

strictly the act of God's grace alone in which the Lord declares legally righteous those who are His own, by the imputation to them of the perfect righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ alone, through faith alone. These persons have abandoned the Biblical phrase "imputed righteousness" and taught that justification is a transformative rather than a purely forensic act. This alteration carries with it the old lie of Satan — of conveyed, imparted, or infused righteousness ('you shall be as God'). They have proclaimed erroneous doctrines, such as baptismal regeneration, that annul the grace of justification, to be interrelated questions yet to be resolved. These men have persisted in their divisive behavior without the benefit of Church discipline commanded by Christ in Matthew 18:15-20, and modeled for us by Paul the Apostle.

"In light of the recent proliferation and popularity of such unbiblical concordats as *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (March 1994) and *The Gift of Salvation* (November 1997), we see that it is once again time for the Church of Jesus Christ to rise up to stand on the Bible alone so that it may be said of us what was said to the Philadelphians: 'You 'have kept My Word, and have not denied My Name' (Revelation 3:8), for His Word alone is truth (John 17:17). It is therefore strongly urged by those present at this Conference that all who read this Statement join with us and sign it. In so doing we seek to obey the command of Christ 'in a spirit of gentleness' so that we may receive from Him either the restoration of our transgressing brethren (Galatians 6:1), or the clarity and courage of mind necessary to excuse them from our midst in order to preserve the unity of the Church for which Christ prayed in John 17, 'that they

all may be one in Us.'

"To God alone be the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

[Signed]

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KEYNOTE

THE PROPHETIC CALL FOR CARE OF THE POOR by Leonard Pine

When it comes to the poor and afflicted of this world, the Church at large has generally abandoned its duty and allowed the secular authorities to usurp its role as caretaker of the needy, the afflicted, the destitute. If this were not so, there would be no such thing as a state welfare system, social security, medicare, and innumerable other government aid programs. There was a time in this country (and others) that the Church fulfilled the role of charity and provision for the poor in society. Amazingly enough, it was at that time that the Church was also at its zenith of activity and influence. Coincidence? I do not think so.

I trust it does not surprise you when I say that a principle burden of our Lord is for the poor (in terms of finances, power, influence) of this world. God reveals that burden throughout the Scriptures, but nowhere is it more prevalent than in the writings of the prophets. If the poor are a heart concern of our Lord's, should they not concern us also — so much so that we are moved to act on their behalf as God does? Even a brief overview of the prophetic message is sufficient to demonstrate clearly that more is required of us than prayer!

The Prophets' Foundation

The prophets, of course, did not make things up as they went along. The Spirit of God moved upon them to apply God's previous revelation to Israel and the nations, as well as to reveal further aspects

of grace and judgment as he laid the foundation for further revelation through Jesus the Christ and his apostles. Most of the prophetic writings, however, do not *foretell* but *forthtell* — declaring to their generation how they stacked up against God's law. The law concerning the poor and afflicted among the people is amply represented in Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, "The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand," and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, "You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land."

Israel would continually abuse both the spirit and the letter of this law, manifesting their unbelief and ingratitude for their own deliverance thereby. God had opened wide his hand to his poor people in their bondage: they were in turn to show that they had an inkling of an idea what mercy was by demonstrating it to the less fortunate (Mt. 5:7). The prophets did not have to look far among the people to find reason for dismay, since the na-

tion neglected, and often abused, the poor among them. This neglect and abuse was among the reasons that God delivered his people over to oppressors themselves, as we shall see.

The People's Sin Against the Poor

The prophets starkly shed the light of God upon the wickedness of God's people. Consider the following:

- Isaiah 3:14, 15 - "The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders of His people and His princes: for you have eaten up the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people and grinding the faces of the poor?" says the Lord GOD of hosts."
- Isaiah 10:1, 2 - "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune, *which* they have prescribed to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherless."
- Ezekiel 16:49 - "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: she and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."
- Amos 5:12 - "For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: afflicting the just *and* taking bribes; diverting the poor *from justice* at the gate."

Here is what the people had done: they had greedily consumed their abundance solely upon themselves without regard for the needs of the poor; indeed, they had done so with arrogance and cruelty. They had written laws so as to keep the poor in poverty, and made life for widows and orphans a horror. They had neglected

works of charity and provision. They had made justice a matter of who had money and influence.

Please notice that none of these crimes against the poor are "spiritual" in nature: they have to do with the actual physical needs of people. When we neglect the needs of the poor, cast a jaundiced eye upon them, find them repulsive, elect officials who abuse their power through taxation and legislation, and even discourage the poor from the Lord's house (by our attitudes, if nothing else), it makes no difference how much we talk about loving our neighbors or preaching the love of Christ. We are as guilty as Israel was, and the prophets would be no kinder to us in their declarations were they here to speak to us in person.

The Penalty for Disobedience

As I mentioned earlier, one of the reasons Israel and Judah were sent off into captivity was that they had broken God's law in this most important area of ministering to the poor. Showing mercy to the poor is not an extra ministry that the church is to get around to if and when it is convenient. It's a matter of certain judgment if you neglect your responsibility to the poor:

- Zechariah 7:9-12 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.' But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts."

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an underlying cause, and thus may also have a cure.

If an endless supply of free food, clothing and shelter is not the answer, then may we suggest going back to the roots of the urban mission movement, that *Christ is the answer*. Lives are rebuilt with our Savior at their center, replacing a welfare mentality, a government check, a prescription of anti-depressants, or an addiction to illegal drugs. Rev. Stephen Burger, director of the International Union of Gospel Missions, has said that his is the only profession where a man can crawl in the door as a drunk and walk out the door a few years later as the executive director. God is still changing lives at rescue missions!

Such transformation only happens when compassion is balanced with accountability, when there is one-on-one contact with the homeless person to determine not only what they lack, but rather what they *can* do with God's help. Thus, committed volunteers and cheerful givers are needed from the Christian community, as urgently now as they were a century ago, to disciple and "Rescue the Perishing," one soul at a time. 📖

¹ Olasky, Marvin, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, Washington, Regnery Publishing, 1992.

² Seath, William, DD, *Unto the Least of These*, Kansas City, IUGM, 1974.

³ International Union of Gospel Missions, "Snapshot Survey," 1998.

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THE REFORMATION DAY STATEMENT

[In the interest of making it clear that we think statements are important, too, we have secured permission from The Trinity Foundation to reprint the following statement. Many have signed this document electronically, including the editor of The WRS Journal. We would encourage you to do the same. Ed.]

Unicoi, Tennessee, October 28, 1998 — The Trinity Foundation today released the following statement on the 481st anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation on October 31, 1517. The Statement was adopted at the Conference on Christianity and Roman Catholicism held in Erwin, Tennessee, October 8-10, 1998.

"We the undersigned, having gathered together for the purpose of exposing the fundamental errors of the Roman State-Church and her superstitious and deceptive doctrines, as well as to re-affirm the Biblical doctrines of grace which alone can counter the persistent heresies of Rome, do of one mind stand together after the example of Paul the Apostle to exhort all Christians to stand boldly against those today who are not being 'straightforward about the truth of the Gospel' (Galatians 2:14).

"Divisive persons have risen within the ranks of those professing the Christian Faith, persons who do not cherish or do not understand the distinctive doctrines of the Bible, but rather have trampled the Gospel and the unity of the Christian Church underfoot. They have twisted the clear Biblical doctrine of justification. The Biblical truth is that justification is

sions, there exists a dynamic tension between two scriptural models which Christ gave us for ministering to society's neediest people:

1. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." (Luke 4:18, NIV)
2. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in." (Matthew 25:35, NIV)

Certainly, Christ's two instructions to the Church are not mutually exclusive—we can preach the Gospel *and* provide food, clothing and shelter. However, there is a critical question of which will have priority, and we need only look to such fields as higher education, medicine and the YMCA/YWCA movements to see examples of organizations strongly rooted in evangelism which have lost their Christian distinctive and become "just another" university, hospital, or recreation center where a Bible or a prayer may be scarce commodities.

Back in 1974, Dr. William Seath compared the annual reports of two urban missions and cautioned about losing sight of the original purpose of the Rescue movement. "One had a property valuation of \$200,000, large staff, annual budget \$100,000. This organization reported 105 Gospel services, average audience of 40, and 200 people prayed with. The other Mission, in a rented building, annual budget of \$3,000 held 366 services, average attendance of 12, but indicated 400 people prayed with! One thirtieth the amount of money spent but twice as many prayed with. How big is big?"²

Currently, the need for more resources

to meet the growing homeless population, including an alarming number of families with small children, has led some urban missions to enter into a partnership with local, state and federal government. This yields resources in the form of grants and service contracts to meet the physical needs of the homeless, but sets up the potential of another conflict, since many government contracts stipulate that there will be no religious requirement connected with the provision of tax-funded public services. A bright note is that the United States Congress has recently recognized the ability of faith-based organizations to meet pressing social needs cost-effectively and usually with better success rates than their secular counterparts. The result is the "Charitable Choice" rules adopted with the 1996 welfare reform law, aimed at rendering both to God and to Caesar, by allowing the client to receive government-subsidized help from either a spiritual or a secular organization. Interestingly, a recent survey of the homeless indicates that 79% prefer a spiritual emphasis in the services provided to them.³

What is the role of the local church and the individual Christian in these growing and evolving inner city missions? There may well be a pendulum swing underway in the philosophy and delivery of homeless services, and involved Christians will help determine the rate and extent of that swing. The social gospel has held sway in the field of urban ministries for some time, often resulting in the "no questions asked" provision of services for an indefinite period to whosoever comes expressing a need. Now, as urban poverty has grown despite these sincere but apparently misguided programs, the issue of homelessness is increasingly being viewed as a symptom which may have

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- Isaiah 10:3, 4 - "What will you do in the day of punishment, and in the desolation *which* will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory? Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners, and they shall fall among the slain. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand *is* stretched out still."

The marvel of the decline of the contemporary visible Church is not that it is declining; rather, the marvel is that we haven't figured out the reason! Currently, large-scale efforts at evangelism are being undertaken by various evangelical organizations. I fear the results will be less than encouraging to the true Church. Theological considerations aside regarding the faithfulness (to the Scriptures) of the message presented, when you preach truth without deeds to demonstrate that truth, your audience will simply consider what you say to be a lie. What good is a gospel devoid of action? Why should a lost world want an emasculated faith? Show your faith by your works!

God's Standards for Ministering to the Poor

The prophets are equally clear in declaring what God has in mind for the proper treatment of the poor and needy:

- Isaiah 11:4 - "But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked."
- Isaiah 25:4 - "For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall."

- Isaiah 41:17 - "The poor and needy seek water, but *there is* none, their tongues fail for thirst. I, the LORD, will hear them; *I*, the God of Israel, will not forsake them."
- Isaiah 61:1-3 - "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

Note from these passages in Isaiah's prophecy that there are two aspects to the Lord's labor that ought to be reflected in our own. First, there is the aspect of meeting physical, temporal needs of justice, strength, and sustenance. Second, spiritual needs are also prominently in view. Fundamental churches have too often focused on the latter without benefit of the former aspect, to the detriment of the message. God does both. In Isaiah 58:5-8, God gives the Church her marching orders, as well as the prescription for restoring vigor to her ministries:

Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? *Is it* to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? *Is* this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? *Is it* not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are

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cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

If you want to see your church spiritually flourish, be sure that it will not happen unless you are obedient to all of God's word: including ministering to the needy both spiritually *and* physically.

The Prophets' Call Confirmed in Christ

Lest there be any doubt about all of this, the Spirit of God saw fit to reiterate these Old Testament truths in the New Testament writings. Taking care of the poor cannot be regarded as OT "legalism" or simply be spiritualized away. Charity to the needy — in word *and* deed — is a part of the true religion of the whole of Scripture. Our Lord Jesus, the Christ stated so plainly:

- Matthew 11:2-6 - "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: *the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.*'"
- Luke 14:12-14 - "Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite *the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.* And

you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

And when a certain tax collector was redeemed, the first thing he did was to desire to show his gratitude to Christ by laboring for the poor:

Luke 19:8 - "Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.'" (Compare Luke 18:22.)

The apostles were no less concerned about these matters. Paul indicates that having a regard for the poor, especially of the Church, was every believer's business: "For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem" (Romans 15:26). The first council in Jerusalem made a special point to Paul that he "should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do" (Galatians 2:10).

James also speaks directly to our responsibility to minister to the needy of this world. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (1:27). He gives the ground of this principle a few paragraphs later: "Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" (2:5).

Conclusion

Isn't it time we started taking the commands of Scripture to heart, as did our forefathers? It doesn't matter how much money you have — it takes no money to show an act of kindness and speak the truth of the gospel's hope to a person who

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BACK TO THE FUTURE FOR INNER CITY MISSIONS by Michael Lonergan

The rescue mission movement in America has its roots in the last century — a New York City mission founded in 1872 by Jerry McAuley (himself a saved sinner, reformed drunk and ex-offender) is still in operation. Today there are over 250 member organizations of the International Union of Gospel Missions — each operated independently by local non-denominational Christian boards.

Many of these urban missions bear little outward resemblance to the "mom and pop" operations of years gone by, where a man on the skids could get a bowl of soup and a bunk for the night, after he first heard a salvation message by the mission founder or a minister-in-training from a local church or seminary. Dozens of them operate with multi-million dollar budgets and a myriad of programs to address the issues of health, education, employment, mental illness, and chemical dependency faced by homeless families and individuals.

Yet all of the IUGM member missions still maintain their evangelistic purpose, in varying degrees, while a new crop of government and private agencies have grown up in our cities to address physical needs with no thought to the spiritual. Professor Marvin Olasky disguised himself as a street person in March of 1990 and visited several such helping stations. He writes, "In two days I was given lots of food, lots of pills of various kinds, and lots of offerings of clothing and shelter. I was never asked to do anything, not even remove my tray after eating. But there was one thing I did not get, even though I asked for it many times: a Bible."¹

Even among the IUGM member mis-

sion of first born sons; "Sanctify to Me all the first-born" (Ex. 13:2). As we remember David's grief over the loss of his son, begotten in an adulterous relationship, we are beginning a ministry to the hurting fathers of unwanted pregnancies.

Operation Self Respect (OSR) is a presentation of abstinence-based sex education and dating practices. It is useful in church youth groups and especially in public and private school health classes. We can't get into schools unless we are invited to come. Urge your schools to provide abstinence-based instruction.

How can you or your church get involved? Psalm 116:12-13 asks, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" and answers, "I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord." Prayer is the foundation for any service to our Lord. Also:

- Ask Him how He would have you serve.
- Pray for the centers already established that they will see fruit in souls and babies saved.
- Take the required training course and become a volunteer. There are varied opportunities from sorting donated items, office work, or serving on the Hotline in your own home.
- Donate used items, perhaps holding a church-wide baby shower. Anything for a baby or pregnant mom is accepted.

Christ promised a place in the kingdom to those who gave food and drink, clothed the naked, visited the sick. "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto Me" (Matt. 25:40). 

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ates under Care Net, a branch of the Christian Action Council which was founded in 1975. The founding purpose was to challenge abortion and provide help to encourage women to carry their babies either to parent or give them up for adoption. In later years they have added challenges to fetal tissue research, genetic engineering, infanticide, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. The Doctrinal statement is scripturally sound and must be adhered to by all centers operating under Care Net. The first center opened in Tacoma in 1980. In 1984 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday was established.

I believe the first step in the church must be to educate and guard our own young people and as far as possible “to keep them unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). Let our churches be steadfast in this sexually irresponsible culture where movies and TV are increasingly bold in their sexual exposures. We need to reach youth with biblical truths about right relationships, virtuous love, and the truth that abstinence before marriage is the only way to honor God and is the only 100% contraceptive. “Hear my children the instruction of a father — Do not enter the path of the wicked and do not walk in the way of evil” (Prov. 4:1,14). “Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding. He who does it destroys his own soul” (Prov. 6:32). I believe the whole book of Proverbs to be a valuable standard for all.

Each crisis pregnancy center may offer different services depending on the founding board, support of churches, and number of volunteers.

A prayerful group in Tacoma started in 1983 to provide a 24 hour counseling service via telephone. In February of 1984 the first center opened offering free pregnancy tests and counseling. Soon a sup-

ply center offering maternity and baby clothing was added. An hour is allocated for the testing and counseling session. If the client claims to be Christian she is asked if she is active in her relationship to the Lord. If she makes no profession, the gospel is presented. If the test is negative she is counseled in changing her life style and warned of the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. If the test is positive there are three possibilities. She can carry the child and raise it, give the child up for adoption, or abort the baby. Counseling is directed at whichever possibility she is considering. Development of the baby is always discussed with fetal models showing the present stage of her pregnancy. We refer the client to agencies that help with financial and medical need or Christian adoption agencies. There are some Christian homes for those who have no family support.

We have a new medical ministry with volunteer doctors and nurses. The ultrasound exam is effective in changing the pro-abortion mind to a pro-life mind.

The offering of supplies to those in need has proved a real blessing as time is given to find the spiritual needs behind the material needs. Again the gospel is presented and the client prayed with. Since service is allowed only once a month we get “repeat” clients and some for more than one pregnancy.

In recent years other services have been added. One of the most important has been the Post Abortion Counseling and Education (PACE) program. One of the big secrets of the abortion industry is the emotional trauma, usually suppressed, which may surface years after the initial deed. Women are led through a Bible study helping them find forgiveness from God and restoration of peace. There is much said in the Bible about the impor-

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is destitute. For those with means, God has given you those things in stewardship. Use those means not just for great halls and grand projects but for food, clothing, Bibles, shelter, and righteous government. Let us take seriously the Lord’s burden for the poor, and as his vessels fulfill the great commission of Matthew 28 in the context of all the demands of Scripture. Then only will the Church demonstrate that the gospel is about more than words. 

according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [and was seen by witnesses]” (1 Cor. 15:1-8)¹

Paul identified the gospel with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, for our sins. The resurrection of Jesus is the central truth of the gospel: “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8). The gospel is the message that we can be saved from our sins by the grace of God through faith in Christ. This gospel is personal and individual: “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13). The primary time in which we receive the benefits of this gospel is the age to come, the promised resurrection and eternal life.

The benefits received through the gospel in this life are also considerable, however. The New Testament in several places emphasizes that a person thus saved will live a changed life. Therefore, the gospel brings other benefits to the believer and to others affected by him or her. The Christian is to grow in grace, and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit seek to obey the commandments of God. These commandments have personal and social applications. Where people are Christians, there will be less crime, more humanity and compassion, more public honesty, better human relations, and more reliable public trust. As well, unjust or wicked social customs and traditions will decrease and even disappear. These social benefits result from the preaching and living out of gospel truth, but they are not the gospel itself. Attempts to improve society apart from the gospel often fall apart or are led astray by a false view of

HISTORY

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

by John Battle

The True Gospel

What is the social gospel? Before answering this question, we must compare it with the gospel declared in the New Testament. For example, the Apostle Paul said,

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins

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humanity or of what is right and wrong in social relations. Communism and Nazism provide examples of the terrible consequences that such attempts may cause.

The Christian Gospel and Social Gospel Contrasted

While the Christian gospel produces many social benefits, that is not its core or its *raison d'être*. We are not to become Christians in order to produce a better society, but only because that is what God desires us to do. God insists on being the goal of our worship and life. The great sin of the Pharisees was in making disciples to their party and social program rather than to God: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are" (Mt. 23:15).

This is one point at which the social gospel differs from the traditional gospel of the New Testament. The social gospel concentrates not so much on individual salvation of one's own soul, but rather on the "evangelization" and "conversion" of social structures and institutions to a "Christian" form, culminating in the promised kingdom of God. For example, if a businessman becomes a Christian, his main concern should not be personal piety, but rather a change in his business practices, or even better, the business practices of everyone else. These changes might include better working conditions and wages for his workers, less concern for profit, and more concern for social responsibility and the environment. The movement certainly favored a greater role for government in all aspects of the economic life of the country. Since many of

the social gospel leaders were socialistic or progressive in their economic and political outlook, they considered activities that led to this type of society as being "evangelistic"—evangelizing the social structures.

At another point the social gospel diverges from the traditional gospel. One of the foundations of the social gospel was the so-called "Liberal Jesus." This "Liberal Jesus" was not the belief that Jesus was "Liberal," but rather was the Jesus arrived at by the process of a critical reappraisal of the gospel accounts in the New Testament. During the nineteenth century critical scholars had adopted the position that the four gospels did not present an accurate picture of Jesus' actual life. To find the "real Jesus," it was necessary to strip away the miraculous elements, the Jewish teaching, and many other aspects of the Jesus of the gospels. The result was a watered-down Jesus, a merely human moral leader, who taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man—a theological emphasis that just happened to agree with the theology of the Liberals at the time! The social gospel leaders assumed that this was the true, historical Jesus, and that his teachings favored the progressive social programs they were fighting for.

The Social Gospel Identified

The social gospel has been perhaps most clearly defined by its most famous protagonist, Walter Rauschenbusch. Writing in 1907, he spoke of the "immense latent perfectibility in human nature." He said that we are now at the point in history when all things can come together and produce a race of happy, prosperous, peaceful people, working together harmoniously and in love. This will be

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walking club, etc.) At the same time we hired a seminary graduate with a burden for youth. His office is in the new facility where programs are being developed including Junior and Senior Youth nights involving active programs as well as discipleship classes for Senior youth. AWANA uses both the new center and the main church facilities each Wednesday for a large gathering of children and youth age three through grade eight, with high-schoolers working as trainees in the program. An energetic, motivated staff provides a most profitable program. We are equipped for basketball, volleyball and tennis as well as ping-pong, bumper pool, foosball, and other activities to attract youth.

Of course there are the Children's and Junior Church at both morning and evening services. Our presbytery winter and summer camps are effective as is our Vacation Bible School and Summer Bible Clubs. Emphasis is placed upon memorization and application of Scripture.

Some reading this may be saying that they could do more if they had this kind of facility. Early in my ministry my wife and I had a burden for children and early on the Lord blessed us with a sizable group to whom we devoted as much time as possible. Sometimes our home or the Christian youth center ten miles away were utilized. A basketball team was begun and this was very useful bringing in fellows and girls (even though we were the only team without uniforms!). Our team became the champions in the area and later a fine businessman provided the needed uniforms. Regular Bible studies helped ground them in the Word and we trained as many as possible to assume leadership in the children's ministries. A favorite event for many years was the semi-formal banquet and program held

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between Christmas and the new year. This helped to provide a special dress-up evening to offset the disappointment of not participating in questionable entertainment in the world.

Now my question is: Might this be a good time to reassess what we each are doing for the church of the future? 📖

MINISTERING TO WOMEN IN TIMES OF PERSONAL CRISIS: CHRISTIAN CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS

by Betty J. Kvale

When *Roe v. Wade* was passed in 1973 the churches for the most part were silent. In my memory there have always been a few homes where the pregnant, unmarried were sent to have their babies in a secluded environment or the secret abortion was obtained. The openness of the sexual revolution has brought problems into our churches. Amazing statistics report that 73% of women getting abortions call themselves Christian. 15% of them call themselves "evangelical" or "born again." Legislation has been introduced in several states to impose restrictions on abortions. Some have passed, but more have failed.

What is the church to do? "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this; to visit orphans and widows in their trouble" (James 1:27, NKJV). I believe unborn children and single (often abandoned) women and mothers qualify as orphans and widows.

There are many pro-life agencies that may or may not have a Biblical basis. Some of their practices should be questioned. The Crisis Pregnancy Centers of Pierce County where I volunteer, oper-

**SERVING THE LORD THROUGH
SERVING YOUNG PEOPLE**
by Robert W. Vandermeij

Do you ever look back at your life and ask yourself if the world is a better place because you are here? Will God say, "Well done, faithful servant of mine"?

Might not we ask the same question about a church? Has it had a lasting, positive effect on this world where God placed it? Certainly an important way to have a continuing effect is to reach children and young people for Christ. This must involve having an aggressive program that keeps reaching out to attract children and youth. It's easy to underestimate the value of our ministries to these youth if we lose our long-range perspective that in only a few years the young people we have now will be the adults in our churches.

Being pastor of our congregation over forty years has allowed me to see how the investments our people have made in children and youth outreach have paid great dividends. Many of the sixty-five people who have gone into short or long-term Christian services as pastors, missionaries, Christian school teachers, pastors' wives, etc. were influenced to do so through their church. It has been a joy to see former children emerge into adults who now take active part in their churches and often assume positions of leadership. How exciting to see homes established with Jesus Christ as the Head!

Recently I met a young mother who is a children's church leader. Her grandparents were saved here and brought their young children who in turn were saved and then participated in all the activities and opportunities provided by our church. Eventually one of their sons met a girl of our church and they married. Now their

child is grown, married, serving the Lord, and training the fourth generation!

Recently, a young mother was singing a solo in our worship service and my mind flashed back to when she came as a little seven-year-old. After being invited to attend our two-week VBS our summer assistant (intern pastor) visited the home and asked the parents if they'd like their daughter to ride our bus to Sunday School. Soon the little girl accepted Christ and eventually all the family attended. Passing through all the ministries including Jr. Church, youth groups, VBS, summer camps, outreach service projects, etc., the girl went to a Christian college and after graduation married a fine Christian man. Now she is greatly involved in our church. In addition she is bringing her daughter to hopefully follow a similar process.

These accounts can be repeated over and over. Keeping long-range goals in perspective is so vital if we are to experience the value of ministries to youth.

Our church takes this responsibility and privilege very seriously. Much thought and prayer was made as to what direction we were going to go in future planning. There were many suggestions, but the emphasis on our agenda put youth as a high priority. This does not mean we ignore or consider the adults and elderly as any less important. Rather, we have found that adults are energized through involvement and interest in the younger generation and the youth and children are enriched by their elders. Why? Because they sense early on that there is the love of Jesus Christ as the motivation! There's the formula for success! Because of our commitment to youth, we invested one and a half million dollars in a Family Life Center. It is a place for the whole family to use. (This includes adult Bible studies,

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the kingdom of God, come now into fruition. All that is necessary is that we set ourselves free from the false doctrines and ideas that have held us back in the past. "Religious faith and moral strength must be directed toward these last great social tasks."²

While the social gospel found adherents in Europe, it was primarily an American phenomenon. After the Civil War and Reconstruction in the South, American churches underwent great transformation. At the end of the Civil War, the mainline denominations were uniformly orthodox, but within forty years liberal theology and the social gospel had made significant inroads. By the 1930's the social gospel was the predominant theme in many sections of the church. These changes were brought about by several factors, including the demoralization caused by the war, increased immigration of people with different theology and practices, increased participation and influence by laymen (especially wealthy businessmen) in church affairs, the developing progressive or socialistic movement in America, and the importation of liberal biblical criticism and theology from Germany and England. An example of this change is seen in the observance of the Christian Sabbath. After the Civil War, Americans generally attended church and closed their businesses on Sunday; twenty years later Chicago could be described as "a Berlin in the morning and a Paris in the afternoon."³

Development of the Movement

An early leader in this liberalizing of the church in the nineteenth century was Horace Bushnell, a Congregational minister in Hartford, Connecticut, during the mid-1800's. He emphasized Christian

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growth from childhood over later conversion, and his books turned the attention of many to the training of youth rather than preaching as the key to a successful church. Bushnell repudiated the orthodox theory of the atonement of Christ, substituting his "moral influence" theory. While at first opposed by conservative church leaders, Bushnell's ideas gained in popularity. The famous preachers Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks popularized his ideas.

Near the turn of the century the churches grew tremendously in wealth, especially in the large cities. Poorer Christians often left the mainline denominations to form other groups. An example of this increased wealth is seen in the transformation of the revivalistic camp-meeting sites to middle-class summer resorts; camp-meeting revivals were replaced by lectures on moral, cultural, religious subjects, and entertainments.⁴ Wealthy capitalists, including John D. Rockefeller, Cyrus H. McCormick, J. Pierpont Morgan, and Andrew Carnegie, gave large donations and other aid to the churches and their agencies. In addition countless other, less famous, businessmen brought business ideas into the inner courts of church government and authority. With this new capital, and the prestige that came with it, many churches and preachers became more entangled in the financial and social issues of the day, and based decisions and emphases in teaching on more material considerations than in the past.

The labor unrest and bloody strikes of the late 1800's provided a most noticeable occasion of churches becoming involved in the social gospel. By 1914 two million workers had joined the American Federation of Labor, but the churches, being largely controlled by business in-

terests, at first opposed this movement. However, in the churches there were several voices calling for the opposite stance. An early leader in this movement was Washington Gladden, a Congregational minister in Ohio in the late 1800's and author of about forty books. These books, such as *Workingmen and Their Employers* (1876), *Applied Christianity* (1887), and *Tools and Men* (1893), urged the application of Christian ethics to business and labor concerns, with a strong liberal bent.⁵

A center for this new approach to the Christian gospel was the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, with its professors Shailer Mathews, A. W. Small, and Charles R. Henderson. Another theological leader was Graham Taylor of the Chicago Theological Seminary. Coming from a different perspective was the famous professor of economics Richard T. Ely. He sought to combine progressive economic theory with Christian ethics, especially the command to love one's neighbor. He declared that the church, the state, and the individual must work together under the guidance of science to fulfill the kingdom of God on earth.

Among the churches the new social gospel gained in popularity along with the liberal theology and biblical criticism that was gaining control of their educational institutions. In 1908 the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was formed. The leadership of this new church body was decidedly liberal in theology and progressive or socialistic in political philosophy. At its first meeting the Federal Council adopted its famous "Social Creed of the Churches," which was largely borrowed from the previously adopted Social Creed of the Methodists.⁶ At this time the majority of churchgoers in America were much more conserva-

tive, both theologically and politically. This caused widespread opposition to the new council's activities. "Because the council was founded through the efforts of men committed to the Social Gospel, it failed to become an authentic voice of Protestants."⁷ Later, the council tried to overcome some of this stigma by changing its name to the National Council of Churches of Christ; however, its liberal stance in theology and politics has continued basically the same.

The Social Gospel's Primary Spokesman

Probably the man most intimately associated with the social gospel is Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918). As a Baptist pastor in the West Side of New York City, in a depressed area known as Hell's Kitchen, he encountered many social problems.⁸ He sought to help alleviate some of these problems by becoming involved in local political and social activities. Later, after post-graduate studies in Germany, he became a professor of church history in Rochester Theological Seminary. Rauschenbusch completely adopted the liberal teachings of his professors in Germany, and identified himself with such men as Schleiermacher, Bushnell, Ritschl, Wellhausen, and Harnack—household names in the new liberal theology. To these he added the liberal or progressive political ideas being espoused at the time.

The young professor sought to reconcile these two chains of thought into a single concept. As he himself said, "When I had begun to apply my previous religious ideas to the conditions I found, I discovered that they didn't fit. . . . I had to go back to the Bible to find out whether I or my [liberal] friends were right. I had

Reconciliation is a Bible doctrine — not a social action, as alluded to in the Presbyterian U.S.A. Church's 1967 Confession. Resolving the problems and woes of an inner city is not biblical reconciliation, but only social action. It is to be commended, but don't confuse biblical reconciliation and social action. God is in Christ Jesus reconciling sinners to Himself. This is God's and the Church's first emphasis, but good works are often neglected. This should not be so. Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says God's people should be zealous of good works and abound in them (Titus 2:14 and 2 Cor. 9:8).

Evangelical, fundamental churches through the ages have had social works. Paul raised up offerings to help the poor in Jerusalem. Hospitals and orphanages have been established around the world. Dr. Lambie and Dr. Hasmon of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions established hospitals in Bethlehem, Israel, and in Charger, Arabia. Evelyn Moulton, missionary in Brazil, worked with orphans. God's people supported and prayed for these social works connected with the gospel ministry. Similar good works could be multiplied by the thousands around the world for centuries.

Although these social good works are separated in the main by vast distances from the local churches and denominations that support them, in some cases and places these social works are locally connected to the church that oversees them. God has placed deacons in the churches to supervise and extend social works or benevolences in the areas of a local church's activities. This work is found in Acts chapter six, and explains the social work to the widows and most likely orphans as well. The local church of Jerusalem had social work going on, and it was put in the hands of the deacons including Stephen and Philip. This was done so that

the Apostles and elders would have more time for prayer and the sermon ministries of the Word of God.

In Brazil in a local church, money was given every month to the deacons so as they visited, money would be available to buy medicine for the needy who didn't have money to do so. The deacons received a spiritual blessing in their own souls as they visited and ministered spiritually and physically to the people.

In Guatemala, in one church, money is given to the pastor to minister to the needy, but it was stated that this was to be in conjunction with the deacons. It is better if they head it up and work with the pastor through a board of deacons.

In some churches, the deacons don't work at this important ministry that God has ordained. They neglect visiting and praying for the sick. They don't do visitation evangelism. They don't visit the widows and orphans as true religion requires by James under the direction of the Holy Spirit. James 1:27 says: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Dacons that have this God-given call and name, are exhorted to serve and do good works as servants of the Lord, thus fulfilling their task for the Glory of the Lord. There is no social gospel, but there is social service which is pleasing to our God. 📖

***"If you love me,
keep my
commandments."***

John 14:15

ments. Some of us like Daniel and Joseph may be called upon *to be* policy making leaders.

In all of our political involvement we will operate within the guidelines of the whole counsel of God. Our chief motive will be to bring glory to God as we strive to bring "...captive every thought to the obedience of Christ...."¹² Ultimately, active Christian involvement in the affairs of state will tend toward domestic tranquility for the church and all of society.

Christians are citizens of heaven first. Daniel teaches us that we must also be good citizens in the world. 

¹ Jer. 25:11,12

² Is. 44:28-45:4

³ Dan. 2:19-23,28

⁴ Dan. 4:19,27

⁵ 1 Tim. 2:1,2

⁶ Acts 5:29

⁷ In intervening for the lives of the other wise men (2:24) and in wishing the king well (4:19).

⁸ Gal. 6:10

⁹ First half of chap. 11

¹⁰ Chap. 12

¹¹ Dan. 7:13,14,27

¹² 2 Cor. 10:3-5

***“Do good to all,
especially to those
of the household
of faith.”***

Galatians 6:10

APPLICATION

SOCIAL WORK BY THE CHURCH AND ITS DEACONS by Hal Ricker

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a social Gospel but it does have social implications. The Gospel is the “Good News” for the lost soul that Jesus can save a sinner from the judgment of God and the penalty of sin — eternal death and hell.

However, when the sinner is reconciled to God through the redemption bought by His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross, he is transformed, and receives a new nature. He, as a new creature in Christ, wants to be like the Good Samaritan and help people (Luke 10). He concerns himself in letting his light so shine before men that they will see his good works. He shows social interest in helping his fellow man like Jesus did. Jesus first called for repentance in Mark 1:15: “The Kingdom of God is at hand—repent and believe the Gospel.” Jesus preached and taught the Scriptures giving their true interpretation, in contrast to the misleading interpretations and applications of the Pharisees. He showed His social concerns by changing the water into wine and feeding the 5,000 as well as visiting and healing the sick. There is no physical healing in the atonement as such. Only spiritual, but God heals because of His mercy and we pray in faith.

Reconciliation is first spiritual. A sinner is reconciled to his God through the blood of the cross. A sinner is an enemy of God until he makes his peace with God, or better said, God makes peace for the sinner through His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.

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to revise my whole study of the Bible.... All my scientific studying of the Bible was undertaken to find a basis for the Christian teaching of a social gospel.” Robert T. Handy goes on to explain, “He found that basis in the doctrine of the kingdom of God, which brought together his evangelical concern for individuals and his social vision of a redeemed society.”⁹

Rauschenbusch produced many books related to the social gospel. His first famous one was *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907), a book which more than fifty years later Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “left an indelible imprint on my thinking.... Rauschenbusch gave to American Protestantism a sense of social responsibility that it should never lose.”¹⁰ Another important work was *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912), in which he detailed his “conversion” to the social gospel and the way he discovered the importance of the kingdom of God as the controlling idea of Jesus. This book emphasized changes that he thought needed to be made in America’s capitalist system, which, seeking only one’s own welfare, was “semi-Christian.”

Rauschenbusch’s most important theological work was his *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917). In this book he notes that the social gospel is not emphasized by traditional theology; in fact, traditional theology often was used to oppose the social gospel! He then proceeds to show how there must be an adjustment; something must change. What must change? Not the social gospel, but theology! Thus his first two chapters are entitled, “The Challenge of the Social Gospel to Theology” and “The Difficulties of Theological Readjustment.” Rauschenbusch tries to show that the social gospel does not destroy what is good

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in theology; it only improves upon it by adding the new dimension of a true understanding of the central point of biblical theology, the kingdom of God. In the remaining chapters he shows how the social gospel changes our understanding of the traditional areas of theology. These areas include the fall of man, the consciousness, nature, and transmission of sin, the “super-personal forces of evil” (more often corporations than demons!¹¹), personal salvation, the church in society, the kingdom of God, the identity of God, revelation and inspiration, the sacraments, eschatology, and the atonement. To see how the social gospel differs from that in the Bible, one need only peruse this book.

Here is an outstanding example of what Paul would “a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all” (Gal. 1:6-7). The true gospel is not a creation of human philosophy or political theory. As Paul said, “I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11-12).

The Social Gospel’s Continuing Legacy

With the coming of two world wars, largely inspired by “enlightened” Germany, confidence in German Liberal theology and in the perfectibility of man greatly declined. The new attack from the Neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth and others, combined with the continuing resistance from conservative Christians, left the old social gospel with few active defenders in academia. However, the social program and religious support for it did continue in many areas in the churches.

The Federal Council of Churches, more recently named the National Council of Churches, continues pushing for the social gospel agenda. On the international level the World Council of Churches of Christ promotes the social gospel throughout the world. Along with these councils, there are many liberal-dominated denominations that still preach these ideas for social change as the Christian gospel.

The more radical Liberation Theology is avowedly Marxist, and actively seeks to introduce communist programs into many countries, especially poorer, third world nations. This theology is especially prominent among Roman Catholic missionaries and leaders in those countries.

On the local level many cities find their churches uniting to do social works of various kinds. While these activities may be good things to do, often they are thought of as the best thing churches can do. These activities can, and often do, take the place of preaching the gospel of salvation found in Scripture. This danger is increased when other people in the community expect the churches to do social work, and the churches desire to maintain their good reputation with non-Christians in the community.

Contending for the Gospel

Any gospel other than the one given by Christ and the apostles is a false gospel. Those who believe a false gospel will not share in the salvation promised in the gospel of Christ. And they who teach and promote such a false gospel are condemned in the strongest terms in the New Testament.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a differ-

ent gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Gal. 1:6-9)

We must not only be aware of false gospels, such as the social gospel, but we must also stand for the true gospel. Paul thus instructed the Thessalonian believers:

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. (2 Thess. 2:13-15)

May God give us grace to “stand firm and hold” the gospel which has been handed down to us! 

¹ All Scripture references are from the NIV.

² Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 785-86; Ahlstrom here provides an excellent summary of the three main points of Rauschenbusch’s social gospel: its millennial thought, its optimism about the perfectibility of human nature, and its moral demand that religion become the tool to bring in social change.

³ William W. Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (1950; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 334.

⁴ Sweet, pp. 345-46.

Daniel Himself Set the Terms of Engagement with Secular Powers

It would have been easy for Daniel and his friends to take the path of least resistance. But they had to answer to God and live with their consciences. The only safe recourse would be to “obey God before men.”⁶

When godless powers made benign demands on them, Daniel and his friends would respond with diligence. But when demands were made that might compromise them, the Hebrews often responded with a reasonable counter-proposal. At times they were forced to disobey unjust decrees, but in doing so, they tried to avoid reactionary fanaticism. Consider the following:

- Daniel and his friends made the best out of a difficult situation by proposing a simple diet of vegetables and water. This called for personal sacrifice, but it avoided the meats and drinks offered to pagan gods, while enabling them to keep a kosher diet (chap. 1).
- When offered rewards for interpreting the hand-writing on the wall, Daniel told Belshazzar to keep his gifts for himself (chap. 5).
- When the Hebrews were inadvertently (chap 3) or deliberately (chap. 6) placed under strictures of improper religious observance, they did not over-react, even though obedience to God would mean death at the hands of unjust men. Daniel’s friends did not incite a riot at the sound of the band calling for obeisance to Nebuchadnezzar’s statue. Daniel himself did not change from his thrice daily prayers by closing his apartment windows nor by prostrat-

ing himself in the street. Even under personal threat he followed his routine religious duties in his routine manner.

God Raises Up Leaders to Bring Messages of Hope

Daniel was happy to use his position to do good unto all men,⁷ and especially to those of the household of faith.⁸ Leaders can lead away from God, or they can restrain evil and lead toward godly virtues. Not only do their policies impact the lives of their subjects, but their pronouncements and speeches can leave a lasting influence beyond the contemporary generation.

God spoke through Daniel as a leader to give comfort in the present and hope for the future.

- Daniel should have been retired by the third year of Cyrus. After years of service, he was pushing age 80 in the year 537. Yet he seems to be traveling near the Tigris River, probably on a diplomatic embassy, when God reveals the messages of Daniel 11 & 12 to him. These prophecies give detailed predictions of near-term events⁹ as well as a message of resurrection and future rewards for the persevering righteous ones.¹⁰
- Daniel’s message of hope in chapter seven reminds us that no matter how dark the night, the final triumph must come through the Son of Man when he brings in His glorious kingdom.¹¹

Conclusion

Daniel’s life and message teach us that believers do not have to hide from the world or the issues of our generation. Rather, we can and should be engaged with the policy makers of our govern-

When they were carried captive to Bablylon, Daniel and his friends had to make decisions about what ways and how much they would cooperate with their new masters. Babylon was no friend to the true God and was openly antagonistic to Daniel's values and religious practices.

We may learn some lessons for our time from the example of Daniel's involvement with the "powers that be."

God Can Raise Up Godly Leaders

Not all politicians are crooked. Still, some Christians believe that people of faith should not pursue positions of secular leadership. They say that politics by nature requires compromise. Besides, there is so much temptation in the public arena that one may enter public service as pure as the driven snow only to run the risk of being personally and publicly corrupted.

The fact remains, however, that through church history and sacred history God's good providence has raised up many of His people to serve His purposes in the sphere of government.

God Raises Up Heroes to Look after His Own

Like Queen Esther "for such a time as this" or Joseph whom He positioned in Pharaoh's court "to save much people alive," God placed Daniel in high positions of influence so that he could protect the interests of His captive people in Bablylon. For example:

- God used Daniel to preserve life when all the wise men, including the Jewish apprentice wise men, fell under Nebuchadnezzar's sweeping sentence of death (chapter 2).
- More particularly, Daniel is called

out of retirement to serve as one of three presidents in the new Persian regime that had just overthrown Babylon (chapter 6). This was a crucial period for setting the course of the new rule in relation to God's people. It is possible that Daniel used his position to gain access to Emperor Cyrus to intercede for the captive Jews. He knew that the appointed 70 years of captivity had now run its course,¹ and he may have turned Cyrus' attention to the sacred prophecy of Isaiah that predicted Cyrus' role in rebuilding Jerusalem.²

Believers Should Engage the "Powers that Be"

As a stranger in a strange land, Daniel could have tried to avoid encounters with his pagan overlords. Some of us might stick our head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich, or try passive resistance. Others might get aggressively fanatical. But notice the following:

- Rather than going on a hunger strike, Daniel and his friends did not refuse all of the king's provision (chap. 1).
- Rather than going on a sit-down strike, Daniel determined to make the best of his assignment as an apprentice wise man. When God gave His leading about Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel did not hesitate to give God glory³ when he shared the interpretation with the king.
- Rather than calling for a violent coup against the wicked Emperor Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel prayed for his security while also calling for his personal repentance.⁴ In this way we too promote domestic tranquility by praying for the well-being of those in authority.⁵

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Such was Knox, the greatest of living Scotchmen.

No grander figure can be found in the entire history of the Reformation in this island than that of Knox. Cromwell and Burghley rank beside him for the work which they effected, but as politicians and statesmen they had to labor with instruments with which they soiled their hands in touching. In purity, in uprightness, in courage, truth and stainless honor the regent Murray and our English Latimer were perhaps his equals; but Murray was intellectually far below him, and the sphere of Latimer's influence was on small scale. The time has come when English history may do justice to one but for whom the *Reformation would have been overthrown* among ourselves; for the spirit which Knox created saved Scotland; and if Scotland had been Catholic again, neither the wisdom of Elizabeth's ministers, nor the teaching of her bishops, nor her own chicaneries, would have preserved England from revolution. His was the voice which taught the peasant of the Lothians that he was a free man, the equal in the sight of God with the proudest peer or prelate that had trampled on his forefathers. He was the one antagonist whom Mary Stuart could not soften nor Maitland deceive; he it was that raised the poor Commons of his country into a stern and rugged people, who might be hard, narrow, superstitious and fanatical, but who, nevertheless, were men whom neither king, noble nor priest could force again to submit to tyranny. And his reward has been the ingratitude of those who should most have done honor to his memory. [Quoted in N. S. McFetridge, *Calvinism in History*, pp. 24-25.]

John Knox stressed the necessity of resistance to tyranny (whether ecclesiastical or civil) as a Biblical mandate. At one time Knox recommended flight as the main option when faced with tyrannical government, but later modified his views between the accession of Mary I and the

⁵ For an excellent introduction to three of these leaders, Washington Gladden, Richard T. Ely, and Walter Rauschenbush, including extensive excerpts from their writings, see Robert T. Handy, ed., *The Social Gospel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

⁶ Ahlstrom, p. 803.

⁷ Ahlstrom, p. 804.

⁸ Handy, p. 254.

⁹ Handy, p. 255.

¹⁰ Handy, p. 259.

¹¹ Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), pp. 90-91.

JOHN KNOX: A CASE STUDY IN BIBLICAL SOCIAL ACTIVISM by James E. Huff

If by the term "social activism" we mean the influence of Christianity on culture according to God's holy, infallible word, then we can demonstrate the influences of John Knox, not only in Scotland, but also in the United States. If by the term "social activism" we include Christians being salt and light in the midst of a pagan culture, then we can demonstrate like influence of John Knox on the culture of Scotland. We do not mean by "social activism" an anthropological social-gospel Christianity; but, rather one that is God-centered, that emphasizes the sovereignty of God over every area of life.

John Knox saw his responsibility before God to bring reformation to Scotland according to the word of God. John Knox had learned his theology from John Calvin in Geneva. The historian Froude says of Knox:

John Knox, to whose teaching they (the Scotch) owed the *national existence*.

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accession of Elizabeth I (1558). His modified views allowed “for greater amounts of resistance to ungodly rulers. In his *First Blast of the Trumpet* (1558), Knox called on the lesser magistrates to punish idolatry and blasphemy. He charged them with the obligation of resisting such, even permitting the execution of the queen. Knox believed that ecclesiastical reformation should be supported by the magistrates, and began to license even the masses to depose and execute an idolatrous civil leader:

...punishment of such crimes, as are idolatrie, blasphemie, and others that tuche the Majesty of God, dothe not appertain to kinges and chefe rulers only, but also to the whole body of that people, and every member of the same, according to the vocation of everie man, and according to that possibilitie and occasion which God doth minister. [cited in David W. Hall, *Savior or Servant?*, p. 230.]

One of the most well known examples of Knox’s views on resistance was his reply to Mary Stuart when she asked him, “Think ye,” said the queen, “that subjects having the power may resist their princes?” Knox replied:

If princes exceed their bounds, Madam, and do that which they ought not, they may doubtless be resisted even by power. For neither is greater honor nor greater obedience to be given to kings and princes, than God has commanded to be given to father and mother. But, Madam, the father may be struck with a frenzy, in which he would slay his own children. Now, Madam, if the children arise, join together, apprehend him, take the sword from him, bind his hands, and keep him in prison till the frenzy be over, think ye, madam, that the children do any wrong? Even so is it, Madam, with princes who would murder the children of God who are subject unto them. Their blind zeal is nothing but mad frenzy; and, there-

fore, to take the sword from them, to bind their hands, and to cast them into prison till they be brought to a sober mind, is not disobedience against princes, but a just obedience, because it agreeth with the will of God. [N. S. McFetridge, *Calvinism in History*, page iv.]

Knox’s patriotism continued to influence the nation of Scotland many years later. On June 22, 1680, the Sanquhar Declaration was read before twenty men who had ridden into town on horseback with swords drawn and pistols in their hands and before assembled townspeople. It stated that as their (i.e., the 20 men) being under the standard of “...our Lord Jesus Christ, Captain of Salvation” that they “do declare war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ and His cause and Covenants; and against all such as have strengthened him, sided with, or anywise acknowledged him in his tyranny, civil or ecclesiastic.” (Alexander Smellie, *Men of the Covenant*, p. 336.) These Cameronians had been influenced by John Knox and his ministry.

Knox’s influence in these areas was especially through his idea of “covenant”. Knox wrote in “An Admonition or Warning That the Faithful Christians in London, etc....May Avoid God’s Vengeance” that Christians must covenant

... “betwixt God and us, that He alone shall be our God and we shall be His people...we shall seek to Him and we shall flee from all strange gods.” This meant opposing idolatry in order to remain in covenant with the true God and thus avoid eternal damnation. Knox dealt with covenant again in a tract on baptism in 1556, but stated his views most fully in his 1558 *Appellation* to the nobility, estates, and commonwealth of Scotland. Here Knox based his concept of a covenant that binds government and

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people under the law of God very firmly on his understanding of the Old Testament. He cited King Josiah’s calling the Israelites to obey the rediscovered law (II Kings 23). Hence temporal rulers must reform religion and extirpate idolatry. [Douglas F. Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World, The Influence of Calvin on Five Governments from the 16th Through 18th Centuries*, p. 54.]

The impact of Knox on Scotland was monumental, especially in the area of applying the principles of God’s word to the relationships between government and governed. Among those principles are the elevation of the common man to equal standing and accountability with the king according to the laws of a country and according to the laws of God, and that the king does not rule according to his own whims. Knox did not separate his ministerial duties from his responsibilities to the nation. Their source was one and the same — the Bible. Christians today would do well to recall this man of God and the example he set. Civil matters are our responsibility. The influences of Knox have been reflected in the history of Presbyterianism in the United States, too. James Thornwell said:

As the individual, in coming to God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, so the State must be impressed with a profound sense of His all-pervading providence, and of its responsibility to Him as the moral Ruler of the world. The powers that be are ordained of Him. From Him the magistrate receives his commission, and in His fear he must use the sword as a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well. Civil government is an institute of Heaven, founded in the character of man as social and moral, and is designed to realize the idea of justice. Take way the notion of mutual rights and the correspond-

ing notions of duty and obligation, and a Commonwealth is no more conceivable among men than among brutes. As the State is essentially moral in its idea, it connects itself directly with the government of God. It is, indeed, the organ through which that government is administered in its relations to the highest interests of earth. A State, therefore, which does not recognize its dependence upon God, or which fails to apprehend, in its functions and offices, a commission from heaven, is false to the law of its own being. The moral finds its source and centre only in God. There can be no rights without responsibility, and responsibility is incomplete until it terminates in a Supreme Will. The earthly sanctions of the State, its rewards and punishments, are insufficient either for the punishment of vice or the encouragement of virtue, unless they connect themselves with the higher sanctions which religion discloses.” (*The Collected Writings of James Henly Thornwell*, vol. 4, “Ecclesiastical,” pp. 514-5.) 

EXEGESIS

MEMBERS OF THE BODY
OF CHRIST
IN THE BODY POLITIC:
EXAMPLES FROM DANIEL’S
INVOLVEMENT
IN AFFAIRS OF STATE
by
Christopher Lensch

Daniel was destined for court politics. As he grew up in the royal surroundings of Jerusalem, however, he probably never dreamed as a boy that he, a prince in Judah, would serve his whole life in the courts of Babylon and Persia.

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