became a member of the student body of that new institution. Obviously, he did not continue in that persuasion. From that day in 1929 when the new seminary was organized, there has never been any question, as far as I know, as to their belief in the whole inerrancy of Scripture. When another "separatist" institution, Faith Theological Seminary, was founded in 1937, still another school held tenaciously to this doctrinal verity.

Under the brilliant leadership of Dr. Allan A. MacRae and others, men were trained in this great truth. Now the jacket of Lindell's book quotes Francis Schaeffer in favor of his position. He also cites Kenneth Kantzer at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and the position of Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary under the leadership of Vernon Grounds. All three of these men are graduates of this "separatist" seminary headed up by Allan A. MacRae. Again, as far as I know, men like Samuel Schultz at Wheaton; Elmer Smick at Gordon-Conwell, Sanderson Wallis, and Mare at Covenant; G. Douglas Young at the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem; and many, many others are not repudiating whole inerrancy. These also were trained in the same "separatist" seminary.

I am not ashamed of the separatist flag! As an independent evangelist I move in the circle of those whose separatism and ecclesiology have been repudiated. I am deeply impressed with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, with its more than 1,500 churches. How could one sit in the meetings of the Fellowship of Missions with its nearly 2,000 missionaries and not rejoice? What about the remarkable growth and world outreach of IFCA International? Can we ignore the amazing growth of
the New Tribes Mission or the phenomenal growth of the Awana Youth Association? An investigation into the so called "separatist" organizations, whether they are church groups, mission boards at home and abroad, schools or publishing houses, will reveal a vibrant growth holding to a strong view of Scripture.

May God give us grace and strength to stand firmly upon the truth of the whole inerrancy of the Scripture.
A small, but vocal, group of theologians are beginning to make their presence felt in American churches. Equipped with powerful arguments and an unyielding determination, they are taking their flawed, but ever so appealing, message to Bible-believing Christians. They are the reconstructionists, or as they are sometimes called, theonomists.

Reconstructionist theology has been set forth primarily in two books: *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* by Greg Bahnsen (Presbyterian and Reformed) and *The Institutes of Biblical Law* by Rousas J. Rushdoony (Presbyterian and Reformed). These two men, along with Rushdoony's son-in-law Gary North, have provided the leadership for the movement. Their chief voices are "The Chalcedon Report" and the "Journal of Christian Reconstruction."

The cornerstone of reconstructionist teaching is the Old Testament law. The Mosaic law is taught to be normative not only for the Christian's life but also for society at large. The Christian, therefore, should work for the establishment of the law as the all-encompassing principle of the earthly government. This would mean the establishment of the economic and legal system of the Mosaic law and would include such things as the death penalty for adultery and homosexuality.

A second feature of reconstructionist theology is a militant insistence upon a postmillennial eschatology. Reconstructionists denounce premillennialism as an eschatology of escape and amillennialism as an eschatology of defeat. They decry the "newspaper exegesis" that dismisses postmillennialism from serious discussion. For them the establishment of the reconstructed society, based on the Old Testament law, will precede Christ's return.

As one might expect, reconstructionist teaching is based on covenant theology, though most Reformed theologians would assign it to the lunatic fringe. Reconstructionist thought has naturally had the greatest impact within Reformed circles. While no denomination endorses the teaching, adherents can be found in virtually every conservative Presbyterian body. A number of individuals in charismatic and nondenominational circles have also been drawn to the movement. Undoubtedly reconstructionist theology will continue to grow as a movement because it has a certain appeal to it.

What is the lure of reconstructionist theology? What makes it so attractive to many bright young minds? A number of things combine to make the movement an alluring alternative to the traditional schools of thought. First, by all counts the leaders of the reconstructionist movement are godly, Bible-believing men. They are unwavering in their stand for an inerrant Bible. Second, the reconstructionist leaders are men of brilliance. As such they can be very persuasive. Their writings reflect not only a vast knowledge of biblical and theological topics but also a thorough understanding of subjects such as economics, philosophy, and education.

Third, reconstructionists are avid supporters of the Christian school movement. Many fundamentalists share this enthusiasm with them, but for the reconstructionists Christian schools are seen as a primary means of bringing about the reconstructed society that will usher in Christ's return.

Fourth, reconstructionists tend to be biblical creationists. At a time when the vast majority of Evangelicalism has surrendered to scientism to one degree or another, the reconstructionists reaffirm the biblical account of creation. In fact, North's book, *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Institute for Christian Economics) is dedicated to John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, authors of *The Genesis Flood*.

Another attractive feature of reconstructionist thought is its comprehensive world and life view. Since the basis of Reconstructionism is the Mosaic law, reconstructionist theology speaks to government, criminal justice, economics, education, and virtually every other area of life. This is perhaps the
strongest appeal of reconstructionist thought. People who are fed up with the prevailing conditions in our society find in the system a clear answer for all our ills.

While reconstructionist theology does pose a threat to our churches (as any false teaching does), it also has done us a great service by pointing out two glaring weaknesses in our teaching. First, we have failed to a large degree to accurately teach the distinctions between law and grace. Even some who call themselves dispensationalists in effect attempt to impose the law on the believer. Serious study and teaching need to be undertaken in this area. It is not enough to simply affirm the biblical teaching that believers are not under the law but under grace. We must teach it, live it, and allow others to live it.

A second failure of fundamentalism, as well as the broader evangelicalism has been the lack of an all-encompassing world and life view. We have been content to preach salvation and principles of Christian living but have often failed to apply biblical principles to various areas of life. Have we given thought to how Scripture applies to business, economics, education, recreation, and criminal justice? In short, have we been teaching the Lordship of Christ? If we are not serious about teaching the Bible and applying its teachings to all of life, Reconstructionism might prove an alluring alternative to many Christians.
The Challenges of Missions in a Changing World

Rev. Joel Mathai

The story has been told about the Aboriginals in Australia who, when introduced to the account in Genesis said, "If we were in the garden of Eden, you wouldn't have this mess today. We would've thrown away the fruit and eaten the snake." Perhaps not everyone looks at the world as a mess today, however pastors and missiologists will agree we live in challenging times.

It has been over 200 years since William Carey inaugurated what has come to be known as the modern era of missions. Since the days of the East India company, the world has undergone stupendous changes. Beginning with that first missionary station in Serampore, to more than 2000 mission agencies at work today, Christian missionaries have taken the "Good News" to the ends of the earth. But in reality, how have we done? As we consider this tremendous effort in the last two millennia, what is the current status of the fulfillment of the Great Commission? What are the challenges that face us today?

Jesus had said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He may send out laborers into His harvest." After 2000 years those words still reverberate with relevance today. When Jesus spoke those words, scholars estimate the world population was 250 million. Today there are over 6 billion people in the world. One out of four babies born in 1999 was Indian. In October 1999 India's population passed the 1 billion mark. Of the 6 billion people in the world, almost 4 billion are Asian. Mission Frontiers Web site, http://www.missionfrontiers.org/newslinks/statewe.htm, gives a current status of world evangelization and claims we are in the final era of missions. They state, "Biblical faith is growing and spreading to the ends of the earth as never before in history." They report that for the first time in history we can anticipate the completion of the missionary task, which is to establish an indigenous church-planting movement within the language and social structure of every people on earth. This is a rather optimistic analysis of the world which is still in tremendous need. I agree that much has been accomplished and that there are more born-again believers in the world today then ever before in the history of mankind. However, one must realize there are also more unsaved as well. There are still over 1000 people groups that have no Gospel witness and are classified as unreached (I prefer the term least-reached). The AD2000 Joshua project puts the number of such groups at 1739 with 579 people groups having no church-planting effort among them. The task is far from over.

However, this does not diminish what has already been accomplished. The world picture is positive in many ways and there are reasons to rejoice. Let me share a few examples. In 1983 there were only 50 believers in Kazakstan, today there are over 5000 believers. Albania, a country completely closed for over 40 years, economically ravished with practically no infrastructure, at one point with no known believers, today has more than 5000 believers; a current missionary on furlough reports there is a church in almost every major city in Albania. China has shown incredible responsiveness to the Gospel. Believers in mainland China are estimated to number in the tens of thousands, and the door is still open. In spite of overwhelming persecution in India, churches have been planted by missionaries in the very heart of Hindu territory; in one of the holiest of Hindu cities in north India, there is now a fellowship of 10 cell churches meeting in homes. Recently the largest evangelical church in the Middle East hosted an evangelistic crusade; an unprecedented 3,500 people attended, with hundreds more occupying the overflow space. When the call to trust Christ was given, more than 150 people responded. This is an amazing response, in a Muslim nation known to persecute Christians. Truly, these are reasons to praise God and give Him glory.

However, as we enter the third millennium, there are tremendous challenges that face us in missions in this rapidly changing world. In order to face these challenges mission agencies and the local Church will need to step out in faith and face the future with leaders who have a vision. Bert Nanus, in Visionary Leadership, tells us that leadership is a much more difficult matter these days than it once was. He alerts
us by saying, "The world is much more complex and confusing, continually reshaping and renewing itself, changing before our very own eyes in endless kaleidoscopic variations." (1) We live in a world that has gone through stupendous changes. John Naisbitt the world's leading trend forecaster says, "In the global context, the West is still important, but no longer dominant. The global axis of influence has shifted from West to East." (2) This has significant ramifications on the missions scene.

Yet the biblical mandate has not changed. In light of today's global changes, let us take another look at what Jesus meant when He said to make believers of all nations? Most people don't realize that the word "nations" (ethne) in this verse refers to ethno-linguistic people groups and not to countries with geographical borders, as it may appear to the casual reader. Just imagine how many countries have changed their boundaries since the Lord Jesus gave us the Great Commission. In fact, not only have nations changed their borders, scores of countries have been added to the world map since Jesus gave that mandate.

If we are to make disciples of every ethnic people group, we have tremendous challenges that face us in this millennium. 84% of the world is closed to missionaries. In many Islamic countries it is illegal to witness. How will we deal with these challenges? Obviously radio waves are an answer, but you really can't plant churches with radio alone. We believe tentmaking (a new paradigm in missions) is a more effective way to combat this challenge. However, this new paradigm in missions needs to be carefully examined. What use is it for a tentmaker to enter an Islamic nation, work 40 hours a week, be the best worker he can be, have a great testimony for 4 years (some have done it longer) and see no fruit? Think of it: after working at secular jobs, tentmakers come home tired each day. They have no time to learn the language or build relationships and no real opportunity to share the Gospel. Often in these situations, there is no church planting team, and no ministry accountability?

I suggest a different approach to tentmaking. Missionaries should use their acquired skill or training only as a means of entering a country and having a legitimate reason for residency, rather than getting involved in a time-consuming full-time job. This approach frees time for ministry. Yes, there are many ways to do tentmaking; one just needs to be creative. Biblically speaking, we note that the reasons for tentmaking in the Bible are very different than those today. Paul was not looking for a reason to be a covert missionary, his was not a problem of access to a country, he simply did not want anyone to point fingers at him for accepting money for preaching, and so he worked for his support. Today we have a very sophisticated system in place with mission agencies playing a key role. Support is not the issue but "closed countries" is. I believe Bible colleges and seminaries need to revamp their curriculum in missions, adding tentmaking-related courses to prepare for missions today. Since God has left the door cracked open in these so called "closed countries" we need to be creative in gaining access to these nations.

There are also challenges facing us within our own borders. The demographics of the landscape in America is changing every 24 hours as new immigrants continue to arrive from Asia. In the United States one person in ten is born outside the country. There are Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Buddhists in almost every major city. In my small city of Reading, Pennsylvania, there are 20 families from Afghanistan and an Islamic center. The lead article in the April 2000 issue of Christianity Today focused on Islam in America and asked the question, "Are Christians prepared for Muslims in the mainstream?" During this last decade the Muslim population in the United States has grown by 25%. It is the second largest religious group in the world with more than a billion members; some estimates put this number closer to 2 billion. Islam has a missionary mandate and the West is one of its final frontiers. Robert Douglas, former director of the Zwemer Institute of Muslim Studies, described a Muslim missionary conference several years ago at which one speaker expressed the need to target 75 million Americans for Islam. " . . . if it takes 500 years or a 1000 years, that's OK. We're here for the long haul," the speaker said. (3) The average church goer in America has no idea how to witness to a Hindu or a Muslim. Natun Bhattacharyya says that trying to understand the worldview of these groups is of utmost importance, because their perspective is different from ours. (4)
In addition to these challenges add the diminished enthusiasm among churches for evangelism and missions as cited by Dr. Alban in Voice, November-December 1999. He says, "If we are to rediscover the passion that motivated the American church to aggressively blaze missionary trails earlier this century, we must question not only what we do, but why we do it." Many churches across this land have canceled their Sunday evening services. How will that affect the missions program of the church? How many pastors are willing to give up time in their morning service to missionaries? Where will there be time for the missionary or the pastor to motivate and mobilize people into missions? Is missions in the local church reduced to a "missions moment" on Sunday morning?

Mission agencies struggle with the fact that only 10% of all the graduates of north American Bible colleges and Seminaries are willing to go to the neediest of places in Asia, like the 10/40 window. More than 90% minister to professing Christians. Will the task be completed in this decade?

These questions are all valid and the challenges are real but not insurmountable. Let us remind ourselves we are on the winning side. Rev. 5 describes the scene in heaven when there will be worshipers from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. So we have a glimpse at the end result. The world can change all it wants, our message does not change. Our efforts is what God wants and the Great Commission will be fulfilled, Praise God!


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The Challenge of Preserving Integrity in a Pragmatic World
By Rev. Robert W. Crummie

In my estimation, one of the greatest challenges facing the church today is to reject the pressure to reflect the culture we live in. We live in a pragmatic world that constantly cultivates in us an appetite for what is nice, and accepting rather than what is honest and true. This climate has thinned our skin and caused many of us not to do anything that would "offend" someone. We have become more concerned about what people say and think about us than what God says and thinks about us.

Unfortunately, and all too often, the result is doctrinal compromise. We have allowed our culture to make certain issues so dominant that we become pressured to pursue them at all costs, even downplaying doctrine. Two issues that many are sacrificing doctrinal integrity for are unity and opportunity. It looks good for everyone to come together. Unity is a wonderful thing. It is a nice thing. When more and more people get together, not only is unity accomplished but also opportunities are expanded. Yet if we come together and partner with churches or ministries that do not share our convictions on matters related to bibliology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, etc., it may look like a nice thing to do, but could lead to chaos and confusion. It could result in a situation that does more to reflect badly on God's glory than give Him glory.

Several years ago a local church initiated a partnership with a Bible college where it wanted to train several of its members who had been called to preach the gospel. The church was large and influential. In appearance, a partnership with the church could be fruitful for the college.

Beside the partnership being a nice thing to do, the college would gain more students and more resources - immediately and perhaps residually. It sounded like a great opportunity. It was not. The Bible college and the church had two totally different views when it came to ecclesiology. The Bible college rightly believed that the Scriptures taught that the role of the pastor was limited to men. The church however believed that both men and women could fill the role of the pastor. When the church sent the students who were to be trained as preachers, guess who showed up - men and women. The Bible college refused to train the women. The church got upset and pulled all of the students. No one got trained and the whole scenario did more damage than good, leaving bad feelings between the college and the church.

When we come together for the sake of cosmetics and acceptance, I wonder if we have really thought through such partnerships to their logical conclusion. Had the leader of the Bible college thought through the potential harm that could result from a partnership where two ministries have differences in doctrine, they could have avoided the collision of doctrinal differences to the benefit of the younger students and less mature members of the church. It did not look good for Christians to carry on that way. Yet we must realize that whenever we link up with ministries that do not share our convictions, the potential for doctrinal differences to divide is always lingering. Some doctrinal issues are more divisive than others.

When I was in seminary, I served with an urban ministry and we linked up with some other ministries to reach some kids in a housing project. I was sharing the gospel with a group of young men when one of them indicated he trusted Christ as his Savior. One of the men from one of the partnering ministries demanded that the young man be baptized right there and right now. Obviously we differed in our soteriology. As he argued his case, and as I responded, it became a nightmare, confusing all of the young men, including the new convert, and leaving them not wanting to be bothered with either of us. But it looked nice for us to come together. We compromised what we believed by linking up with that ministry in the first place.
Another area of ministry where I see potential for compromise is missions. Some mission agencies do not have centralized funding. Since the life of their ministries are largely dependent upon free will gifts, the pressure for doctrinal compromise and pressure to not "offend" anyone is amplified.

I know of a mission agency that serves as a catalyst for a number of missionaries who serve with a variety of agencies representing a variety of doctrinal beliefs. Their platform is built around the need to come together and support one another and stop competing against each other. They believe the most important thing is getting people saved and if we can all just agree on that one issue, we can work together and have greater opportunities and a greater impact. This sounds wonderful on the surface, but if there are doctrinal differences, and there are, we will acknowledge them now or later, whether in their present context or on the field.

Even though it is popular and nice to be unified, the challenge is for us to preserve doctrinal integrity. Peter said it best when he said, "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29) We must not compromise what we believe to be true according to Scripture for the sake of unity or opportunity. There are a lot of nice movements that are bringing Christians together with varying theological convictions. You cannot partner with someone who has differing theological views and then say you are not endorsing their views. If you partner with them, you communicate to those looking on and to those whom you are reaching, that you embrace each other's doctrine.

As a pastor and as a Bible college president, I face this pressure often. For example, if I invite someone to preach at Mt. Calvary (where I am pastor) who believes that baptism is a precondition to salvation, it will send a message to our congregation that I agree with his position. Now I can get the congregation excited about the fact that we have brought our congregations together. Yet as soon as we evangelize together, conflict will arise. Eventually doctrinal differences will surface.

At Carver Bible College, if we partner with a ministry or another college whose doctrine is different from ours, we run several risks. First, we set the stage for chaos and confusion. Can you imagine having a visiting professor on campus trying to teach a view of soteriology that is different from the college? Or what about inviting a woman pastor to preach in chapel? Though it would look nice, and some on the outside may get excited about the "unity," heated debates would surface internally. Once we begin to appease onlookers and partner with ministries or individuals whose doctrine differs, we begin to loosen our own theological convictions. Many people who have already gotten into such partnerships do not like to discuss doctrinal issues. They do not wish to discuss such issues because they know where the discussion will lead - chaos and confusion. Then we must honestly ask ourselves, do these attempts at unity and opportunity result in true unity. How can there be unity when we are hesitant and uncomfortable discussing things that we hold dear, because we know they will cause division?

Though the pressure is on, we must not give in. Let us not be so nearsighted that we do not evaluate the eventual results some partnerships bring. It may be better for some of our ministries to love each other at a distance, while pursuing distinct goals and objectives rather than partnering.

Though a native of Washington, D.C., Rev. Robert Crummie moved to Atlanta after graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1996, where he was president of the class. He began as Vice President of Carver Bible College and on May 5, 2000 he was asked to serve the college as President. His heart for ministry is to see Carver becoming one of the nation's premier Bible Colleges where Christians from anywhere are trained to transform the world for Christ everywhere.
The Challenge of Maintaining a Christian Testimony in this Culture
Dr. Les Ollila

Postmodernism is like a rising tide, blurring the character lines that were once clearly imprinted in our culture. Objective knowledge is unaccepted, the absolute is rejected, and the authority of God's Word is laughed off as foolishness. As a result, this generation is left adrift without an anchor.

This generation is strikingly similar to how Paul described the culture of his day in Romans 1. In this chapter Paul describes the downward spiral of a decaying nation. The people eliminated God, deified man, and justified sin. They eliminated God from their thinking by becoming vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. Next, they deified man. The creature was served and worshiped more than the Creator. Does this sound familiar? Then, instead of responding to the conviction and correction of God, they justified sin. Like the culture in Paul's day, things that were once considered perverse and unacceptable are now defended, and any proclamation of God's Word is rejected as narrow, ignorant, and bigoted.

How did we decline to this decayed state in a nation that was founded on godly principles? In his book, The Battle for a Generation, Ron Hutchcraft points out that in the decades following World War II, our society suffered some losses that molded the character of our nation. He indicates that from 1950 to the present, the youth of each decade suffered a loss of innocence (50's), authority (60's), love (70's) and hope (80's). (1) The collected loss of each decade and their generation has ripped our culture apart and put its people out of control. The effects are highly visible on every side.

During the 50's, the youth were stripped of innocence. Two major factors contributing to this loss were television and rock music. Rock music's influence through its lyrics and style had a marked affect not only on the youth of that day, but also on the mentality of the generation that followed. In the 60's, promoted by its music and drug culture, our youth suffered a loss of authority. For example, on June 25, 1962, in the case of Engel vs. Vitale, the United States Supreme Court took the first step toward removing God's authority and influence from public life. As a result, prayer and Bible reading became taboo. One year later, on June 17, 1963, in the O'Hare/Curlett case, Bible reading and the quoting of the Lord's Prayer were outlawed from public schools. With this decision, the reference point of truth and authority was removed from the public sector. Demonstrations against all forms of authority became the rule, rather than the exception. Respect for all forms of authority was lessened. Many colleges were taken over by their students, and administrators found themselves on the outside looking in. Self-autonomy became the rule.

In his book Slouching Toward Gomorrah, Robert Bork names "radical individualism" as one of the destructive philosophies of our day. (2) The 70's brought a greater emphasis on mothers working outside of the home--either to survive financially or to earn more money so the "American Dream" could become a reality for their families. The consequence of parental absence was the rise of "Latch Key Children," who went home to empty houses and experienced a loss of love and intrinsic value.

When we examine the last two decades leading up to the feared Y2K, we find evidence of a loss of hope. We have entered a century of postmodernity, a no-hope philosophy. God has been rejected, and science is no longer the source of hope. Consequently, we can best describe this generation as one that has been stripped of all hope. The byword of this postmodern youth culture is "Whatever!" That one word reflects the lack of an anchor in this drifting culture.

The challenge the Christian community faces today is to maintain a Christian culture in a world system that is bent on undermining the very foundation upon which our faith is built. Christians are the salt of
the earth and the light of the world. These metaphors communicate that the believer's presence in the world cannot be neutral. Salt prevents corruption while adding savor, and light which expose false philosophies while revealing God's truth.

God's people must be insulated from destructive philosophies but not isolated from people if they hope to maintain a Christian culture. In John 17:23-26, Jesus gives us a picture of the believer's relationship to the world. He refers to believers as those He has "taken out of the world" (a reference to their purging from sin). Yet He says that they are "in the world," a clear indication that they are still present. He then says they are "not of the world," which shows that God's children must be separated from worldly ways. First John 2:15-17 states that God's people are sent into the world to fulfill the Great Commission.

Local church leaders and congregations need to seriously evaluate the mission and program of the Church--to evaluate whether the Church is having a positive influence on fathers, who instruct their families in God's truth. Many families, which God intended to be the foundational structure of our culture, have traded God's truth for the philosophy and pleasure of this world. Fathers must realize their eternal accountability as communicators of God's truth. Without this commitment, church leaders and the family structure will cave in under the onslaught of a postmodern philosophy.

The *Mind Game Survival Course Manual*, produced by Probe Ministries, is an excellent presentation for teaching Christian high schoolers and college students how to understand, defend, and live out a Christian world view in the midst of an anti-God culture. The manual gives three keys to survival in a postmodern culture: think biblically, communicate effectively, and learn continually. (3)

First, we must think biblically. Thinking biblically requires us to develop a biblical net for filtering through all of life's responsibilities and issues. It is absolutely essential to maintain a biblical paradigm for all decisions and philosophies we encounter. We find it necessary and comforting to put both decisions and philosophies that we must confront through a biblical model. This framework must include how God has worked in the past and the truths from His Word. The ministry offers potential pitfalls that can turn the believer's mind to pragmatic thinking. By careful examination, one discovers that some things are logical but not necessarily theological. Christians must be convinced beyond all doubt of the sufficiency of Christ and the adequacy of God's Word (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

True biblical thinking also focuses on the worship of God. Worship flows out of the heart of one who is filled with the knowledge of God. One aid in worship is to build a personal biography of God. This practice entails reading the Bible, finding descriptions of God's character, and recording one's findings. A verse like Psalm 62:2 would be particularly effective: "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved." Once a list of God's characteristics is listed, one may use it during prayer to adore God and to express gratitude to God for who He is.

Biblical thinking also requires studying the works of God. The children of Israel did not apostatize and become a part of the ungodly nations because they forgot His words, but because they forgot His works (see Judges 2 and Psalm 78). The "second generation syndrome" is a result of parents not communicating the works of God to their children. Each Monday during chapel at Northland Baptist Bible College, we set aside 10 minutes for "Works of God" testimonies. During this special time, students have the opportunity to report how God is alive in this generation. Jehovah Jireh is frequently mentioned when God provides needs. How we need Him in an age that knows only Jehovah "Visa"!

Another way to maintain a Christian culture is to communicate effectively. Communicating effectively requires the child of God to develop proper skills and a keen knowledge to articulate and defend the Christian faith. We must provide believers with a precise Christian apologetic that equips both parents and youth with answers as to why they believe what they believe. First Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer [apologetic] to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
One glaring weakness of the average Christian is a lack of critical thinking. The critical thinker goes beyond rote answers to a biblically based response that comes out of firm conviction. Dissatisfied with brief devotional thoughts, he gets into serious study of God's Word and God's character. The critical thinker gathers all the facts, considers all the probabilities, weighs them against the Word of God, and reaches a conclusion. Just as an effective communicator should have more than a casual knowledge of his subject Christian in this postmodern culture should have more than a casual knowledge of God and His Word.

Finally, to maintain a Christian culture, God's people must be committed to spirit-filled living and develop a hunger and thirst to learn. There is no place for stagnation and spiritual lethargy in the life of a Christian who wants to be salt and light in this culture.

We must overcome the problem of a world system that focuses so much on materialism that Christians are tempted to live with a mentality that says, "I do not want to be disturbed." Tragically, the demands of discipleship are often perceived as fanaticism or legalistic nonsense. Rather than setting a godly pattern and having the courage to advance the cause, some are being drawn into the mentality and lifestyle of those who need to see that Christians are different.

We need to issue a clear call for Christians to stand alone if necessary and to be leaders and students of our culture. Knowledgeable Christians will gain God's wisdom as they show God mighty in this generation and demonstrate God's perfect love to a hopeless world.

To gain needed wisdom, Christians must begin their day with God through daily Bible reading and meditation. God's precious truth is just as applicable in this godless era as it has been during other times in history. Believers who hold firmly to the absolute truth will be perceived just as oddly as those who defended God's truth in other ages. Consider how Noah, Daniel, Joseph, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego turned their culture from anti-god to an awe of God.

I encourage myself by reading about the heroes in Hebrews 11. They loved God, and they were committed to His Word. Though the world considered them to be nonprofessional, unapproved and not credible, they remained unmoved in their passion to prove God faithful in the midst of a faithless culture. We have a great challenge ahead of us, but we worship and serve a great God who delights to show Himself mighty.

Endnotes

The Reality of Persecution
Dr. Alexander Firisiuk

The request to share my thoughts in the well-known Christian magazine "Voice" coincided with a special spiritual experience in my life. On January 23, 2000 God gave me the special opportunity to participate in a joyful service in Belarus. That day we dedicated a church building in Antopol village in the Brest region. The church was located about 7 miles from the village where I was born. The church building was a typical remodeled house, in which one room became a sanctuary and another one a Sunday school classroom. The pastor of this church, my dad's friend, Yachnik Pavel, just turned 90 in January. He opened the service in the overcrowded church with a great sermon. He reminded the listeners about the joy of having faith in Jesus Christ and shared his own lifetime Christian journey.

In 1951 Yachnik was arrested because among those that he had baptized were two 17-year-old girls. Under Soviet law, a person could only be baptized after he turned 18. When a judge was pronouncing the sentence on Pavel, he pointed out that for the seduction of two 17-year-old girls he deserved capital punishment, but the world's most humane Soviet government gave him only 25 years of prison for correction. His wife and little children were sent into exile in Kazakhstan.

After Stalin's death in 1955, he was released from prison and moved to Antopol where he started a new underground church. They met for 45 years in his home at the edge of the village. For decades the government officials refused to register the church; therefore believers were meeting illegally. In September of 1964, Pavel baptized me in the deep, dark night, so there would be no other witnesses. Back then most of the young people were baptized in the same way.

After the arrest of Yachnik Pavel the church elected my father to be its pastor. Our church building was destroyed and the believers were forced to gather in a little house of a Christian lady in the out-of-the-way, desolate village of Sovpli. Just before I graduated from high school in 1955, the school's principal sent for my dad, and with very offensive words criticized my father for raising all seven of his children in the Baptist faith. He accused him of depriving them of their future. The principal was trying to convince my father that Christians don't have any future. He told my father: "Soon the last old woman will quit going to church (if you will not go to prison before that just like Yachnik Pavel) and all Christians will die out like dinosaurs. Only communism has a future." Interestingly, in 1982 at the Minsk school, where my oldest daughter went, almost with the same words teachers tried to convince us, that "Christians don't have any future and it is not right to raise children in the Christian faith and deprive them of their future."

But even in this case God laughed at the enemies of church. Psalm 2:4 "He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them." The school building, where the principal was telling my father that all Baptists will die soon, decayed. And, in 1997, on that very place we built a church, which has in attendance adults and about 70 children. There is always hope in Jesus Christ and Christ's church always has a future, because it is built by God and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

I was asked to comment in this article on a Christian's response to suffering and persecution. As far as suffering and persecution of Christians are concerned, this should be understood to be a normal condition of Christ's church. "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you,'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20).

On April 14 of this year, the Belorussian newspaper "Republic" published an interview with me. One of the questions was on a new law about religion, in which only Orthodox and Catholic churches were called traditional, therefore the rest of the Christian churches were limited in rights. I told the journalist,
that the Evangelical Christian Baptist church is a traditional church also for we were and are traditionally persecuted according to the Gospel. I pointed out that they persecuted our predecessors, our grandparents, our parents and they are persecuting us. They will also persecute our children and grandchildren.

The 140 years of history of Evangelical churches in Belarus and the former USSR has shown that persecution of Christians just strengthens the spirit of the church. In this way only true disciples of Jesus Christ remain in church. Persecution is a normal condition of the church because "...indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). To be in the position of persecution is a position of bliss and not sorrow. "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12). Believers should be deeply concerned when no one is persecuting or slandering us for Christ. When ministers from the States ask me: "How would you explain the miracle of survival of the church during the years of persecution?", I answer them with another question: "How would you explain the miracle of church's surviving in the atmosphere of freedom and prosperity? It is harder for Christians to survive in your country."

I would like to encourage all the Christians of American churches with the same words we use to encourage ministers of Belarussian churches: Stand in faith in God, in faithfulness to God's Word and He will win for you. Remember the words written in Joshua 1:8-9, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Today it is harder to remain faithful to the Lord than it was in times of the first church or for that matter than it was for Christians of my generation. Never in the 2000 years of the history of Christianity was there such a massive attack on the Bible, Christian values, churches that stay faithful to the Christ and young people who live according to the moral principles of Ten Commandments and the Gospel. Earlier, people were called to repentance when they had sinned but today they are being encouraged to laugh at sins. Today the world makes superheroes out of sinners. People make them objects of entertainment and humorous shows. The media, newspapers, books, movies, TV and the Internet present the sinful lifestyle as normal and attractive. In such an atmosphere it is especially important for believers to stand in truth and to remain the light of the world and the salt of the earth. "In speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe" (I Tim. 4:12). Christians must never be afraid to be in the minority. Martin Luther once said that "one person plus God is always a majority." A light bulb does not take all the space in a room, but it can light the entire room. Salt is always the smallest portion of the food, but it salts the entire amount.

I often encourage our Belarus ministers with the following words: "Brothers, do not be afraid of struggles and difficulties of life. For true Christians only the first 100 years are the hardest. For unbelievers the first 100 years are even harder, because they don't have the joy of salvation, the joy of love, the happiness of holy life and ahead of them is only the grief of God's judgment and hell".

The future of the persecuted in Belarus, in the United States and in other countries of the world is a future of victory, joy and love. I trust that I will see you at the Parade of Victory in Heaven's Kingdom!

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The Incursion of Reformed Theology

Rev. Chris Bauer

I recently received some information from a church in the east inviting me to Chicago to attend a national formation meeting for a new fellowship of churches called F.I.R.E. That is an acronym for the Fellowship of Independent Reformed Evangelicals. In their vision statement they write, "... we seek to promote unity and co-operation among Calvinistic Baptists." There appears to be resurgence in Evangelicalism of Reformed Theology. Actually, it may be more accurate to say that there has been an incursion into dispensational circles.

Proponents of covenant theology have existed for many years. But for various reasons they now seem to be making inroads into the dispensational neighborhood. I am not a professional theologian. But I am an Elder/Pastor-Teacher who has been given the mandate to "Be on guard" for myself and for all of my flock (Acts 20:28). It is important to keep one's ear to the ground theologically as an overseer. The Apostle Paul wrote to Titus that overseers must hold fast "the faithful word in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able to both exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:7a, 9 NASB). I hear many things as I read various books and periodicals, listen to tapes and Christian radio, watch Christian television, am solicited to attend different conferences, and watch video taped seminars. There is clearly a movement a foot that requires our undivided attention.

My intent is not to assail the character of any proponent of Reformed Theology. Many of them have made some very significant contributions to the Church through their publications and tapes. Who hasn't been blessed by R.C. Sproul's erudite writings on a variety of subjects? Another, John Armstrong has written an excellent book on the subject of restoring fallen leaders. They have given great insight on worship issues and various theological trends of today. One of the greatest contributions they have made recently has been their input on the discussion clarifying the Gospel and salvation. This grew out of the "Evangelical and Catholics Together" document and it's successors (i.e. "The Gift of Salvation"; and "The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration"). Men like D. James Kennedy, R.C.Sproul, Michael Horton, John Armstrong, and many others have helped the church defend and biblically define the Gospel. We must not view them as outside the "house hold of faith". They are genuine committed Christians with whom we differ theologically on some key points.

Due to the limited space in an article of this nature this is not an exhaustive treatment of the subject. For further personal study I would direct you to the books, "The Death Christ Died," Robert Lightner; "There Really Is A Difference," Renald Showers; "Grace Unknown," R.C. Sproul; and the "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology," edited by Walter Elwell. I will limit our discussion to the differences between these two opposing theological perspectives (i.e. covenant and dispensational theology), some suggested reasons for the incursion of reformed theology into dispensational circles and illustrations of some critical areas of concern.

As we begin it will be helpful to define a few important terms that will be used throughout our discussion. The terms "covenant" and "reformed" will be used synonymously to describe a theological perspective. Sproul calls "Covenant Theology" a nickname for "Reformed Theology". The term "dispensational" will be used to refer to a contrasting doctrinal view. For our purposes we will define covenant or reformed theology as "a system of theology which attempts to develop the Bible's philosophy of history on the basis of two or three covenants" (Renald Showers, There Really Is A Difference, pg. 7). Covenant theology views the association of God to humanity as a compact, which God established to mirror the relationship existing between the three persons of the Godhead. This compact takes the form of two or three covenants, depending upon your view. They are the "Covenant of Works" and the "Covenant of Grace". Some see this latter pact springing from what they call the "Covenant of Redemption". The term "Reformed" is used to distinguish the Calvinistic from the Lutheran and Anabaptist traditions. We could summarize the Calvinistic doctrinal view by the acronym
T.U.L.I.P. (i.e. Total depravity of man, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints). Dispensational theology will be defined as "a system of theology which attempts to develop the Bible's philosophy of history on the basis of the sovereign rule of God" (Renald Showers, There Really Is A Difference, pg. 27). Those who take a dispensational view would see God administering His rule over man in a particular way as He progressively works out His purpose for world history (Showers, pg. 30).

Why has there been an incursion into dispensational circles by Reform Theology? From personal observation and input from others let me share a few thoughts. The incredible proliferation of information, via the media, has given the people in our churches a plethora of data to ingest. The Internet, videotapes, audiotapes, television, Christian radio, and the print media have all made this information readily accessible to the people in the pew, as well as the pastor in the pulpit. The upside of this is that we have increased the churches instructional resources with many gifted teachers. The downside is that it increases our exposure to things that are theologically misguided or at best confusing. All of this information and its easy access tremendously influence the church. I believe the Bible says of man, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is." (Proverbs 23:7 NASB). A caution needs to be sounded to those lured by a fascination with all of this information.

Another observation is that there is an intellectual appeal of covenant theology, especially as it relates to attempting to understand some of the theological mysteries of the Scriptures (i.e. election, predestination, sovereignty and free will, etc.). It seems to offer explanations for theological truths that many find hard to fully comprehend and explain. It appears to "explain God" and His person and work. This I believe appeals to the pride of man. Yet the Bible tells us, " 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are my ways your ways,' declares the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.' " (Isaiah 55:8,9 NASB). Some may see too simplistic an explanation in dispensational theology. Thus the appeal of this reform perspective in a world enamored with scholastics. We should seek to know all that we can about our God (Jer. 29:13; Deut. 29:29) and even pursue that knowledge scholarly, but not at the expense of corrupting the text of scripture (2 Timothy 2:15).

I believe another reason many have given an ear to the covenant perspective is the weak view of grace seen so prevalently in evangelical circles today. "Cheap grace," as it sometimes is called, has caused an over reaction on the part of some. They have come to see the position of the covenant theologian as a higher or more superior view of grace. But, many who have been drawn by this attraction have also found other dimensions of this perspective appealing and therein lies the danger.

We close our article with a quick overview of some of the more critical concerns with Reform Theology. I will illustrate with two salient ones. The most significant issue, in my opinion, is the third tenet of the acronym T.U.L.I.P. Limited atonement is the view that Jesus Christ died only for the elect. This is contrary to many passages in the scriptures (i.e. John 3:16; 1 Timothy. 2:4,6; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2 to name a few). Additionally, it goes against John Calvin's own writings. He wrote, "He [Paul] says that this redemption was procured by the blood of Christ, for by the sacrifice of His death all the sins of the world have been expiated" (My emphasis) (Institutes 3.1.1, comments on Colossians 1:15). It is better to understand Christ's atonement as "sufficient for all but only efficient for the elect". An extreme and confusing by-product of this position is illustrated by a Jay Adam's quote in his book, Competent to Counsel. He writes, "As a reformed Christian, the writer believes that counselors must not tell any unsaved counselee that Christ died for him, for they cannot say that. No man knows except Christ Himself who are His elect for whom He died" (page 70). So we are left to try and determine what Peter meant when he said, "The Lord … is patient toward you, not wishing any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9 NASB).

A second issue deals with their hermeneutic (Their method of interpreting the Bible). It is clear that they use the historical, grammatical, and literal method of interpreting the scriptures when it comes to their
conclusions on soteriological issues (The doctrine of salvation). Yet they seem to abandon it when they address other doctrines such as eschatology (The doctrine of future things). For instance, they believe there is no literal millennial kingdom for the nation of Israel. They revert to the spiritualizing of passages that deal clearly with kingdom promises (i.e. Romans 11; Revelation 20:1-6). They must resort to an over dependence on an allegorical hermeneutic, leaving unexplained the promises God made to the Jews. This also leads to other confusion such as their melding of the church and Israel into one entity. When clearly the church is a distinct organism from Israel the nation (Romans 11; Ephesians 3:1-7). There are a number of other important issues that could be discussed (i.e. infant baptism, their inordinate use of logic to defend their positions, reliance on church tradition, etc.). But space does not permit us to go further.

The author of Hebrews describes spiritual leaders as those who "keep watch" over the souls of the church (Hebrews 13:17). It is imperative that we who are leaders fulfill that responsibility by keeping our ear to the ground doctrinally, and by guiding our folds carefully through the theological mine fields that lie before them.

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Cooperate, Compromise or Conform?
Dr. Timothy C. Tatum

At Tufts University in Massachusetts, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship has been "stripped of its right to be recognized as a campus student organization and deprived of its share of student fees because it believes homosexual practice is against God's will."[1] Similar debates are taking place on other college campuses. Have we come to the place where Christian organizations operating off of the church grounds must compromise their beliefs and conform to the latest thinking of those who would remake God in their own image? The debate is raging throughout the United States, and the world, and its outcome will change the way the church is seen by Christians and non-Christians alike.

It has always been a difficult challenge for those called to a Parachurch ministry. In order to have a forum for ministry, a certain amount of cooperation was required. A conservative, evangelical military chaplain must cooperate with men and women from other faith groups if he has any hope of remaining a chaplain. Chaplains share offices, secretaries, finances, sanctuaries, and sometimes the same pulpit. They all work for the same general. The senior chaplain might be a Catholic priest or a Mormon. Failure to cooperate within this type of environment will lead to a quick end to a fruitful ministry. Similar experiences are faced by prison chaplains, hospital chaplains, police chaplains, and campus pastors. It is a challenge seldom faced by the local pastor. The local pastor rarely finds himself in a situation where he must cooperate with the Catholic church down the street if he wants his own church to prosper. The military has brought together a large number of faith groups and allowed them to work in harmony by upholding a very old motto, "Cooperation without compromise." Cooperation, without compromising biblical principles, has opened many doors to the Gospel.

A dramatic change took place shortly after President Clinton took office. Cooperation was not sufficient. A certain amount of conformity and compromise was the new motto. This was driven home to me in a dramatic way when I was working in the Pentagon as an Army chaplain. I was only a few years away from ending a thirty year career and ministry. Congress was in the middle of debating the "don't ask - don't tell" policy concerning homosexuals in the military. This was the first time that homosexuals had been given a world-wide stage to push their new agenda. Because of my frequent visits to the hill to represent the military on other issues, I was asked to testify before a congressional sub-committee. I was the only active duty Army officer to appear before that particular group of congressmen. The morning I arrived to give my testimony I was greeted by an Army liaison officer with these words, "Chaplain, I am surprised to see you here this morning after what happened last night. I was sure the Pentagon would pull you out of these hearings." I had no idea what he was talking about. He explained that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, got into a debate with the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, concerning my testimony. The Secretary was not comfortable with my appearance on the hill and was ready to stop my testimony. General Powell argued that I should be given considerable leeway as a chaplain and be allowed to share my views. General Powell won the day, although I was instructed once again that my statements were my own and did not represent the official position of the Army. Just two days prior the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army had said to me, "Chaplain, I am glad you are going to the hill to testify but you realize that this might keep you from making general officer."

The price I paid for giving what I thought to be sound, biblical guidance on homosexuality and its place in the military was small. I don't believe it was the Lord's plan to make me into a general officer even if I had remained on the sidelines. I was allowed to finish my career and enjoined several more years of military ministry. The price for others in the future is going to be much higher. The homosexual activists got their day in front of the national camera. The playing field is no longer level. The ability to preach the Gospel through cooperation in the marketplace is losing out to the demands to compromise and conform. Those failing to conform are labeled as bigots, homophobes, uncaring, unloving, and in some circles even unbiblical.
Parachurch organizations ministering outside of the church will be the first to feel the pressure. They are already. It is not surprising that the college campus was chosen as a major battlefield by the homosexual community. It is there that they have an abundance of allies. What is more surprising is that they have taken on the military. Our chaplains still have the liberty to preach the gospel from their pulpits, including the message that practicing homosexuality is a sin. But they are coming under increasing pressure. Military chaplains must choose their words carefully when they are not standing behind the pulpit. Failure to do so can end a promising career.

Maybe the local pastor should not feel too secure behind his church walls. It does not take a prophet to predict that there will be increasing pressure for all organizations, including religious institutions, to adopt a policy of non-discrimination based on sexual preference. How long will we be able to screen people as to their personal lifestyle prior to hiring them as a secretary, janitor, organist or administrator? These will be the first positions to come under fire because the job descriptions do not require the teaching of theology. It was not that long ago that a conservative, Presbyterian church was sued for failing to hire a homosexual organist. The city of San Francisco has adopted a law that no organization can do business with the city unless they practice and proclaim a policy of non-discrimination based on sexual preference. The churches in that city must be wondering if they are next.

If there was ever a time for the church and its pastors to stand up and be counted it is now. Sound, biblical preaching concerning the issues will help but it won't be sufficient. We must prepare our congregations to stand up in the marketplace and declare righteousness. Even now many in our congregations feel like they are walking on eggs when they are at the office. Retreats, adult Sunday school classes, Sunday evening training, and Bible studies all present opportunities for this special kind of training. As pastors we need to:

1. Acquaint our people with the issues.
2. Call on an expert with credibility to address their questions.
3. Instruct them in the biblical principles that speak to those issues.
4. Suggest when and how to address the issues biblically and with a loving attitude.
5. Support their efforts with prayer.
6. Prepare them to suffer persecution.

If the church does not take the lead, where will our people learn how to be "salt?" Church history has taught us that the church often flourishes under persecution. We may get our chance to flourish once again.


**Editor's Note:** Since this article was submitted Tufts University has reversed its earlier decision and has allowed Intervarsity Christian Fellowship back on Campus.

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Facing the Future
Dr. Richard I. Gregory

This issue of Voice has attempted to explore some of the important issues that the church faced during the last thirty years. Dr. Jack Murray's article on Dr. Lindsell's book "Battle for the Bible" focused attention on one of the issues of the 1970's. Rev. Jarl Waggoner's article from the 1987 July-August issue of Voice on "The Lure of Reconstructionist Theology" spoke to one of the influences that enamored proponents of both the Christian School Movement and the emergence of the religious right as a political force. The 1990's saw the publishing of Rev. Marvin Rosenthal's book the "Pre Wrath Rapture of the Church." Dr. Paul Karleen wrote an article for the January-February 1991 issue of the Voice on "Evaluating the Pre Wrath Rapture of the Church" that provided an analysis of the book and the controversy surrounding it. We have reprinted these articles in this issue of Voice.

The issue also contains three articles addressing the challenges being faced by the church today. Rev. Joel Mathai, of Christar speaks to "The Challenge of Missions in our World," Rev. Robert Crummie of Carver Bible College and Institute writes on "The Challenge of Preserving our Doctrinal Integrity" and Dr. Les Ollila, President of Northland Baptist College, tackles "The Challenge of Maintaining a Christian Culture in a Godless Society."

The question I ask myself concerning the challenges that the church is going to have to face tomorrow addresses "Is the church discerning enough to foresee the results of the seeds being sown in the church today, or do Christians even care?" We have decided to include three articles that illustrate the challenges that the church is destine to face.

While I was in Belarus last fall I had a conversation with Dr. Alexander Firisiuk about his boyhood and the days under the communist regime. He shared with me some of his experiences and insights about living as a believer under constant surveillance and persecution. I asked him to write an article for this issue of the Voice on "The Reality of Persecution." The atmosphere in America today with respect to genuine believers should cause us to understand that persecution is not only a possibility but should be an expectation.

Rev. Tim Tatum served as for many years as an IFCA International army chaplain. While he was serving in the Chief of Chaplains office he was requested to represent the army chaplains at a meeting discussing Gays in the Military. Attempts were made to disqualify him because of his biblical views although the army brass supported his appearance. Tim in his article "Pluralism: Tolerance or Affirmation" cites the circumstance faced by InterVarsity on the campus of Tufts University that represented the gagging of biblical viewpoints. Although the decision to expel InterVarsity from campus was reversed, it illustrates the attempt to "punish" those that are unwilling to affirm all others as equally correct. Recently Charles Colson in his daily column quoted John Summerville from his book "The News Makes us Dumb." He pointed out that "Those in the news business tend to be far less religious than most Americans; and they're distrustful of a culture built on the Judeo-Christian narrative. These elites think it's their job to make us aware of the cultural restraints on our thinking.. That's why they sponsor a continuous referendum on our cultural inheritance." It is no longer enough to be tolerant of the views of others, to be politically correct one must affirm that all views are equally valid and correct. The church is going to face this dilemma in days to come as she attempts to bring biblical truth to bear upon issues of societal life. The new hate crime legislation being considered in many states will complicate the attempt of biblicists to speak to these issues.

Lastly, there is another issue that is being faced by those committed to a dispensational hermeneutic. The intellectualism and popular appeal of such men as RC Sproul, the late James Montgomery Boice, John Armstrong and Michael Horton has enamored many young pastors. This has caused them to question not only the dispensational hermeneutic but many of the doctrines that accompany it such as
the distinction between Israel and the church as well as the importance of eschatology. We have asked Chris Bauer, pastor of Santa Rosa Bible Church to write an article addressing "The Incursion of Reformed Theology" into the ranks of our young pastors. We believe that the resurgence of Reformed Theology is an issue many of our churches are going to face in days to come as young pastors, not properly grounded in a literal approach to interpreting Scripture, will be adopting views contrary to their church's doctrinal statements. Unless these pastors have the integrity to resign because they are out of harmony with the church's doctrine great trauma will result and many churches will be divided over the importance of doctrinal agreement.
I think that you may have heard about the accident that occurred on the flight deck of ENTERPRISE on the night of 14 April. Late in the evening of the 14th an E2 landed on the flight deck, a propeller aircraft, which was the last aircraft to be trapped. Apparently as the plane was being moved from the landing area to be "spotted" for the night, it blew a tire. The procedure when that happens is for one of the flight deck crew to "chock" the wheels of the aircraft.

One of the "blue shirts," Airman Maki, an experienced crew member, did that and for some reason turned to walk toward the forward landing gear. At that point, he was struck in the head by the propeller. The medical department worked heroically to save his life, but at 0100 on the 15th, he died. I and the other chaplains were moving throughout the ship speaking with many that worked with him, and knew him.

I went to many small groups of Sailors who were shocked by the news, I spoke with them (use some of the CISD training), read scripture, and prayed with them. Not one individual refused to pray with me. We did this until 0430 and then I told my people they needed to get some sleep.

At 0430 the Captain called me to his cabin to read over the letter he would send to his father. We discussed the letter briefly talked about the memorial service and then I prayed with the Captain and eventually got some sleep myself.

At 0600 we were up and dealing with the issues of this accident again. The CO decided not to resume flight operations until the afternoon. He read a statement to the entire crew over the intercom and let them know that we were going to have to continue to operate.

At 1500 I and the other chaplains were up with the flight deck crew prior to flight ops. The Air Boss (he's in charge of all the flight operations) spoke to me about having a prayer with all the flight deck crew prior to resuming flight ops. So, at 1515 the FOD [foreign object damage] walk-down began and when they reached the waist of the ship the Air Boss stopped them, talked with them about the necessity of resuming operations and their need to keep alert and then asked me to pray. So, over the intercom on the flight deck I prayed for the crew that afternoon.

The next day, Palm Sunday, the attendance was up in the services (not sure if due to Palm Sunday, Flight deck accident or what) but it was an opportunity to share the gospel. We planned to have the memorial service on Monday, the next day at 1000. Sunday afternoon, they flew the body off and the flight deck crew lined up and formed a corridor for the body to be carried from the weapons elevator to the aircraft. One of the chaplains preceded the body to the aircraft.

At 1000 on Monday we held a memorial service in the hangar bay. We only had 120 folding chairs up, but when the service started there were approximately 1000 crewmembers present (1/3 of the crew). The CO gave a great talk and I followed with a meditation. Basically, I told them that it was at times like this that we are most sensitive to the issue of life and death and that there were lesson we should learn from this. (1) God does love us, and I shared scripture to show that Love is the very nature of God, (2) Life is a time of preparation-- a time to prepare for life beyond the grave, and (3) God made a provision for us -
- His Son (John 3:16). What an opportunity to share the gospel with those most sensitive. The meditation was followed by singing the Navy Hymn, taps, a solo and benediction.

Well, that's a brief run down of what happened. To me the ministry provided by simply listening, the reassurance of scripture and prayer was far more effective than the CISD gathering. There were only a handful of people that voluntarily came to those. But, we literally talked with hundreds early into the morning of the 15th.

*Please remember all our military chaplains as they minister among the men and women of our services who live and work in dangerous settings, even during peacetime operations. If you are interested in pursuing the military Chaplaincy in the Bible Churches Chaplaincy contact our Director of Chaplaincy:*

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