



the

WRS Journal

Western Reformed Seminary, Tacoma, Washington

Volume 6, Issue 1

February, 1999

This issue: *Social Action vs. Social Gospel*

EDITOR'S NOTES, *inside cover*

KEYNOTE *pages 1-5*

"The Prophetic Call for Care of the Poor"

Rev. Len Pine, Assistant Prof. of Practical Theology

HISTORY *pages 5-13*

"A Brief History of the Social Gospel"

Dr. John Battle, President & Professor of NT

"John Knox: A Case Study in Biblical Social Activism"

Rev. Jim Huff, Pastor, First BPC of Kalispell, Montana

EXEGESIS *pages 13-16*

"Members of the Body of Christ in the Body Politic:

Examples from Daniel's Involvement in Affairs of State"

Rev. Christopher Lensch, Registrar & Assoc. Prof. of Old Testament

APPLICATION *pages 16-24*

"Social Work by the Church and Its Deacons"

Rev. Hal Ricker, Trinitarian Bible Society, Guatemala

"Serving the Lord through Serving Young People"

Dr. Robert Vandermeij, Pastor, BPC, Grand Island, NY

"Ministering to Women in Times of Personal Crisis:

Christian Crisis Pregnancy Centers"

Mrs. Betty Kvale, WRS Ladies' Auxiliary

"Back to the Future for Inner City Missions"

Mr. Mike Lonergan, Exec. Dir., Tacoma Rescue Mission

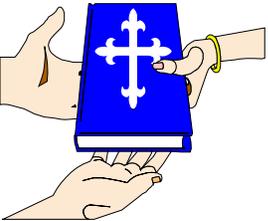
"The Reformation Day Statement"

Rev. John Robbins, President, The Trinity Foundation

Next Issue:
Post-
Modernism's
Assault on
Absolute Truth

Western Reformed Seminary
5 South "G" Street
Tacoma, Washington 98405

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tacoma, WA
Permit No. 741

EDITOR'S NOTES

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

(Philippians 2:14-16)

That the church is to be a purifying agent in this world comes as no surprise to any of us: I believe that all of us would acknowledge that we are called to “shine as lights in the world” reflecting the light of Jesus (Mt. 5:16; cf. Jn. 8:12). What does surprise us, especially as biblical fundamentalists, is how this shining takes place.

The contemporary fundamental Church has usually taken the phrase “holding fast the word of life” to limit “shining as lights” to preaching and evangelism: in short, to *words*. But this limitation is not biblical: it does not reflect the activities of Christ nor the apostles, all of whom ministered to body as well as soul. The passage from Philippians quoted above is itself bracketed in the text by praise unto God for a Savior who gave of himself for his people (2:1-13) and commendation of fellowservants who sacrificed unselfishly for their brethren (2:17-30). Jesus himself commanded us to love our enemies and do good to those who abuse us.

Enter the liberal, modernist mentality, which is intent upon ministering to the body as a prime weapon in the war against sin. The problem is not that the liberal wants to minister to the body: the problem is that it redefines *sin* by calling it *poverty, hunger, oppression, or ignorance*, redefines *salvation* by calling it *wealth, satisfaction, freedom, or education*, and redefines *savior* as *man*, not *Christ* as revealed in Scripture. These redefinitions, and their resultant practices, are what we usually call the *social gospel*: an abandoning of biblical absolutes for the sake of sentimental, man-glorifying pragmatism.

Unfortunately, the orthodox Church has reacted against the abuses of the liberal camp by distrusting social ministries, both within and without the walls of the local church. Consequently, while our preaching may be sound, and our resolutions scorching, our words either never reach the lost or worse, merely illicit the inevitable reaction from cynical hearts that “pretty is as pretty does.” Seeing no love demonstrated through *action*, the lost dismiss the words we *speak*.

It's no secret that a prime key to the growth of the cult of Mormonism, for example, is the loving service they render to their own in times of need. Pseudo-religious organizations like the Masons and Shriners are built upon social activity. The Roman church has used its schools and hospitals for centuries to draw converts into its fold. All this while the true Church sits back in judgment upon others' false theology and wonders why people don't listen to what we *say*!

If we want our words to carry weight, we must remember a simple principle common to every society everywhere: *actions speak louder than words*. This issue of *The WRS Journal* is dedicated to calling the Church to faithful ministry in society without compromising truth. While here we only scratch the surface of what can and should be done, perhaps the articles you read will stir you to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). As always, we welcome your comments! 📖

WESTERN REFORMED SEMINARY

Since 1983, Training Christian Leaders to Serve Christ
“in Spirit and in Truth”

- Bible-Believing, Reformed, & Premillennial
- Several Masters Programs, Day and Night Classes
- Balanced Emphasis on Christian Scholarship and Christian Service
- Biblical Counseling Training leading to Certification with the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors
- Programs Recognized for VA Benefits
- Introductory Rates for Church Groups

253/272-0417 ♦ registrar@wrs.edu
Five South “G” Street, Tacoma, WA 98405

Subscription Information

The WRS Journal is published semi-annually, with issues appearing every February and August. Circulation is currently approximately 800, with a production run of 1000 copies. Subscriptions for churches and school libraries are free. Individual subscriptions are available for \$5 per annum (2 issues) for domestic addresses, and \$10 per annum for international addresses (US funds only). Please write or call to subscribe. You may also e-mail your subscription requests and/or comments to:

pine@wrs.edu.

the **WRS Journal**

5 South “G” Street
Tacoma, Washington 98405
(253) 272-0417

Back issues are available electronically at:
www.wrs.edu

*Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of WRS on any given topic.
For a copy of our catalogue, contact the office.*