

“DEVELOPING AN ECCLESIASTICAL CULTURE OF SPONTANEOUS KINGDOM EVANGELISM”

By

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Preface

William Carey, the acknowledged Father of Modern Missions embarked upon his Missionary activity driven by three indisputable Biblical truths. First, this activity is a God-given duty. Second, it brings glory to the Triune God. Third, it necessitates a heart of compassion for hell-bound sinners. God “ignited him,” and with the “wind of the Holy Spirit” in the sails of his life (Hebr. 1:7a) he turned into a “flame of fire” (Hebr. 1:7). To honor him is not just to speak about him in enthusiastic language to create an atmosphere of euphoria, but rather to be “ignitable,” and to be “flames of Holy Spirit fire” ourselves. The least we can do is to pray to that end persistently, fervently and urgently. The aim of this Paper is to facilitate all this and by God’s grace to see it become a pulsating reality.

Personally I thank God every day that decades ago a fiery Irish Evangelist boldly, if not bluntly told me as well as the congregation that I served at the time that “Evangelism is an essential component of every believer’s sanctification.” After all, “to make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19) is not presented as an option. It is given as a *command to obey*! Furthermore, to be “lukewarm,” tepid, in the pursuit of this obedience runs the risk, if not sets us up for Jesus to “spit us out of his mouth” (Rev. 3:16). This made an indelible imprint upon me. Finally, after “instructing” us and presenting a method to convey the Gospel, he took me out to model the evangelistic outreach in the Field. This proved to be invaluable. In fact, from that very moment on I was fully persuaded that “Classroom Instruction” and “Field Training” do and must go hand-in-hand. Candidly, without the “take-out” I doubt whether I ever would have been able or willing to go from door-to-door.

I also thank God for the recognition of Jesus’ astounding prediction, which slowly but surely dawned upon me, that all believers are destined to do “greater works” than he himself did (John 14:12). With these “greater works” Jesus does not have “miracles” or “deeds of holiness” in mind. No one ever has or ever can best Jesus in either one of these two areas. No, he eyes the outcome of evangelistic outreach, which is “converts.” Pentecost set the tone for the fulfillment of his prediction with 3000 conversions in one day. This kind of fruit bearing glorifies God (John 15:8). It glorifies the Father who powerfully extricates “souls” from the unfathomable darkness of the Enemy (John 14:13). It glorifies the Son who “will see his offspring as the result of his suffering (Is. 53:11). It glorifies the Holy Spirit who completes the triumph of salvation by transmitting it (John 3:5; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 15:16). To love the Triune God with all of our heart, mind and strength is to seek to advance his glory and to pursue evangelism as an essential part of it.

I, finally, thank God for giving all of us the incomparable honor of being valuable co-laborers of the Father (1 Cor. 3:9), worthy ambassadors of the Son (2 Cor. 5:20) and effective instruments of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:3), gracing us with a vision for the plight of sinners (2 Cor. 5:16) by virtue of our regeneration (2 Cor. 5:17), a new passion to reach them (Is. 6:8) rooted in our justification (Is. 6:5-7), and a new mission to turn them into disciples (Mt. 28:19) as part of our sanctification (Mt. 28:19), and having us pursue them, armed with the Eternal Gospel (Rev. 14:6). Indeed, God and God alone is the One who does and can grant anyone of us a sorrowful, anguished and weeping heart (Rom. 9:2; Phil. 3:18) of boundless compassion (Rom. 9:3) that *hears the cries of hell-bound sinners before they arrive there and seeks to prevent this whatever the cost*, in the full recognition that there

will be no “crown” without the “cross” of the joyful fellowship of his suffering (Phil. 3:10a; Col. 1:24) and the conformity to his death (John 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; Phil. 3:10b).

INTRODUCTION

Every Church, whether local, regional, national or international, is under obligation to develop an “evangelistic” as well as an “instructional” Culture. This is to say that it should take both parts of Christ’s Double Command utterly serious and should go out of its way to “make disciples of all nations” as well as to “teach them to observe whatever God commands” (Mt. 28:19-20). This Paper deals mainly with the first section of this Double Command. But let me start out with “unpacking” some of the explicit and implicit details of its title in order to leave no doubt about the range and import of its objective. Candidly, it may require a paradigm shift to implement its content. It certainly will demand a radical commitment.¹

1. Explicit Details

The explicit details deal with the terms that are used in the title of the present Paper, namely, “Ecclesiastical,” “Culture,” “Spontaneous,” and “Kingdom.”

a. “Ecclesiastical”

To ascribe this double mandate as the bread and butter of the Church is to indicate that the obedience to this double command is *ecclesiastical* in the fullest sense of the word. It is a “universal” command that applies to both the leadership and the membership of the Church. “Making disciples” is not just the bailiwick of folks whom we designate as “Missionaries,” whether at home or abroad, nor only the property of small Local Bands of zealous Christians, not even the prerogative of “Missionary Societies” that function as a church (*ecclesiola*) within the Church (*ecclesia*).² Neither is “teaching disciples” confined to the Elder/Pastor-Teacher leadership, let alone merely to “The Man in the Pulpit!” No, the total Church is mandated and the total Church must shoulder Christ’s *double* imperative, and be fully intent to obey and implement it. This makes eminent sense to those who are

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I cannot but appreciate the emphasis upon the radical nature of the Christian Faith, as found in David Platt, *Radical* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Publishers, 2010). I trust and pray that even those who may have some question marks upon reading his book will endorse its central thrust,

See Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes which Hinder it* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984, 117-118, “In the beginning the Church (as a divine institution) was a missionary society (!): it added to its number mainly by the life and speech of its members attracting to it those who were outside.” But it became impaired “in its original purity” when its members failed (refused?) “to carry the Church with them in their own persons” and “very often did not desire the conversions of those among whom they live.” So, when the Church was no longer a “missionary society, enlarging its borders by multiplying local churches, societies were formed within it to do its work for it. Obviously they cannot do it properly.” Allen contends that the organization of missionary societies was permitted for the hardness of our hearts because we had lost the power to appreciate and use the divine organization of the Church in its simplicity for the purpose for which it was first created.” H expresses the hope that “we may yet recover it as such (in Christ),” but concludes that “at the moment we must confess that we have it not!” For a later edition, see Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes which Hinder it* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997).

fully aware that to make disciples of all (!) the nations cannot be left in the hands of a (relative) few. The *whole* Church is the *Militia Dei*, the Army of God, and it takes the *whole* Army to enter into battle. This already was the OT pattern (Josh. 1:14; 8:1), which can only be ignored at one's detriment. In fact, sidestepping it in whatever way and for whatever reason is a sure blueprint for ultimate defeat (Josh. 7:3).³ Not so incidentally, an Army needs a plethora of quartermasters who are able to supply all the logistics needed to enter a combat zone and to come out victorious. As we shall see below this eventually led to the institution of the Diaconate as a third Office (Phil. 1:1) in addition to that of Evangelist and Pastor-Teacher (Eph. 4:11)! We shall see as well that the service Deacons are both mandated and asked to provide is priceless.

b. "Culture"

But, further, the choice of the term *Culture* is intentional.⁴ It conveys that whatever it covers, and wherever it emerges and makes its presence known, it is so part and parcel of life, in this case the life of the Church, that it is or becomes its second nature. So to wipe it out is to wipe out the Church's life, if not the Church itself. To underscore, both cultures are ordered into existence by the Lord of the Church himself. Before his ascension he gave the Church a summons that consisted of two commandments. No more, no less! It must "make disciples" (evangelism) and "train disciples" (teaching them to observe).

Candidly, to be in hot pursuit of both is the sole dual purpose of the Church. All the obedience that God ever did, ever does or ever will require of his Church is summarized in these two commandments. All of the Law of God, whether of the Father, of the Son, or of

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That the "making of disciples" (evangelism) is a glorious *Church-wide* prerogative *as well as* a binding *Church-wide* obligation that therefore encompass every Church member has been tirelessly emphasized by a number of Churchmen with a burden both for God's Truth and for perishing souls throughout Church History! To mention a few, Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Ichthus Publications, 2014), throughout, esp. 134; Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls* (2014), *passim*; A. W. Pink, *Gospel Preaching Commanded* (Pensacola, FL: Free Grace Broadcaster, 2010), Issue 151, 3-5; Stephen Lawson, *Table Talk*, June 2012, Vol. 36, No. 6, 25, "Every pastor should evangelize the community. As a fisher of men he must go where the fish are. He must leave dry land, sail into the deep waters, and cast his net. Pastors must venture out into the community, share the gospel, and urge people to believe in Christ;" and last but not least, Andrew Murray, *The Secret Of United Prayer* (Fort Washington, PA: GLC*Publications, 1998), 6, 24, 30. Murray laments the fact that "the great work of bringing the knowledge of Christ to every creature has been entrusted to a Church that thinks little of her responsibility and of what the consequence of her neglect will be. Regrettably there are not enough like the men just mentioned! It is even more regrettable that these authors have rarely seen their emphatic call to full obedience in this regard come to widespread, let alone universal fruition. I would not be surprised if an ungodly fear to enter the battle of God, rooted in rebellion (See Deut. 1:26-32) as well as a basic disinterest in souls are the main contributing factors to ignore or even oppose Christ's Church-wide mandate to "make disciples." Incidentally, this is not the time or occasion to assess the place and function of so-called "Para-ecclesiastical Organizations." Here the term "para-ecclesiastical" is used in the sense that such organizations embark upon undertakings that the Church ought to be doing as the Church. Frankly, they often feel forced to emerge when the Church appeared to be too anemic to take necessary actions of whatever kind. Nevertheless, I would like to see the Church so rise to the occasion of Christ's double command and to be so entrepreneurial in the process that it eclipses the need for such organizations. That, indeed, would be the day! In fact, it would be a Grand Revival Day for which waves of thanksgiving and praise would reach "the golden altar before God's throne" (Rev. 8:3)! At any rate, it is heartening that these days we hear more and more voices that emphasize the need to honor the centrality of the local Church as God's agency to carry out the various ministries prescribed in Scripture!

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The need for a *Culture* of Evangelism is also strongly emphasized by J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 41ff, 63ff, 79ff.

the Holy Spirit, whether it consists of injunctions, prescriptions, prohibitions, interdictions, exhortations, promises, encouragements, warnings, threats, or anything else, is bundled up in these two.⁵

For that very reason, and by their very nature, if Psalm 119 is any indication, both these commands are awesome (Ps. 119:161). Let us by all means apply the substance, content as well as principles, of Psalm 119 to them. They are precious, more so than gold (Ps. 119:72, 127). They are sweet, more so than honey (Ps. 119:103). They are unforgettable (Psalm 119:61, 109, 153). They delight anyone with a true heart for God (Psalm 119:14, 16, 24, 35, 47, 92, 174). No wonder that such heart loves them, chooses them, desires them, longs for them, seeks them out, stores them up, keeps them and obeys them (Psalm 119:2, 4, 11, 22, 28, 34, 47, 56, 81, 97, 112, 119, 131, 134, 145, 166, 173). They shine brightly, give direction, spell wisdom and convey understanding (Ps. 119:98, 105, 124, 125, 135, 144, 169, 171). They give comfort, strength and preserve life (Ps. 119:28, 37, 50, 154, 156). They safeguard against worthless endeavors (Ps. 119:37). They lead to songs of praise, seven times daily (Ps. 119:54, 164). And last, but not least, they evoke indignation, tears, and even loathing when ignored, sidestepped or forsaken (Ps. 119:53, 136, 139, 158).

It is no exaggeration to assert that if the total Church, local, regional, national, and international, were to embrace, cherish and pursue Christ's Double Command as it should, as essentially "the only thing needful" (Lk. 10:42) in the spirit and footsteps of Psalm 119, it might well enter a (brand?) new era. In fact, it would be unstoppable, whether in times of conquest and victory (Hebr. 11:32-35a; Rev. 3:9) or in times of persecution and death (Hebr. 11:35b-38; Rev. 2:10). The very gates of hell would not be able to bring its relentless march, if not its surge, to a standstill (Mt. 16:18)! Frankly, in the light, the brilliant and glorious (!) light of all this, the sobering question is apropos whether the Church at all embraces Christ's NT Double Command in the same spirit, with the same hunger and with the same tenacity as Psalm 119 embraces God's known Law? After all, there is every reason to prod for an answer, since once again the latter (God's Law) is wrapped up in the former (Christ's Double Command). Everyone must agree that were the Church to rise to the heart's height of Psalm 119 it would take a giant step toward the display of an Evangelism Culture and the beginning of a new day! Just think of such Church that would have this on the tip of its tongue, "How I love Christ's Grand Double Command. It is my meditation (and hot pursuit) all the day" (Ps. 119:97). In fact, "it is the delight of my heart and I meditate on it day *and* night" (Ps. 1:2). Wow!

But there is more to undergird this. There is no way to get around the Biblical need for such Culture. The only reason why this bankrupt world still exists is for Christ as the Lion-Lamb (the King-Priest) to extricate disciples from all nations and languages through his cross and his resurrection (Rev. 5:9) in order to produce the Church as his Bride. Further, the only reason why the Church exists, made up of "kings and priests" (lion-lambs, lower case), is to gather these disciples and train them to be as pure as a Bride is and should be (Rev. 19:8). In short, the world is Christ's "breeding ground" for innumerable Christians (Rev. 7:9). At the same time it is the Church's "fishing ground" to catch them (Rev. 5:10) in and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rev. 4:5; 5:6). In a word, the Church is and ought to be "double-crossed." For one, it comes thankfully and once for all into existence in

To make sure that this is totally clear and totally understood, The Decalogue (The Ten Commandments) is included in the second part of Christ's Grand Double Command, which ensures the obedient compliance with "all that God commands!" The "all" covers the Decalogue as well!

and through “The Cross of Propitiation,” the removal of the burning wrath, the fiery fury and the terrifying torment of God (Rom. 3:25; Rev. 14:10-11; 19:15). For another, it must daily and cheerfully shoulder “The Cross of Propagation,” the exquisite making and training of disciples (Lk. 9:23; Phil. 3:10). Christ’s maxim is crystal clear. “I suffer and die for you, you must suffer and die for me,” and so “fill up what is lacking in my afflictions” (Col. 1:24). There is no other way to bear much fruit (John 12:24), the fruit both of souls (Mt. 29:19) and holiness (Mt. 28:20), and in the process to glorify the Father as the ultimate goal (John 15:8). To receive the Crown of Souls and Holiness both Crosses are indispensable. In Part I of this Paper the astounding magnitude of the Cross of Christ does and must receive our further specific attention. Especially its range will prove to be enormous. Part II spells out the corresponding significance of the Cross of the Christian. It covers particularly the way it should be on open display. In short, both the “what” of the former and the “how” of the latter stand in need to be carefully detailed in order for the evangelistic outreach to be both comprehensive and effective!

All this goes to say that this world has no independent purpose. It never had, never has, and never will have one. It exclusively serves the purposes of God. Apart from these purposes God would never have called it in existence (Creation), would never have continued it (The Fall), and would never have radically renewed it (Consummation). All this goes equally to say that the true Church of Christ in the present dispensation never may and never will swerve from these purposes, and therefore never may ignore, sidestep or compromise its dual mandate of “making and training disciples,” but must treasure and implement it prayerfully, zealously, intentionally, persistently, knowledgeably, diligently, and systematically as its grand and magnificent obsession, in fact, and once again, as ultimately “the *only* thing needful” (Lk. 10:42). In short, it will put itself on the line, radically and totally, joyfully and sacrificially, with all that this entails in terms of the entrepreneurial use of its talents, its skills, and its assets.

Frankly, it is no coincidence that our Lord already anticipates his double command in the awesome prayer that he taught his disciples at their request (Mt. 6:9-13; Lk. 11:2-4). It is awesome both in its God-centeredness and its range. The first three petitions focus on God, his Name, his Kingdom and his Will and call on him to make every one of them dominant on earth as they are already in heaven. In graphic terms, the first one pleads with Jesus’ and our “Holy Father” (John 17:11) to put the Canopy of his Name, which is the sum total of his perfections, over the whole earth. This is a staggering petition in that it covers every person, every area, every aspect, every place, every function, in sort, every nook and cranny of created reality, individual as well as corporate, personal as well as societal, marital, educational, economic, political, etc., etc. Under this umbrella and under this umbrella only can and will the double command hope to thrive. For all practical purposes the second petition pleads for God to regenerate people as the only way to advance his Kingdom (John 3:3, 5). The third petition follows suit and pleads with him to sanctify them as the only way to turn his Will into flesh and blood (John 17:17). But reciting the Lord’s Prayer will amount to a ritual only, as is the case all too often, unless the petitioners plead with God actually to have them stay underneath the Canopy of his Name as a matter of life and death and, further, to give them an ever-active stake in the implementation of his Kingdom and his Will, that is, fully to transform them, in case of need, and so totally to involve them both in Proclaiming the Gospel and in Speaking the Word.

In short, reality will replace ritual only when they do their *utmost* to assure themselves of a place under that Canopy (2 Pet. 1:5-11), and subsequently, if not consequently, do their *utmost* as well to climb “the hill of souls” (making disciples) and to climb “the hill of holiness” (teaching them to observe). In fact, either “hill” resembles a Mt. Everest, since one can only hope to reach its summit by having the oxygen tank of Christ and of the Holy Spirit firmly strapped on one’s back. This is to say, one can only hope to arrive there by the grace of God. That same sovereign grace is needed for converts to join the laborers. After all, both rebirth and holiness are his gifts! All this goes to state as well that true petitioners who identify themselves with the multifaceted Name of God in its utter Purity (Deut. 32:3-4; Rev. 15:3-4; 16:5-7) do and will have a further twofold burden, namely for souls and for holiness, and will not cease pleading with God to give them their “first convert” and their “first instance of holiness,” already intending to go to him for more, many more, once that first milestone is reached. Frankly, this has been my personal experience when I started to “climb.” Is it yours? And if it is, does “the fire in the belly” continue to pursue God for his gifts to you? Yes, “producing a soul” is a gift of God to the “producer.” So is “producing an instance of holiness.”

All this also explains the next three petitions. Climbing a Mt. Everest is an arduous undertaking, to say the least. So one simply cannot afford too much baggage! It surely would bog one down. That is why the fourth petition asks for C-Rations only (Prov. 30:8b). After all, there is a marvelous task to be done and a grand goal to be reached! But the need for abject humility is not far behind (Petition 5). “To my sorrow, I am not a very good soldier, God. Forgive me my many debts (Ps. 40:12b), as I, of course, forgive others.” “And, frankly, when I look at myself, I am not a very powerful soldier either (Petition 6). By all means, deliver me from the Evil One. I cannot take him on all by myself.” But then the climax in the last three petitions! They function as the antidote for any shortcomings in the second three petitions and provide the foundation for the first three, and so can turn these into a magnificent reality. They extol and celebrate God’s Unshakable Kingdom (Hebr. 12:18) God’s Omnipotence (Rev. 11:17; 19:6), and God’s Glory (1 Tim. 1:17), also in me under the Canopy of the Sum total of his Perfections and through me in the Hot Pursuit of souls and holiness. It goes without saying that a Church which embraces, cherishes, utters and personifies The Lord’s Prayer humbly, confidently, fervently, incessantly, urgently, and in unison, individually and corporately, in all its depth, height, breadth and length cannot and will not be far from displaying the very Evangelism Culture envisioned and mandated by its Lord in his Double Command.

c. “Spontaneous”

The adjective “spontaneous” in the title of this volume stands in need of some explanation. It was introduced as an intentional term about a Century ago by a man who had drunk heavily from both the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles, and as a result argued all of his life for the missionary method and practice to become a reality as they were pursued and displayed in these NT books. Spontaneous ecclesiastical expansion and how to achieve it was a major, if not the essential component in his argument.⁶ He means with this “the

expansion which follows the un-exhorted and un-organized activity of individual members of the Church explaining to others the Gospel which they found for themselves; the expansion which follows the irresistible attraction of the Christian Church for men who see its ordered life and are drawn to it by the desire to discover the secret of life which they instinctively wish to share,” the expansion that is subsequently bound to lead to the birth of “new churches”⁷

As we shall see, all this is very much in evidence in the early Church. We shall also see that all this is fully intertwined with the enabling and empowering presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit, with the awesome reality of Biblical Revival, and with a heartfelt commitment to sacrifice in terms of time, money, etc. To tip my hand, Biblical Holy Spirit Revival and Biblical Holy Spirit Church only, spawned by the Biblical Gospel, does and can produce a Biblical Holy Spirit Church as well as its spontaneous Holy Spirit expansion.⁸ Further, when Peter characterizes the chosen people of God, the Church, first of all as a royal *priesthood* (1 Pet. 2:9), he puts “sacrifice” on the front burner. In this regard the Church mirrors its Master. The government rests upon his shoulders and this is unlimited and endless (Is. 9:6-7). He is undisputed royalty! But in order to arrive at a Kingdom citizenry he must first be “The Man of Sorrows” (Is. 52:13-53:12, esp. 53:3). He is the Lion (King) of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). But in order to extract a Church from an unfathomably dark world (Rev. 5:9), he must first be the Sacrificial Lamb (Rev. 6:6). Similarly, for the “Royal” Church to reap the “crown” of its own expansion, it must experience the self-denying cross of its “Priestly” duty. No priesthood, no reign (Rev. 5:10)! Candidly, it was very much recognized ever since the concepts of spontaneous expansion and sacrifice were championed, whether instinctively or otherwise, that these two called for a fundamental paradigm shift.⁹ We shall see as well that this was and is a correct conclusion. To put it mildly, neither one of the two, spontaneous Holy Spirit expansion or sacrifice, is in overwhelming evidence these days, at least not in the Western world!

Part I details further what “spontaneous expansion” looks like, and Part II how to identify “sacrificial service.” If in either instance we must conclude that we have fallen from the biblical heights, whether generationally or more recently, Christ’s summons to repentance would extend itself to us as it did to five of the seven Churches he addresses in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 2:5, 16, 21; 3:3, 19). Since these seven Churches represent the Church Universal, the percentage of local Churches that stand in need of repentance is astonishingly high. This by itself already calls for continuing self-examination on the part of every local Body of Christ. But in this context we would also do well to remember what a godly woman once recorded when she clearly stood in need of repentance. She came to the humbling recognition that she did not have it in herself to repent, however much she tried. It is a grace of God that he must grant (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25)! Her timely advice was for us to gaze at and call on the Crucified Christ until the hardness of heart dissolves and to the Risen Christ until repentance emerges. After all, he dies and rose for this as well as for the benefits of forgiveness and holiness. So he is sure to answer us when we seek him,

Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion (2012).

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Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion*, 7; Payne, 6.

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Allen, 9

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Payne, 109.

weeping over our sins and fully trusting him as our Savior who came to set us free from them.¹⁰ -

d. “Kingdom”

Last, but not least, taking my cue from Jesus himself as he throughout his life on earth proclaimed “The Gospel of the Kingdom” (Mt. 4:23), I argue below that this serves as a Summary term that covers the various facets of the NT Gospel, which is designated in several ways, such as “The Gospel of God,” “The Gospel of Christ,” “The Eternal Gospel,” “The Mighty Gospel,” “‘My’ Gospel” (Paul), etc.

2. Implicit Details

To conclude this Introduction, three more items need to be reviewed. The first one comes in the form of a curious question. The second one is a reminder that can hardly be repeated enough.¹¹ The third one focuses on a pivotal concept. Following this threefold review a paragraph is added to make the transition to the body of this Paper.

a. “The Nations”

First, then, the question! Why would God want to bother with “the nations?” The “dramatic” answer is six-fold.

To start with (1), God owns the nations. It is remarkable how many Psalmists residing in God’s tiny earthly toehold, Israel, again and again boldly proclaim that their God is “The Supreme Creator and Ruler” of *all* existing nations, past, present and future, large or small, with all that this entails in terms of required worship, providential disposition, certain judgment, etc., etc. (Ps. 2:8; 7:8; 9:5; 18:49; 45:17; 46:10; 48: 1, 10; 50:4; 57:5; 60:8; 66:7; 67:3-7; 68:32-35; 72:10-11, 19; 76:8, 12; 77:14; 79:10; 87:4; 94:10; 96: 7, 10, 13; 98:3, 9; 102:15; 103:19; 104:32; 105:7; 110:5; ; 113:4; ; 114:7; 135:5-6 ; 137:7-8; 146:6; 148:11; 149:7; 150:6)! This must have looked like “bragging” without the right to do so. But God himself validates this by addressing the nations at enormous length through his prophets (Is. 13-24; Jer. 46-51; Ezek. 25-32; Joel 3; Amos 1:1-2:3; Obad.; Nah. 1-3).

Further (2), all nations are corrupt to the core. Apart from their cauldron-like violence and their sexual perversity that literally cries to high heaven (Gen. 6:2, 4, 13; Nah. 3:1), they display both a rebellious and arrogant self-aggrandizement that defies God in his face (Is. 13:11, 19; 14:3ff; 16:6ff; 17:12ff; 20:5-6; 24:5, 21; Jer. 45:8, 15, 20; 48:18, 29; 49:25; 50:24, 29; Ezek. 27:1ff; 28:2, 6, 9, 12ff; 29:3, 9; 31:2ff; 32:2, 19; Dan. 4:30; 5:22ff; Obad. 3; Nah. 1:11; 3:9) and a lethal hostility that seeks to annihilate his people Israel (Jer. 50:11, 33; 51:7, 25, 34, 49-51; Ezek. 25:3, 6, 8, 12, 15; 26:2; Joel 2:2-3, 19; Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13;

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M. Basilea Schlink, *Repentance--the Joy-filled Life* (Minneapolis. MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 49-53.

This is in line with the sentiment that Paul expresses in Phil. 3:10 and Col. 1:24!

Obad. 10ff; Nah. 2:2). Frankly, the latter two appear to be the main, if not the exclusive reasons why God pours out his fierce and unrelenting judgment upon them.^{12,13}

Also (3), the tragedy of nations is palpable. We only need to be reminded of the Empires of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome in ancient history, and the Empires of France, Germany, Japan, the Soviet Union and Great Britain in the more recent history. The basic pattern is invariably the same, “Rise, growth, glory,” always by the cruelest, most violent and most sex-offensive means, soon to be followed by “decay, fall, and death.” All in all, “history seems like one vast obituary.”¹⁴ The tragedy is that no one seems to recognize that this obituary-history repeats itself endlessly. There are always folks who embark upon “Empire Building” again and again, whether they are grandiose Empires politically or any other type of empires, smaller in size, whether regional, local or even individual. In fact, who is exempt of this? Even the sluggard turns around on his bed to occupy his “empire” of comfort. Ambition for whatever reason and for whatever purpose drives humanity to climb multitudinous hills of accomplishments, whether they are judged good, bad or indifferent. In a sense this is to be expected. God never changed his threefold mandated blueprint for mankind, “make sure you pursue your spirituality (image of God), your humanity (dominion-taking) and your sexuality (multiply) (Gen. 1:26, 28). Even the fall could not and did not derail this (Gen. 9:1-2; Ps. 8:5-8).¹⁵ But by seeking to pursue any of these three in rebellion against God, in defiance of God, in the ridicule of God, or in the neglect of God, the “law of decay and death” takes over immediately and will catch up with you. In a word, climb the hill of achievements of whatever kind, and be assured that upon reaching the summit, you will find it empty. You die! To waste one’s mind, one’s energy, one’s exertions, in short, one’s life, is the tragedy of all nations in all their components. To be oblivious of this, in the face of all the overwhelming historical evidence, is as ironically impressive as it is fatally absurd.¹⁶ After all, no accomplishment, however celebrated, does or can make a difference for eternity in the Judgment that everybody will have to face (Hebr. 9:27). There is no benefit, even in gaining the whole world, if one loses one’s life (Mk. 8:36).

But there is more. We are only half way. God (4) so loved the world of nations that he gave his only begotten Son to meet their corruption head-on and to rescue them from certain destruction! To be sure, the latter was fully deserved as the worldwide flood puts on open displays and the prophetic addresses against the nations explain in full. Nevertheless, they were from the very outset an essential part of his “plan of salvation” (Gen. 12:3c) that was all along designed “to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth, which includes the nations, or in heaven, which includes the removal of the Enemy (Rev. 12:7ff), making peace through the blood of the cross” (Col. 1:20). In short, the judgment of the nations was not cancelled. It was literally

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Reading through all the OT prophecies against the nations in one sitting is an eye-opener that everyone should yearn for.

13

There is no trace anywhere in the prophetic literature that could give rise to the idea that transgressions of a so-called “natural law” would form the basis for God’s judgments. Not only does this run counter to the fact that there is no such thing as “natural law” that functions as a universally accepted standard. Carl Henry has jettisoned this once and for all as a less than scholarly “illusion.” Besides, it is way too tame an explanation. God takes the rebellious arrogance of the nations very, very personally. And it shows in his burning and scorching anger and in the terrifying and utter destruction that results from it (See once more a Bible chapter, such as Is. 24).

14

See for this, Austin Phelps, *Studies of the Old Testament* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books), 2015), 232.

There is no textual evidence that God ever curtailed the threesome of Gen. 1: 26, 28 by means of the Noahic Covenant. Even if all three components are not explicitly mentioned in the Flood account, the rest of the OT makes more than up for this. The “dominion” element, which is not explicitly mentioned in Gen. 9:1-2, is presented in living colors in Ps. 8:6-8!

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Phelps, 233.

heaped upon Jesus! Surely, the depth of Divine love, the height of Divine grace, the length of Divine mercy and the breadth of Divine goodness are indescribable!

But beyond this (5), the grand objective of the worldwide reconciliation “that has been made known to all nations” (Rom. 16:26a) is emphatically “to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations” (Rom. 1:5; 216:26b), and that for the sake of God’s Name and Glory” (Rom. 1:5b). Already in the OT there is a glimpse of God’s compassion (Is. 15:5; 16:9) and saving mercy (Is. 19:23-25; Ezek. 29:13-14) to this end.

Finally (6), the task to implement all this is squarely placed upon the shoulders of the Church! Initially it consisted mostly, if not exclusively of Jewish believers (Acts 2:41). But as “the dividing wall of hostility” between the Jews and the nations was in principle broken down through the Cross, which brought about the peace and harmony of a fully integrated “household of God (Eph. 2:13-19), this “joint household” soon became a visible reality in spite of some early adjustment “hiccups” (Acts 11:1-18; 15:1-21; Gal. 2:11-14). So, here it is. The Church of Jews and Gentiles, standing shoulder to shoulder, marching arm in arm, and taking action hand in hand, is God’s exclusive Plan A. It must to enter the nations as a Minister of Jesus with the Gospel of God to bring them to obedience, by word and deed, and so to make them acceptable to him, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16-18).

The monumental nature of this Divine Design must make an indelible impression. It also should be crystal clear that God, after meticulously and patiently implementing many, if not most of its phases for Centuries, would not be very tolerant with a Church that decides to bow out at this crucial and final phase just when the going threatens to get rough and it must abandon its comfort zones. Frankly, it would be unconscionable for the Church, after having been bought with blood and having been filled with the Spirit, to be indifferent to the Cosmic Divine Design and to give a nod to its own puny, self-serving, worldly priorities of whatever sort in whatever way. Instead it should be electrified by this Design in worshipful adoration, together with every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea (Rev. 5:13), and set literally everything aside to devote itself *in toto* to Christ’s Double Command, embracing it at his very feet, and now for the third time, as “the only thing needful” (Lk. 10:42). It is hardly surprising that refusal to come to the help of the Lord as well as slackness in doing so both invite God’s curse (Judg. 5:23; Jer. 48:10).

b. “The Cost”

Now, secondly, the reminder! It must be reiterated again and again, until it sinks in, that the mandate to climb the hill of souls, as well as the hill of holiness for that matter, is not exactly a starry-eyed undertaking. Jesus does not mince words. There is a price to be paid! In fact, he is bluntly forthright about this, if not brutally honest, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up the cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel’s will save it” (Mk. 8:34-35). This is further corroborated by Jesus repeated alerts, if not “warnings.” First, as a general rule of thumb, “unless a seed dies, it will not produce fruit” (John 12:24a). Then a communal reminder, disciples, “as the Father has sent me (to my death), I am sending you (to yours) (John 20:21). Finally, a pointed message to Peter, “they will carry you where you do not want to go (in the flesh),” indicating “the kind of death” he would suffer (John 21:18-19a). The end product is awesome. “Much fruit” of conversions and holiness (John 12:24b), both of which glorify God (John 21:19b). To be sure, our “slight and momentary affliction (!)” leads to “an eternal weight of

glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17). But the fact remains that the pavement of the road to this glory is and remains “suffering,” however eagerly shouldered (Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24) and “death,” however joyfully welcomed (2 Cor. 4:11).

In this context it has been said that the leadership as well as membership of a Church may loudly profess faith in these uncompromising truths. But unless they intentionally and earnestly seek to embody them as a matter of life and death for others as well as for themselves, they may well stand condemned as “practical atheists.”¹⁷

Too often, I am afraid, does the proclamation of the truth of God’s Word, any truth for that matter, warrant only one response. “Proclaimer-Physician, start by healing yourself! Please, *first* practice hands-on what you proclaim. *Then* proclaim it. ‘Show’ us that you yourself pay the necessary price of climbing the two hills of souls and holiness, and then ‘tell’ us to imitate *you*, with all the ‘why,’ the ‘what,’ and the ‘how’ of it. Indeed, “*show* and tell!”

It is quite possible that “practical atheism” does not just come into the picture in the context of the truth of Mark 8:34-35. It may well be much more widespread than we (ever) imagined. In fact, it does raise its ugly head whenever the hearing (and proclaiming) of the Word is not matched by the doing of that Word, if James is any indication, with all its frightening, self-deluding consequences (Jam. 1:19-24)! It is imperative that we keep this in mind when we scan the biblical data on the way to an Ecclesiastical Culture of Spontaneous Evangelism! These data are not “for your information only.” No, they are compelling road markers to follow in obedience, unless we want to have the label of “practical atheism” hang over our head.¹⁸ It goes without saying that we better seek to avoid this like the plague!

c. “Disciple”

And now, thirdly, the pivotal concept! The word “disciple” is clearly a pivotal element, if not the central component of Christ’s Double Command. This therefore must receive our utmost attention. Part II of this Paper starts out by “plumbing” the radical nature, the exhaustive range and the far-reaching extent of this biblical concept. Apart from one time in the OT (Is. 8:16), the

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One sample of “practical atheism” is the sin of worry. Someone overtaken by this sin is literally “torn apart” in his heart or mind (Phil. 3:7) as he faces a potentially or actually threatening “black hole” of a future (Mt. 7:34) over which he has no control. Here is the rub. When he cannot control it, there is no control. Period! God’s control of all things and all situations does not even come into the picture. This is “practical atheism” of the worst kind. It also goes to show how easy it is to succumb to it. Of course, Philippians 4:6-7 is worry’s pointed antidote. The mandated sequence of prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, petition, culminating in peace is both deliberate and powerful! It is also noteworthy that “the peace of God” (Phil. 4:7) is complemented by “the God of peace” (Phil. 4:9). In fact, the experience and joy of “the peace of God” is the base camp compared to the summit of the presence of and fellowship with “the God of peace.” While the practice of prayer yields the former, the practice of godliness ushers in the latter!

Non-Christians are “outright atheists” when they by whatever means at their disposal, the spoken word or the printed page, are belligerent in fighting the idea of the existence of God. They seek to eradicate his presence from all layers, areas, aspects and facets of life, including all of society. They are “doctrinaire atheists” when they resolutely deny the existence of God, but have a *laissez-faire* attitude. “I don’t bother you when you don’t bother me.” They are “functional atheists” when they live their lives in total indifference to and disregard of God. They never give him much, if any thought. Christians are “practical atheists” whenever and wherever they ignore that “of God, through God and unto God are *all things*” (Rom. 11:36). They simply fail to take him into account (all too often!). That this does and must grieve God is crystal clear in Scripture (Is. 1:3). That it always has consequences is equally clear (Josh. 9:14). That it at times arouses God’s anger is clear as well (2 Ki. 1:2ff; 2 Chron. 16:7ff; Rev. 3:2ff).

term “disciple” occurs only in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. But, as we shall see, its substance is present throughout Scripture.

d. “Transition”

The remainder of this Paper comes in two parts. Part I asks the question how to *arrive* at a spontaneous ecclesiastical evangelism culture. This is Classroom material.¹⁹ Part II deals with a second question, how to *display* a spontaneous ecclesiastical evangelism culture. This takes us hands-on into the Field. For that very reason it is a burning issue, since the drop-out rate at this point is alarming. Usually no more than 10% of Classroom attendants venture out into the Field when the time for that arrives. This must be countered at all costs for the Church not to be relegated to the backwaters of the nations in order to be snuffed out by them in the end. Historically this has happened innumerable times. The “A+” of head-knowledge simply must be matched by the “A+” of feet-performance. But this can and will only be realized when it becomes an “A+” in heart-knowledge (Deut. 5:19; 29:4; 30:6; 1 Ki. 3:9; Is. 6:10) first. Indeed, it takes a heartfelt commitment, loads of time and tons of energy to make a go of it, on the part of everyone involved, trainers as well as trainees, not to speak of additional sacrifices, whether financial or otherwise.

This should prompt us to storm the gate of heaven at this very moment already, beseeching God humbly and confidently, fervently and incessantly, jointly and urgently, to grace his total Church, leadership and membership alike, to absorb the truth in Part I with heart and mind, and to embody the praxis in Part II on the every-day waterfront of life, determined to bite any and all providential bullets, whatever the price or the cost. After all, Scripture is both adamant and crystal clear, “You don’t have, because you don’t ask” (Jam. 4:2c). But much more about the place, the function, the content and the aim of prayer below!

However, to tip my hand some more already, the embrace of Part I and II would amount to committing oneself to a paradigm shift. Such shift is always painful and costly. The old is not good enough and the new requires a radical and total commitment. Such is the case as well when “Spontaneous Evangelism” becomes the avowed goal. Business as usual is no longer sufficient or acceptable. It is like asking folks who are on a leisurely stroll to run a marathon. It is not unlike asking the Church to fasten its seat belts and not to rest until it reaches Revival heights. The components that make for Revival as Scripture delineates this show it to be a veritable Mount Everest, an impossible goal to reach for humans. But what is impossible with man, is possible with God. In fact, it must be realized because it is both promised and mandated to do so. This puts prayer as called for above in the right perspective. It is indispensable. Period! But what someone may say is “adding insult to injury,” “ordinary prayers” and “ordinary prayer times” won’t do. Only those who master and display Revival Prayer can hope to reach Revival Heights. What all this entails is to be spelled out in Part I and II. For now it is sufficient to be forewarned

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To facilitate “Classroom” instruction I have prepared an Evangelism Syllabus, an Evangelism Booklet and an Evangelism Tract. The Syllabus functions as a Manual that covers pertinent Evangelism data in a step by step fashion. Students must master them before they enter the Field. The Booklet is an extensive Gospel presentation. Students should be thoroughly acquainted with this as well. The Tract is a short summary of the Booklet and can be handed out. It conveys the basic elements of the Gospel. These three documents are distributed separately and can be obtained upon request. The present Paper is an introduction to all three of them.

and so to be forearmed. Those who accept this “warning” will quickly “fasten their seat belts” and literally get ready for “the ride for their *lives*.” This is correct, for no life is acceptable before God unless it is life from God, that is, an obtained life “from above” (Jam. 3:17), an experienced Christ Life (Gal. 3:20; Col. 3:3), a displayed Spirit Life (1 John 2:20), a “Revival Life!”²⁰

I can only recommend to all those who seek Revival Life in Revival Prayer in order to reach Revival Heights, to form a small Group of five (or so) thirsty believers (John 7:37) in order to seek God’s face together at least once a week for a specific time, such as an hour or more. The number “five or so” is chosen to ensure that even if one or two cannot make the weekly meeting, the small group is still intact. During such time the participants should not exchange requests. That is bound to eat up the time. Furthermore, they should pray around the circle to avoid lulls and to assist folks who are shy. Finally, they should pray loud enough to carry everyone with them into God’s Throne Room. Hopefully the group will soon flourish into a Revival Group of Revival Believers. For further Biblical components of Biblical Revival and Revival Prayer, see below. My recommendation is that those groups in the main plead with God for souls and holiness, and be particular and concrete in doing so.

PART I

“HOW TO *ARRIVE* AT AN ECCLESIASTICAL CULTURE OF SPONTANEOUS KINGDOM EVANGELISM”

A. “Ministerial” Leadership

In order to arrive at an Ecclesiastical Culture of Spontaneous Evangelism the issue of Leadership must be settled as a top priority. No one would want to launch an ecclesiastical “instructional” program in the Church (teaching disciples to observe whatever God commands) without an “instructor” (Pastor-Teacher). Similarly, no one would want to launch an ecclesiastical “service” program (providing logistical support) without an “expert” (Deacon). So no one should ever want to launch an ecclesiastical evangelism program (making disciples of all nations) without a “point-man” (Evangelist).

Scripture insists on a threefold continuing ecclesiastical leadership. Apostles and Prophets with a capital “A” and a capital “P” (Eph. 4:11ab) have once and for all laid the foundation of the Church in producing Scripture as the inerrant Word of God (Eph. 2:20), and have exhaustively unveiled the mystery of the Gospel (Eph. 3:4-5). So with their demise they had fulfilled their function and consequently their office ceased. Of course, apostles (folks with a specific mission) with an “a” (lower case) and prophets (proclaimers of the Word) with a “p,” lower case, continue to be with us. But ever since the death of “The College of the Apostles” nobody can and may claim that Jesus breathed the Spirit upon him so as to enable them “magisterially” to produce additions of whatever kind and in whatever way to the inerrant and authoritative Word of God (John 20:22-23). The upshot would be a Church under a fallible man, rather than under the infallible Word. This is always fraught with danger and could well have the potential of disaster. However, the three offices of evangelists, pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11cd) and deacons (Phil. 1:1) are an altogether different story. They did, do and will continue until the Return of Christ! There simply are no exegetical reasons to question this, none at all!²¹

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I wish to be very sensitive to my fellow Christians who on the basis of Eph. 4:11 hold to a continuing *Five-fold* Leadership. As such they appear to cherish “present-day apostles” to keep the Church pure, to have it stay unswervingly on the straight and narrow, and “present-day prophets” to keep the Church moving, to have it go confidently in the right direction. These goals, of course, are eminently laudable. But I would like to ask its proponents, many of whom I regard highly, to give serious consideration to the following. First, the Greek original in Eph. 4:11 only allows for a *four-fold* Leadership, Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Pastor-Teachers. The Greek calls for the hyphenation of the fourth Office. Second, to my knowledge the “Five-folders” never systematically incorporate the Office of Deacon in their Leadership structure. This is passing strange in the light of Phil. 1:1. Third, there is really no need for “present-day apostles.” The Church has *The Apostolic Word* to keep it from straying and going off the deep end. We should never entrust this to fallible men as a kind of “intermediaries!” Fourth, there is really no need for “present-day prophets” either.

Frankly, it is really tragic that otherwise highly respected icons in the Reformed Faith (John

In the area of the transmission of God's Word, which is the duty of all believers, God has given some of them a special giftedness. Peter designates this as the gift of "speaking the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11a). Paul refers to the same giftedness but labels it "prophecy" (Rom. 12:6b). However, he indicates that in this *area* of giftedness two types of gifted *persons* are operational, the ones who "teach" (Rom. 12:7a) and the ones who "exhort" (Rom. 12:8a; for this exegesis, see also J. van Bruggen, *De Ambten in de Apostolische Kerk* (tr. *The Offices in the Apostolic Church*) (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1984), 151-152). Teachers convey the truth of the Word of God. We would say today, the truth from Genesis to Revelation! This is how they keep the Church pure, on the straight and narrow. Exhorters, on the other hand, keep the Church moving. They are implication-visionaries and as such have amazing insights. This is how they provide direction. In short, with the authoritative presence of The Apostolic Word and the functional presence of Exhorters the legitimate bases of concern on the part of the "Five-folders" are fully covered. This prompts me to give the following recommendations in the form of a plea! Let the three types of Leadership, of Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers and Deacons, totally saturate themselves with The Apostolic Word and see to it that the Membership fully follows suit. To read and mediate upon Scripture one hour a day or four times a year would go a long way to soak in its content. Such is not just an optional "nicety." Candidly, it is a "crying" need first of all to honor and know God in the sum total of his perfections and his instructions, and so to prevent disaster. After all, Scripture is crystal clear, "To the Law and to the Testimony! There is no daylight (that is, complete darkness) for those who refuse to go this route (Is. 8:20)! Scripture gives this some additional concrete feet when it tells parents to have it so lodged the Word in their hearts that they teach it to and talk it with their children when they are inside their homes and when they are outside, when they get up and when they go to bed, that is, all the time. Further, they must show its paramount significance by tying it to their hands and their foreheads and fastening it on their doorposts and gates, and so "attack" the eye-gate as well as the ear-gate (Deut. 6:6-8). Then, let these three types of Leaders continually advise, counsel, the Church, each in its own area of giftedness, how to conduct itself and how to move forward corporately and individually. Further, let the Membership act like the Bereans of old (Acts 17:10-11) and determine whether The Apostolic Word sanctions this advice, counsel, in each instance or not. If and when the Leadership is Word-saturated, the Church is assured of the "guidance that keeps it from falling by the wayside" (Prov. 11:14a), and if and when there is a plurality of Leaders, the Church is assured of "an abundance of counselors, which spells safety" (Prov. 11:14b). Further, if and when a noble Membership (Acts 17:11a) is Word-saturated as well, it will receive Word-saturated counsel with eagerness. What is my final plea? Let present day so-called "apostles" be content to function as pastor-teachers or evangelists, according to their giftedness, and present day so-called "prophets" as exhorters. They may be a cut above their peers in terms of their ability and insight. In fact, this is to be expected. Giftedness is not uniform in breadth, depth or length. At any rate, this will ensure that they are always "one among many," honoring the need for an abundance of counselors. This cuts off the danger of being "lone rangers." Further, let them always take their cue from and refer to The Apostolic Word which is sufficient for everyone in all areas and circumstances of life. This prevents the danger of them being "magisterial." Also, let them ever saturate themselves with The Apostolic Word and see to it that those who are entrusted to their care do the very same. This inhibits everyone in principle from going astray. Equally, let them in all humility be accountable both to their peers and to their "Berean" flock. Even Peter was accountable (Gal. 2:11-14), apparently without carrying a grudge when he was called out (2 Pet. 3:15-16)! So was Paul (Acts 17:10-11). This precludes them from going practically off the deep end. Finally, let them give careful consideration to the Office of Deacon and integrate it into the structure of ecclesiastical Leadership. Frankly, taking this route does not remove anything away from their ministries. In fact, it enhances them. After all, the total Apostolic Word would have the sole say and the final say. They will also increasingly gain the trust and respect of their people once they have a track record of always and exclusively living and acting under the canopy of and with reference to the Apostolic Word. They show thereby that they are not "power hungry," and have no intention to consolidate their "power position." It goes without saying that all this can only remain a beckoning "ideal" unless it is "bathed in Revival Prayer!" Three things in conclusion! For one thing, if there is any hesitancy on Five-folders to go this route, let them remember that Eph. 4:11 only knows and mandates *four* Offices. This should at least give them pause! For another, by relinquishing the titles of "apostle" and "prophet," they would ensure that the Apostolic Word is in unobstructed view, would remove any potential barriers that might jeopardize the finality of this Word, and so would have it unimpeded shine in its fullness of range and strength on everyone and in everything. All this should give them thankful joy! Finally, in the final analysis they should ask themselves whether they really have a leg to stand on since Jesus did not breathe the Holy Spirit on them as he did on the College of Apostles in order that they would produce God's inerrant and authoritative Word. Viewed in this light they can only claim an untenable "hybrid" status for which there is no Biblical backing.

Calvin,²² John Owen) deemed it necessary to argue that the office of Evangelist essentially vanished with the demise of the Apostles. This tragedy can be put in graphic terminology. God promised an “Abraham Tank” with enough fire power to conquer nations (Gen. 12:1-3).²³ The assembly of this “Tank,” made possible by the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ, was completed on the Day of Pentecost with the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. From this perspective, however, there is every reason to argue that the dismissal of the Office of Evangelist was and is tantamount to cutting off the Tank’s barrel. Of course, the Tank still can and does move. In fact, it *has* moved quite well at times. But it is severely hampered to invade and capture new territory.

To be sure, whenever the Spirit fills the Church from top to bottom with his “fire power” (Rev. 4:5), and equips it with both Holy Spirit combat “horns” and Holy Spirit entrepreneurial “eyes” (Rev. 5:6; see in this context also Ps. 18:21; 89:17, 24; 92:10; 112:9; 132:17; 148:14 *versus* Ps. 74:4-5; 75:10), there invariably is a rapid spontaneous expansion involving both the leadership and the membership of the Church.²⁴ Luke’s account of the events during and after Pentecost leaves little doubt about this. Under the vibrant and compelling leadership of the

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John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Allen, tr. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, n. d.), Book IV, Chapter iii, Section iv, 321, “The three offices (in Eph. 4:11, of apostles, prophets and evangelists) were not instituted to be of perpetual continuance in the Church., but only for that age when Churches were raised where none had existed before.” But while he does not deny that God has “sometimes” raised up evangelists such as he has done “in his time,” he nevertheless insists that it is “an extraordinary office, *because* (italics, mine) it has no place in well-constituted churches.” This is clearly a kiss of death! Ever since it took an unconscionable and irrefutable toll of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches that historically by and large followed in his footsteps! It virtually enthroned pastor-teachers as the titular heads of the Church, and comparatively speaking relegated the making of disciples to an orphan status. E.g., the Puritans produced hundreds of thousands of pages in the area of “training disciples.” But I have only been able to locate less than five hundred pages that dealt explicitly with the actual “making of disciples.” This excludes, of course, evangelistic messages by pastor-teachers who cover the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, and naturally, in their context, encounter many evangelistic passages to proclaim. But they did so as pastor-teachers. At any rate, the question may well be asked whether Puritanism lost its influence because it failed to take Part I of Christ’s double command as seriously as Part II. If this is the case, it should put the handwriting on the walls of every Church that suffers of an “Evangelism Deficiency!” Incidentally, in a more recent Reformed setting a strong and vigorous case has been made to re-instate the Office of Evangelist *post haste*, by K. Doornbos, *Zending naar Gereformeerde Beginselen* (tr. *Missions according to Reformed Principles*) (Groningen: Erven A. De Jager, 1949), esp. 3-20, 36-46. He argues that the Office of Evangelist differs from that of Pastor-Teacher. But it should not be regarded as lower in rank! I fully concur. He also makes a persuasive case for the following. The local church should be the home base of an Evangelist. Evangelists should be the point-men to enter new areas of evangelistic ministries and not Pastor-Teachers. Seminaries do not function as institutions to train Evangelists. Regrettably in his day and age he was like a lone voice in the wilderness! He essentially proposed a paradigm shift. This proved too much to handle!

I chose this terminology as a telling play of words analogy to the powerful “M1 Abrams Tank” in the arsenal of the US Army, which is recognized as pivotal to mop up enemy forces on the way to victory.

This fact led Roland Allen as an essential element of his biblical and theological underpinnings to hammer away at the need to be “drenched” with the Holy Spirit to make any progress. Without the Baptism with the Spirit (Acts 2:38), there would not and could not be a Church. Without the Gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38) there would not and could not be a Christian. Without the Infilling and Fullness of the Spirit (Acts 4:31; 7:55; 11:24) there would not and could not be a Spontaneous Expansion of the Church! Whenever and wherever the latter is missing, there surely would be a lack of a clear vision about, a necessary embrace of, and a glowing display of the Spirit, such as these were indubitably present with the Apostles. “*We cannot but speak*, they say” (Acts 4:20)! See for this Roland Allen, *Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917); David Paton and Charles H. Long, eds., *The Ministry of the Spirit – Selected Writings of Roland Allen* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1983); David Paton and Charles H. Long, eds., *The Compulsion of the Spirit – A Roland Allen Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1983); and Payne, 47-50.

Apostles the number of the disciples in Jerusalem swelled rapidly in a very short period of time. The initial three thousand quickly became five thousand, and eventually grew into multitudes, which, in turn, saw their number multiply greatly (Acts 2:42; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7).

Soon thereafter Antioch experienced the very same Holy Spirit surge. But here the membership took the spontaneous lead. “Filled with the Spirit, they spoke of Jesus Christ out of the fullness of their heart. They could not be silent. They were filled with the life and the love of Christ. They could not but witness to him. It was this that gave the gospel its power of increase: every new Christian became a *witness* for Christ. Here we have the secret of a flourishing Church: *every believer a witness Jesus*. Here we have the cause for the weakness of the Church: so few who are willing in daily life to testify that Jesus is Lord.”²⁵ Clearly the first tally of Christians was great (Acts 11:21). Candidly, spontaneous populous expansion, such as on display in Antioch, is and should be an essential part, if not a hallmark of every Church, local, regional, national and international! In fact, its absence should make us tremble with a godly sorrow that does and should lead to repentance.

But all this, of course, did not make official leadership expendable. Far from it! In its wisdom the Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas to Antioch, which appeared to have doubled the number of Christians (Acts 11:22-24). Soon after that he was joined by Paul (Acts 11:25-26). The relationship between the blossoming congregation and the new leadership was amazing, if not awesome. Multiplying Holy Spirit spontaneity “desires order.”²⁶ “Please, tell me how I am doing and examine where I am going!” So, it was welcomed with open arms in the persons of Barnabas and Paul.²⁷

Incidentally, the concept of “populous spontaneity” as encountered in Acts has not been without its critics. Can we really make one small section of Church History, however impressive, the mandated benchmark with which to measure all of it? Further, does not the spread of the Gospel by “uneducated novices” run a twofold danger? The dilution or truncation of that Gospel, for one, and, for another, an (involuntary and uninformed) lapse into destructive “syncretism” by adopting any number of basic tenets or practices of the worldview of the environment they seek to transform?²⁸ We can also ask whether this is a possible invitation for self-willed and self-assertive individualism to run amok and in the process ignore or even sidestep the established leadership of the Church! The answer to these questions is threefold.

First of all, the Book of Acts simply describes what takes place by definition when the Holy Spirit is present in his fullness. “Torrents of living water” will “spontaneously” flow from deep within every one of us (John 7:38).²⁹ Is there any reason to believe that it will be any different in

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So, Andrew Murray, *The Secret of United Prayer* (Washington, PA: GLC * Publications, 1998), 24-25.

So, Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, 14.

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The total cooperation, if not intertwinement of godly Leaders who passionately show the way and equally godly Members who joyfully fall in line, such as in the present context is invaluable. Telling samples of this are already found in the OT (Josh. 1:16-18; Neh. 4:6). All too often, however, Leaders simply fail to show up (Neh. 3:5b) or are counterproductive stumbling blocks in the advance of the Kingdom (Ezr. 9:2; 10:15; Neh. 6:17-19; 13:28). Regrettably, members are not immune to either one of these “failures” (Ex. 15:24; 17:2; Num. 11:1; 14:1-4; Neh. 4:10).

C.I. Van Heerden, *Die Spontane Uitbreiding van die Kerk* by Roland Allen (Tr. “The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church by Roland Allen”) (Kampen: J.H. Kok, n.d), 223-226.

According to the literal translation these “torrents” originate in one’s “belly.” This is remarkable. The human belly always takes in, three meals a day, twenty one a week, ninety a month, one thousand a year, etc., etc., and never returns anything. And when it does, it is far from pretty. But when a miracle of grace takes place, it does not just produce. It

any epoch of Church History when folks are truly and totally “thirsty” (in repentance), truly and totally “come” to Jesus (in faith) and truly and totally “drink” from him (in Revival Prayer)?

Further, does not the Antioch phenomenon show how to prevent situations in which the Gospel might, could or would be mishandled by so-called novices and the Church might, could or would be manhandled by the environment? The Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas to provide Antioch with an encouraging, facilitating and “Ordering Leadership” which was, and always will, be received with open arms by a Membership that is marked by a genuinely “Biblical Spontaneity!”

Finally, as long as “the flesh” is operational in outright sinners, there will always be tares (disrupting unbelievers) among the wheat (consecrated believers). And since this “flesh” remains operational in all of God’s saints (Rom. 7:24), they are by definition “mixed bags” as well and often far from perfect. But would this necessitate us to rob the Church of its awesome “baby” of inspired and inspiring Holy Spirit zeal by throwing it out with the awful “bathwater” which sooner or later will inevitably raise its disorderly demonic head?³⁰ I think not! If such “bathwater” would by definition call for this, we might as well close shop altogether.

Note well that the “Ordering Leaders” in Antioch did not magisterially seek to control or to tie up, let alone to restrict or to curtail volcanic evangelistic Holy Spirit zeal. They recognized that they could not control a mighty rushing Holy Spirit wind, even if they wanted to do so. So, they did not come to reorganize, to regroup or anything like it. They came to *join* the pulsating action, and—*serendipity*--the Church doubled in size again. They came *ministerially* to teach Berea type folks (Acts 17:10-11) in order to keep the action pure and on track (Acts 11:26). In short, they came to link up with existing Holy Spirit action, to support it, to enrich it, to deepen it, to heighten it, to broaden it, to enlarge it, to enhance it, and to intensify its vigor, its power surge. They came to heap Word-fuel upon the already blazing Holy Spirit-fire, which was equally blazing in them (Acts 9:17; 11:24; for a similar ministry, see Acts 18:26-28)!³¹

Frankly, the presence of this fire did not come as a surprise to them. Not at all! It should not come as a surprise to us either. After all, had not Joel already prophesied that the Spirit would be poured out on *all* flesh, on sons and on daughters, on young and on old, on male and on female, and that *all* would turn into God’s “pipeline” to irrigate the nations (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17-18; see also Acts 4:31)? Neither did a properly guiding and empowering Spirit-filled Leadership, as evidenced throughout Acts 1-12 come as a surprise. So today it should not come as a surprise either. In fact, its absence should be startling, and raise serious eyebrows. After all, did not and does not God-in-Christ give such Leadership to keep the “pipeline” going full tilt and to clear it from all possible debris (Eph. 4:11ff)?

To be sure, it is a fact from Church History that the Church has not always operated on this (Revival) level. In fact, it frequently and grievously fallen down on the job in terms of an anemic ecclesiastical leadership as well as a passive membership that failed (or refused) to go “full tilt.” The “ebb tides” seem to be much more numerous than the “flood tides.” But this does not and

yields, in fact, torrents of the purest water of life. This is a miracle, indeed. Only God’s grace can transform perpetual self-centeredness into a servant-hood that enriches others to overflowing!

Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, 15. Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust) uses a similar argument when he defends the Glory of the Great Awakening against its detractors who cavalierly dismiss it because of the demonstrable “excesses” and “backslidings” of its so-called converts. There has not been one work of God’s glorious grace that The Enemy did not seek to vilify and did not somehow manage to contaminate (See Acts 5:1ff).

cannot give anyone the right to “provincialize” or “compartmentalize” the Book of Acts by claiming that for reasons of an often failing history it does not and cannot possibly have universal application or implications. This is essentially to discredit Acts as God’s Standard. To do so is to fall victim to the grievous fallacy of giving the authoritative say to the historical perspective, regardless all possible protestations. History is not the standard. Scripture is. The Church ought to recognize that *by virtue of the Baptism with the Spirit* the Book of Acts is the Divine Benchmark and Measuring Stick, should acknowledge that as such it roundly condemns much of its own Lamentable History (mirroring Jesus’ example in Revelation 2 and 3), and must do everything in its power to “Universalize” its Glorious Message!

By way of an illustrating anecdote that mirrors the Antioch phenomenon, in a sub-Saharan African country the principal instructor in a Pentecostal Bible College bemoaned the fact that the Church population grew so quickly and the number of Churches increased so rapidly that he had a hard time training a sufficient number of men who could assume the leadership role. Frankly, I congratulated him and confided on the other side of the coin that schools in the Western world churn out so many graduates that there are not enough places to put them. Logistics inform us that in a little over a decade 35,000 Churches had to close their doors in North America alone. All this spells a vast Grand Canyon-like difference between an “explosion” (Africa) and an “implosion” (The West), that is, as we shall see further below, between “Revival” and “Evaporation.”

Today’s Western world clearly faces the kind of implosion of “trouble and shame” that Nehemiah encountered (Neh. 1:3). Gone are the times that Christianity virtually ruled the roost in Europe as well as in the USA. Europe has been overrun by atheistic secularism and the USA is being overrun by a godless humanism. In the process the Church turned into a shadow of its former self. This should alert us to the sobering fact that any kind of training of the ecclesiastical membership must not only focus upon thoroughly biblical content, but also must seek to return it to the presence and height of the spontaneous expansion that is typical of Revival times. Theological Seminaries and Bible Colleges are rarely geared to operate with that in mind. It is all too often not in their line of vision. But in order to stem, if not turn the tide they better “gird their loins for action” (1 Pet. 1:13) and start by taking a page out of the book of Psalmists and Prophets. In times of distress when enemies rule and ridicule they cry their eyes out, and literally cast themselves upon the Lord in their prayers and pleas. Read Psalm 74. Read Psalm 79. Read Psalm 80. Read Psalm 83. Read Psalm 89. Read Daniel 9. Read Nehemiah 1. Read Jeremiah 9:1, “O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” When taking into account the onslaught of Idolatrous Islam in the Middle East, of Atheistic Secularism in Europe and Godless Humanism in the USA these slain now can be counted in the hundreds of millions, if not billions.

At any rate, these choice men of God belong to “The Order of the Broken Heart and the Swollen Eyes,” of which Jesus eventually would become President (Mt. 23:37; John 11:35), with the Apostle John as Prime Minister (Rev. 5:4) and the Apostle Paul as Minister of Foreign Affairs (Rom. 9:1-2; Phil. 3:18), an Order into which membership all of us are *enrolled* by definition, “to be burdened about the imperiled souls of countless multitudes of men and women, estranged from God, bent on destruction and facing the awful doom of a Christ-less conflagration.”³² This class of men does not have a life of ease, and is not always popular. But those who belong to it are endowed with Spirit power to be the catalysts of a new day. They are the movers and

shakers, necessary to break through spiritual logjams, whether of ignorance, indifference, anemia, or otherwise. In fact, with their incessant prayers and urgent pleas they move God to shake the Church until leaders and members jointly turn into the *Militia Dei* in full battle dress to face the nations in order to catch disciples and to teach them obedience. That is, to enter the war, with all that this entails in terms of self-denial and sacrifice, in order to win it outright!

It should now go without saying that the training in evangelism which has this in view as its great and magnificent obsession presents an immense challenge, especially when it takes place in ecclesiastical situations that are plagued by the malady of an “Evangelism Deficiency,” whether short term or long term, whether consciously or not, and intentionally or not. In such scenarios such training must at least in part be remedial in nature. This would require repentance with a view to forgiveness and either the initial gift of or a renewed infilling with the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 4:31). At any rate, when the presence of the Holy Spirit and his inevitable “torrents of living water” (John 7:37-39) are in unmistakable evidence, both the orderly (leadership) and the spontaneous (populous), the spontaneous (populous) and the orderly (leadership) expansion do and should go hand in hand, and for that very reason such expansion will be rapid. Scripture leaves no doubt about this, and Revival times in Church History attest to it.³³

Once the biblical necessity of ecclesiastical leadership, also in the area of “making disciples” (evangelism), is acknowledged and settled, the question of the precise ministry and function of the Evangelist becomes urgent and therefore must be raised and answered. Well, they are twofold. First, the Evangelist must proclaim the Gospel. This is a no-brainer. But, further, he must also train the membership of the Church to that very same end. It may require some biblical argumentation to back up this statement. But, candidly, such argumentation is essentially supplied by our Lord Jesus himself. In the Hillside Sermon he calls his disciples “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” This is what they are. Period! But he adds something. Salt that loses its saltiness is thrown out as good for nothing and trampled underfoot. And light that remains under a bushel is equally good for nothing. So what he tells his disciples is this. “You are the salt of the earth. But are you? You are the light of the world. But are you” (Mt. 5:13-15)? So they are far from home free. In fact, after his double statement he proceeds to train them for three years so that they “finally” would become what they are. It is rather sobering that in the end they even failed the final exam, at least at its first go around!

At any rate, this Divine model does and should establish once and for all the dire and indisputable need for a training period of exhaustive substance until the trainees are fully certified, that is, receive their well-earned diploma or degree, and are ready to take on “the earth” as God’s functional “topmost preservative” (salt) and to be launched into “the world” as God’s operational “illumination agents” (light). This is also emphatically underscored by Paul. He hammers on the self-same anvil when he charges Timothy to teach the faithful, and not to let up until they are able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). It stands to reason that this takes a radical and total as well as joyful and sacrificial commitment in terms of time and energy on the part of both teacher and pupil, especially in the light of Jesus’ three-year model.

According to Acts 1:1, his training is intensive and takes place hands-on “in the field” (the prime focus) as well as studiously “in the classroom” (mentioned in the second place). Notice carefully what must be accepted, embraced, promoted and put into practice as the principal and therefore benchmark *order* of all ecclesiastical training. “Let me *show* you and in this way teach you how to swim while *in the swimming pool*.” After all, this was and still is “The Way of the

Master!” Regrettably, this Divine model has all too often been ignored or sidestepped, regrettably with dire consequences! This must be immediately evident when we hear today’s Western World labeled as “Post-Christian,” together with the common consent that a serious societal downgrade is in full swing. Somehow the Church has fallen short in fielding a fully equipped army that is sufficiently victorious over the unfathomable darkness of the present world. Somehow the Church has fallen short in fielding a fully equipped army that is sufficiently victorious over the unfathomable darkness of the present world. Culturally the spiritual and moral conditions have deteriorated so badly that it is hardly realistic even to talk about turning the clock back.³⁴ Frankly, we need a new clock, a Revival clock, first of all in the Church. Then and then only we might by the grace of God succeed to “synchronize” the world.

At any rate, before I detail what a training “school” ought to look like biblically and concretely, with the proverbial Revival Clock in mind, the first order of business is to assess what the proclamation of the Gospel is all about. After all, this was, is and always will be the central mandate of the Evangelist (See Acts 8:26-38).

Just think of the rapid moral downgrade in the legally sanctioned cruel murder of sixty million babies in the abortion mills of the USA alone, in the factually sanctioned triumphant march of the LGBT contingent throughout society, in the politically sanctioned popular practice of same-sex marriages and transgenderism, not to speak of the increasing rate of an ever wider variety of crimes and addictions and an avalanche of deficit spending on all levels of society, especially the Federal level, as if there is no tomorrow or no God. Yes, “or no God!” He forbids “theft,” whether it is “*in* the present” or “*from* the future.” The latter is what generational deficit spending is all about. Besides, it is rebelling against the extent or range of the blessings that God providentially bestows upon us. All this must make us conclude that even the thought already of seeking to turn the public and communal clock back amounts to a pipedream! The (still accelerating) downgrade is humanly speaking unstoppable. Nothing but a Biblical Revival Clock will do. Thankfully, we can take heart because such Clock was present in the past wherever Revival fires were burning. These led both to great numbers of conversions and to a remarkable sanitation of society. That is why Christian (!) hope may spring eternal. What occurred may by God’s grace occur again! But these fires did come, do come and will come with a price. Revival fires require fuel. Only if the Church is eager to function as such can there be a new dawn by God’s mercy and to God’s glory. Nevertheless, we better remember that burning fuel leaves no residue. So the necessary eagerness is a matter of radical and total commitment. Come to think about it. This spells CHRIST. To the full! “His Cross” did demonstrate it. What possibly could be the objection to spell it CHRISTIAN? Equally to the full! Only “my cross” can demonstrate it.

B. Gospel Proclamation

A recent publication laments that any poll of “one hundred self-professed evangelical Christians,” asking them for a definition of the Gospel, is likely to result in “sixty different answers.”³⁵ Frankly, after 2000 years of Church History this scenario is extremely troubling and basically shameful. No agreed upon Gospel definition after two Millennia? The Church simply ought to do better. In this context I am not covering all the various answers people gave, sharing their confusion, or even all the various proposals scholars make to remedy the situation. This would take us too far afield. But I must outline what the Scripture itself teaches. It should be noted that Scripture never stipulates a full definition of “The Gospel.” Therefore it must be culled from the aggregate of data that Scripture presents. For a starter, the Gospel is described in a variety of ways, as the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Eternal Gospel, I Mighty Gospel, “my” Gospel (Paul), the Eternal Gospel, etc. This has led people to believe that to use a variety of Gospel presentations is quite OK.³⁶ This, however, is not acceptable. To be sure, there are various *aspects* or *facets* to the Gospel which are presented as such in Scripture and therefore may be proclaimed as such, like the facets of a beautiful diamond. But there is only one Full Gospel that ties all these aspects together. Just as there is always one Brilliant Diamond that lies at the root of its various facets! In this case it is The New Covenant Gospel as the Penthouse of the Covenantal Edifice. So, let us take a close look at the pivotal function of this Penthouse.

The New Covenant

From a thorough examination of the historical tapestry of Scripture itself we can, if not must conclude that it definitively testifies to the content of the “Good News” toward the close of the OT in terms of *The New Covenant* (Jer. 31:31ff; Ezek. 36:25-27). Let me explain.

Up till the promulgation of the New Covenant OT history had made one fact crystal clear, and it is this. Mankind, including Israel, was and is radically and totally bankrupt. This prompted both the Flood and the Exile. The burning wrath of God was palpable in either instance. All of mankind was drowned in the Flood, except for one man and his family. Further, all of Israel was banished from its land, apart from a few “stragglers,” who proved to be equally obstinate as those who were exiled (Jer. 40:6; see also Jer. 41-43). The nature and extent of Divine wrath *may never* escape anyone. In one instance Ezra exclaims, “Will your fierce anger consume us completely” (Ezr. 9:14)? In apparently the same context the Psalmist repeats this heart-rending cry (Ps. 85:5). And Jeremiah does not count out that God’s exceeding anger could continue (Lam. 5:22), even after confessing his “unceasing love, his “unending mercies” and his “ever present faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23).

Frankly, this *does not* and *will not ever* escape us, once it is recognized that God’s wrath is just as fully deserved in the present and the future as it was in past history. Scripture overflows with references to God’s wrath from Genesis all the way to Revelation. Were it not for the

astounding fact of the Cross of Christ, it would never cease, and apart from a heartfelt embrace of that Cross one cannot escape it either (Rev. 14:9-11). When it comes to all this, very few folks “tremble at” the Word of God, regardless whether they hear it proclaimed in public places or read it personally in the privacy of their homes. This is passing strange since “Trembling *Coram Deo*” is the very precondition to enjoy the presence of and the fellowship with God (Is. 66:1-2).³⁷ The contrite recognition of his awesome holiness and hand-in-hand with this of his awful wrath should, in fact, be meant to remedy any shortfall in this regard very quickly. Hence the need to “tremble” must be vigorously proclaimed to put God’s people “in their (assigned) place.” It will also prevent them from turning to an ever lurking and threatening folly in faith and practice (Ps. 85:8c).

Further, the nature of mankind’s bankruptcy and therewith the reason for God’s wrath is equally clear. Its bankruptcy is threefold. First, the heart of man is wicked to the core (Jer. 17:9). It is so rebellious that all its thoughts and intentions are only evil continually (Gen. 6:5, 11-13; 8:21). The Psalmist compares it to a “cobra” (Ps. 58:4). Further, the past of man is equally wicked. It is no better than filthy rags (Is. 64:6). Paul even ups the ante when he likens it to “human dung” (Phil. 3:8). Finally, the life of man is wicked as well. It is so destructive that it is identified as “deadly poison” (Rom. 3:13; Jam. 3:8). The damning nature of his threefold indictment is sufficient to make everybody tremble and to stop every mouth! Candidly, no one in his right mind would ever welcome a cobra, human dung or poison in one’s residence. So, neither does God! Hence the Flood and the Exile! They are such astounding demonstrations of his just wrath that they better sink in deeply. When they do, they will be unforgettable and put a permanent stamp upon one’s heart, one’s mind, one’s will, one’s emotions as well as upon one’s life, one’s speaking and one’s acting. It would put on clear display what it means radically and totally to exist and to function *Coram Deo* in the sum total of his revealed perfections.

It may be well to recognize that these three problems were generated by Adam in Paradise. God had told him that he would always be Nr. 2. If Adam listened to him and obey him, he would live. But if he would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as a source of

“Trembling *Coram Deo*” is a common occurrence in the OT and is present in the NT as well (See Ex. 15:14; 19:16; 20:18; Ezr. 9:4; 10:3; 2 Sam. 22:8; Ps. 18:7; 60:2; 97:4; 99:1; 104:32; 119:120; Is. 5:25; 32:11; 57:15; 64:2; Jer. 5:22; 10:10; 33:9; 51:29; Ezek. 26:16,18; 32:10; Dan. 6:26; Hos. 11:10, 11; Joel 2:1,10-11; Am. 8:8; Hab. 3:7, 10, 16; Mk. 16:8; Acts 7:32; 24:25; Phil. 2:12; Jam. 2:19). This occurrence stands to eminent reason when one is confronted with God’s presence, his holiness, his commandments, and his wrath. Even the inanimate earth and heavens are said to tremble before God. It is high time not only that this vocabulary returns to the proclamation of God’s truth, but also that this reality is experienced by the recipients of this proclamation. The frequent mention in the OT goes hand in hand with the fact that the first Testament is the Book of God the Father. Failure or refusal to recognize this cannot but adversely affect one’s Christology. Only a trembling heart can truly appreciate the awesome glory of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. “The dreadful wrath of God the Father that I with my offensive (cobra) heart, (dung) past, and (toxic) life now totally acknowledge and tremblingly experience as fully deserved is poured upon the Son. What an *amazing, amazing, amazing* grace.” See for this also Andrew Bonar, *Robert Murray M’Cheyne* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust: 2015), 38. M’Cheyne’s counsel to “assured believers” is always “to rejoice in their heir-ship; and yet, to rejoice with trembling; for that is the very character of God’s heirs.” We can only imagine what his counsel would be to unbelievers! Incidentally, from my perspective all those efforts by “scholars” to start nibbling at the edges of the OT by putting question marks behind a “six-day creation” (Gen. 1) or a “historical Adam” (Gen. 2) with all that this entails in terms of “original sin,” may well be traced back to a failure (refusal?) to approach the first Testament as the Book of God the Father, resulting in a failure (refusal?) to tremble before him. It is hard to imagine how folks who come face to face with and are duly impressed regarding their cobra-like heart, their dung-like past and their poison-like life “with fear and trembling” could decide to sit in judgment over the Word of God. Candidly, to start nibbling at the edges of that Word is bound to end up by destroying the core. Brazenly to deny the truth of “original sin” is already a giant step in that direction.

interpretation (knowledge) and conduct (good and evil) outside of God, he would surely die. This stood to reason. After all, the only source outside God was “the liar and murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). No wonder that deriving knowledge from a liar and conduct from a murderer would spell disaster. In fact, it would be suicidal. But the Enemy ridiculed all this. Who would want to be Nr. 2 all the time? A stifling, if not deadening proposition! Never an opportunity to roam freely, never to fly on one’s own wings! How unthinkably depressing! But eating of the tree could and would turn the tide. Adam would triumphantly become Nr. 1, the master of his own fate, being able in unfettered freedom sovereignly and independently to determine his own knowledge and his own conduct. He would not die. Far from it! For the first time he would experience what true life was all about. He would truly begin to live for the first time as his own man! This clearly enticed Adam and he decided to take the gamble. He ate!!

Here the root cause of his sinfulness is laid bare. He rebelled against God and told him in no uncertain terms to move over. From now on he would be the king of his own castle! With this the cobra heart emerged. This always goes after God as a lion goes after and tears into its prey (Jer. 12:8). Of course, irony of ironies, in deciding upon his course of action Adam listened to Satan. Thereby he proved God to be correct. Mankind can never be Nr. 1. It is always Nr. 2, either under God or under Satan. In fact, by following the lead of the Enemy, Adam enslaved himself to him and would have become his permanent Nr. 2, with all that this entails for time and (a spine-chilling) eternity, had it not been for God’s sovereign and intervening grace.

The two additional problems of sin quickly made their appearance as well. Prompted by his rebellion Adam ate of the tree in flagrant disobedience and heaped guilt and shame upon himself. Then he recognized his nakedness as a token of his polluted and destructive life. These two, then, are the components of sin that Holy Writ eventually would pinpoint in graphic terms as “human dung” and “poison.”

That this triad of problems spells “death” is and should be clear on the face of it. In fact, it does so in a twofold way. Satan brutally murdered Adam when the latter freely and willingly entered into his trap. Further, God’s judgment put him on death row as the result of his rebellion with all that this entailed in terms of his guilt and his pollution. But this is not all. By *participating* in Adam’s sin (Rom. 5:12), all of mankind opted for a cobra heart, a dung past and a toxic life as well, and so immediately and simultaneously joined him on death row. Frankly, this triad of rebellion, guilt and pollution may be tempered by the goodness of God in which he literally bestows upon mankind an abundance of his common graces which make life livable, pleasurable, and often even exciting. But let no one deceive himself so as to deny the grim and damning reality of this triad. Also, folks may not spot their three problems when they look into a mirror. But they are fully visible in the mirror of God’s Word, in unmistakable and “deadly colors,” and will always be “owned” as such to one’s tearful dismay and blatant horror when the Spirit of God does his convicting work and opens the eyes with a view to a godly sorrow that leads to repentance!

At any rate, it is against this backdrop, which is ever so dark, that Almighty God takes action. He is the immutable God! He cannot deny himself. After all, he has sworn by his own holiness that he would persevere with his utterly corrupt mankind! So he cannot and will not go back on his promises, whether to Adam and Eve (following the fall regarding the victory of Eve’s seed), to Abraham (on his way to Canaan regarding Israel and the nations), to Moses in the desert (with regard to an assured future), or to David (guaranteeing him a permanent throne). But glorious and necessary as these promises may be, at the time they were introduced they were clearly not sufficient to stem the tide of the humanly irremediable utter darkness and radical

bankruptcy on the part of mankind in general and of Israel in particular. They were partly framework promises, both negative and positive. Negative: I will refrain from sending another Flood, “although the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen. 8:21). Positive: I will you a land and a specific nation, and this will pave the way to bless all nations (Gen. 12:1-3). They were partly bedrock promises as well, in fact, there were two of them. First, eventually the seed of the woman would crush the enemy (Gen. 3:15). One could and should count on that! And, second, the Davidic Kingdom would last forever (2 Sam. 7:16). One could and should rejoice in that. But both framework and bedrock promises stood in need of completion, a superstructure. So, for the sake of his holy name (Ezek. 36:22) God literary goes all out, if not for the jugular, when he tops off the earlier promises with a brand-new set that once and for all will turn the tide of sin and death. These are the awesome and towering penthouse promises of the New Covenant.

These New Covenant promises were foreshadowed, alright, such as, in the sacrificial system instituted in Leviticus (Lev. 1ff). They were even announced to be in the offing after the Exile (Deut. 30:6). But they were never officially and climactically promulgated until late in Israel’s history. Their earlier OT absence kept Israel and the nations fully mired in their radical and total threefold corruption. But their promulgation opened up a new dawn, and their NT presence brought about the brilliant light of a new day, the day of the three solutions, in fact, the light of “The Age of Glory” which the Psalmist had fervently longed for, heart-brokenly prayed for and joyfully predicted (Ps. 85:9).

In short, these promises and these alone are “The Good News” that once and for all will produce and safeguard the reality of a new mankind. So when we seek to establish what the Gospel, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Eternal Gospel, “our” Gospel, is all about, we better take our cue from this New Covenant, which replaces “a ministration of sin, condemnation, and death” (2 Cor. 3:7, 9a) with “one of righteousness, approbation, and life” (2 Cor. 3:8, 9b). This New Covenant Gospel ties all these aspects together. After all, it is promised by the Father, produced by the Son and transported by the Spirit. Further, it holds out regeneration as the key to the Kingdom entrance and sanctification as the content of the Kingdom substance. Finally, God swore by his own holiness that his Covenantal purpose, with all that this entails is unchangeable (Hebr. 6:17).

With all this in mind I now will define the Gospel in simple and straightforward terms, and then unpack this definition in its concrete and detailed New Covenant substance. The latter is consciously and intentionally done to pave the way for a concrete and hands-on evangelistic outreach with a Message that is right to the point, simple to grasp and easy to convey.

Frankly, according to Scripture the “good news” of the Gospel is twofold. It has both a definitive and a progressive dimension. The definitive Gospel aims at wretched sinners at the entrance of the Kingdom and serves as the instrument to make disciples (Mt. 28:19): “The Triune God saves triple (threefold) wretched sinners in a triple (threefold) way.”³⁸ The progressive Gospel aims at wretched saints in the fabric of the Kingdom and serves as instrument to train disciples (Mt. 28:20): “The Triune God saves triple (threefold) wretched saints in a threefold way.” For the moment we confine ourselves to the definitive Gospel to turn to the progressive Gospel later. The definitive Gospel has three components.

This definition (simply) broadens and deepens from a wider biblical perspective what Paul states in one of his trustworthy sayings, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

1. The Triune God Saves

First, then, The Triune God originates the New Covenant. God the Father promises the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31ff; Ezek. 36:25-27). God the Son personifies the New Covenant (Is. 42:6; 49:8). God the Holy Spirit personalizes the New Covenant (Is. 59:21). In simpler wording, what God the Father pledges, God the Son produces and God the Holy Spirit transports and delivers. Each Person of the Trinity is fully involved and is equally crucial in the salvation of sinners. By way of graphic illustration, an unexpected promise of a brand-new vehicle would be rather awesome and, of course, deeply appreciated. But there is little substance to such promise, unless it is factory produced, manufactured. The promise and production of a new vehicle would be equally awesome. But, once again, unless it is transported from the factory and delivered to the would-be recipient, even these two, all by themselves, will amount to nothing. In short, the matter of salvation is not merely Patri-centric, nor Christo-centric, nor Spiritu-centric. It is comprehensively Theo-centric in its essence and its application, with each Person of the Trinity making his own indispensable contribution.

Candidly, the OT is the Book of the Father. It explains in detail why and how he arrives at the promulgation of the New Covenant. The NT Gospels are the Book of the Son. They explain where and how he proceeds to turn the New Covenant into a reality. From Acts and onward the NT is the Book of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ It explains what and how he tangibly implements the New Covenant. So there is every reason equally to bond with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in profound gratitude and joy for the New Covenant, which is the very summit of all earlier covenantal dealings of the Triune God with his people, who hail from both Israel and the Nations. This summit and all that it entails is God's Glory in which the sum total of the Father's God's perfections come into their manifest own. Therefore it does, must and will evoke unparalleled worship, both in deed and in word, as his Church literally surrenders everything (deed) to him (Rev. 4:10), and bursts out (word) in praise of him (Rev. 4:11). This is complemented by an even more deafening worship and praise for the Son who "factory-made" what the Father did hold out in prospect (Rev. 5:9-12), which climaxed in turn in the joint worship on the part of every creature in the whole universe, including the Church, of both the Father and the Son (Rev. 5:13-14). That the Spirit has a fully integrated part in this worship by

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With this "traditional" view I throw in my lot with one of the most acclaimed point-men in Systematic Theology that the Church has ever produced, Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1928), II, 287; Eng. Tr., *Reformed Dogmatics*, John Bolt, ed., John Vriend, tr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003-2008), II, 320, "Just as in the ontological Trinity the Father is the first in the order of subsistence, the Son the second, the Holy Spirit the third, so also in the history of revelation the Father preceded the Son, and the Son in turn preceded the Holy Spirit. The 'economy' of the Father was especially that of the Old Testament (Heb. 1:1); the 'economy' of the Son started with the incarnation; and the 'economy' of the Holy Spirit began on the Day of Pentecost (John 7:39; 14:16-17). The Father came without having been sent, the Son came after being sent by the Father (Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48; John 3:16; 5:23, 30, 37; 6:28ff; etc.), and the Holy Spirit only came because he was sent both by the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 16:7)." This is robust and authentic Systematic and Biblical Theology at its finest! Frankly, the traditional view has come under "friendly" fire for some decades now, based frankly on a misread of Lk. 24:47 and John 5:46. Jesus supposedly claims that the OT is *his* Book. This is not the place to discuss the essence and the admittedly far-reaching implications of this exegesis at length. Such must await another time and occasion. But suffice it to say for now that it is a faulty one. To be sure, Jesus does tell his opponents in the middle of his earthly ministry that "Moses testifies of him" (John 5:46) and shares with two of his disciples at the end of this ministry from "all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Lk. 24:47). But he definitely did not state or even imply that Moses testifies of him *exclusively* and that all of Scripture *only* contains things that pertain to him.

virtue of both his awesome Person (Rev. 4:5) and his equally awesome transporting work (Rev. 5:6) is explicitly indicated as well.

2. The Triune God Saves *Triple Sinners*

Second, the Triune God saves triple sinners. God the Father targets the three problems of the sinner with his threefold promise. For my Holy Name's sake I take the heart of stone out of you and replace it with a heart of flesh, cleanse you of all your filth and idolatry, and put the Holy Spirit within you to make you holy, according to the dictates of my law (Ezek. 36:25-27). God's covenant dealings as presented in the OT can best be depicted as a "covenantal edifice," with each of these dealings functioning as a distinct unit. Because the various stories are intricately interwoven, the edifice rises organically. But each story makes its own unique contribution, all aiming at the promulgation of the New Covenant.⁴⁰

Prior to the New Covenant, Scripture enumerates the following stories, the Pre-Fall (Gen. 2:16-17), the Post-Fall (Gen. 3:15), the Noahic (Gen. 9:8-11), the Abrahamic (/1: Gen. 15:18-19 and /2: Gen. 17:1-14), the Mosaic (Deut. 29:1-28), and the Davidic (Ps. 89:28-37; 132:11-18) stories. As is commonly recognized, some of these stories focus on promise and others on law. But to conclude to two diverging perspectives is misleading and unacceptable. God clearly starts with law (Pre-Fall). In the ensuing bankruptcy he has little choice. He either terminates mankind or responds with his promise. He does the latter, in fact, three times (Post-Fall; Noah; Abraham/1). This, however, does not mean that he lowers his standards in any way, shape or form. He makes this crystal clear by returning to law (Abraham/2; Moses). When this exacerbates the corruption, he once again underscores promise, be it with a solemn warning not to forget law (David). In other words, law and promise, promise and law leapfrog over each other of sorts.

This may not and should not come as a surprise since both are a reflection of the nature of God as he reveals himself in the sum total of his perfections. God is utterly holy (law). He is also utterly good (promise). These two perfections never were, never are, and never will compete with each other, let alone detract from each other or neutralize each other. This is why in a corrupt scenario law (as the reflection of his holiness) by necessity leads to promise (as a reflection of his goodness), and *vice versa*, why promise by equal necessity leads to law. God's holiness does not negate his goodness. Neither does his goodness negate his holiness. Just as justification never sends sanctification packing, and sanctification does not show justification the door! The Divine genius of the New Covenant is that it merges promise and law, law and promise.

The implications of all this reach wide and far, in fact, very wide and very far! It is the antidote against all kinds of aberration that invite folks to tilt one way or another. This is not a laughing matter. To tilt too much is to capsize sooner or later. All this goes to say that each New Covenant member will by definition wrap his one arm around the promise and the other around the law. When he contemplates the law, he knows that he needs the promise. When he contemplates the promise, he knows that he needs the law. He loves them both, cherishes both, delights in both, rejoices in both, thanks God for both, and praises him for both. After all, by

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Throughout this Paper I emphasize again and again that the New Covenant embodies not just a *monex gratia* (justification), nor even merely a *duplex gratia* (justification and sanctification), but a glorious, robust and full-orbed *triplex gratia* (regeneration, justification and sanctification). This emphasis is and remains necessary until the three magnificent facets of the New Covenant diamond universally hit home and are or become unforgettable!

bonding with God the Father they bond equally with his holiness and goodness, his goodness and holiness. Therefore, the failure to hunger for promise and law, for law and promise, and the refusal to embrace both simultaneously, equally, and from the heart may well prove or lead to one's disqualification from being a Christian.

This is further underscored *in toto* and in detail in the production of the New Covenant by God the Son as well as in its transportation by God the Holy Spirit. When we bond with the Son and the Spirit, we bond both with promise and law, with law and promise. The New Covenant promises are fully embodied in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20). But they include law (Rom. 3:31). The Holy Spirit writes the law on the hearts (Hebr. 8:10). But this arises from promise.

To ignore or tone down the all-encompassing necessity of God's promise results in "legalism." Legalism raises its ugly head when folks believe (doctrine) or show in practice (life), or hold in both (doctrine and life) that they are capable, in whole or in part, of meeting a legal standard, whether the standard is divine (God's law) or human (man's law). It vitiates the crystal clear biblical testimony that without Jesus no one can do anything (John 15:5). So they either fail or refuse to drink of Jesus in utter humility and total dependence before they embark upon anything. In short, they first of all imprison themselves and others in a "law system," from which there is no escape (Acts 15:10). Further, persuaded of their own ability they display a deep-seated arrogance, whether intentionally and consciously or not (See Mk. 2:11-17 for the dangers of works-righteous legalism). Finally, leaning on a broken staff that is getting them nowhere, they basically "deserve" everybody's endless compassion, even if they reject this out of hand.

On the other hand, to ignore or tone down the all-encompassing necessity of God's law ends up in "hyper grace." This raises its equally ugly head when folks believe (doctrine) or show in practice (life), or hold in both (doctrine and life) that to insist upon the necessity of obedience, whether in a non-nomian or anti-nomian fashion, is to relapse in self-righteousness by definition. This vitiates the equally clear biblical testimony that without holiness no one can or will see the God (Hebr. 12:14). They fail or refuse to be conformed to a holy Jesus in disciplined zeal and total surrender as they face life. In short, they first of all play in the hands of an Enemy from whom there is no escape. Further, they are presumptuous, whether consciously and intentionally or not, ignoring the Divine insistence on holiness (See Ps. 50:16-21) for the dangers of "hyper-grace presumption). Finally, embracing the fallacy of an imagined heaven, they are equally "deserving" of endless compassion, even if they stubbornly deny this. Proponents or adherents of legalism and advocates or supporters of hyper-grace have never truly or fully bonded with God the Father and therefore are actually or potentially deadly enemies of the Church of Christ

Turning now to God the Son, he personifies the New Covenant, both in his crucifixion and in his resurrection. These are the twin pillars on which the good news of the New Covenant Gospel rests. Therefore they must be proclaimed in unison (Lk. 24:46) in order to be embraced in unison. Of course, each "pillar" has its own unique contribution to make. But they are inseparable. The Cross demolishes the three problems that warrant eternal death, and the Resurrection replaces them with the three solutions that give a threefold title to eternal life. Both are indispensable for the production of what the Father promised. On his Cross Christ kills the "cobra" heart (Rom. 6:3, 6), washes the "dung" past (1 Pet. 1:18-19), and eliminates the "toxic" life (Hebr. 10:10). In his Resurrection he comes up with a new heart, his own (Rom. 6:11b; Eph. 2:5a), a new righteousness, his own (2 Cor. 5:21) and a new holiness, his own (1 Cor. 1:30). These three constitute the foundation of as well as the substance for the regeneration, the justification and the sanctification of the people of God. In Reformation circles it is customary to embrace and set forth the righteousness of Christ as one's title to heaven. That such embrace is

an utter necessity is undeniable. But it is not sufficient. Without regeneration one cannot enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). Without justification one cannot possess the peace of God (Rom. 5:1). Without sanctification one cannot enjoy the fellowship of God (Heb. 12:14).

All this goes to show that the utter need is for a threefold title. Without the heart of Jesus, it is a no go. Without the righteousness of Jesus it is a no go. Without the holiness of Jesus it is no go. This must be forcefully proclaimed in public assemblies and carefully counseled in private meetings. To limit oneself to a one-fold title is fraught with deadly danger. It simply will not do in the Judgment! It also goes totally against the grain of Jesus' command that on the basis of the cross and the resurrection the Church must proclaim the triad of repentance ("the new heart") unto the forgiveness of sins ("the new righteousness") and a place among those who are sanctified by faith ("the new holiness") (Lk. 24:47; Acts 26:18).

This, then, is also Peter's insistence at Pentecost. He heard the agonizing and unforgettable cry of his hearers who were cut to the heart by his powerful message that exposed them in their rebellion, their guilt and their pollution in the murder of Jesus and brought them face to face with their certain doom. Their cry was, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And what was his equally unforgettable answer? "Repent ... for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:39). He proclaimed the triad of the New Covenant, and did so with many additional words and with continuing exhortations (Acts 2:40). For all practical purposes to have his audience turn from their lamentable corruption in order to enter the joyful service of the living God (See 1 Thess. 1:9)! Well, what Jesus commands, and Peter as well as Paul model in abject obedience, better be trumpeted and heard in every possible key in every Church from every pulpit and in every counseling room, until it is unforgettable for everybody. It must be shouted from the roof tops. "You have three problems of sin and stand in need of three solutions of grace, promised by the Father, produced by the Son, and transported by the Holy Spirit." Further, to make an impact it must be shouted in the graphic terminology of Scripture itself. Look in the mirror of the Word of God. It shows you to your shame your three realities, your cobra heart, your dung past and your toxic life.⁴¹ Of course, Scripture is crystal clear that no one can actually "see" them for what they are (Deut. 29:4) apart from the Spirit of God. This, then, introduces us, finally, to the Third Person of the Godhead and the "tireless" labors that he expends to complete the saving activity of the triune God.

Yes, God the Holy Spirit transports and delivers what the Father promises and the Son produces. He, first of all, is the Master Surgeon who sovereignly performs a heart transplant in regeneration by removing the "cobra" heart and replaces it with the heart of Jesus in the recipient. He does so by the proclamation of the Word of Truth (Jam. 1:18), and specifically of "the good news" of the Gospel (1 Pet. 1:23-25). Acts 2 is living proof to this effect. Immediately following the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Baptism with the Spirit) at Pentecost (Acts 2:33;

It is regrettable that The Reformation has too strong a tilt toward justification in its designation of this doctrine as "the heart" (Luther) or "the hinge" (Calvin) of the Gospel. To be sure, this is quite understandable in the heat of the time in which they lived and with the fight of their lives on their hands. But this does not make it less regrettable. In fact, the focus upon justification was so strong that it even impacted, if not took over the hymnology of its day in the area of soteriology to the point that it made an indelible impression upon the Reformation Church throughout the Centuries. In a word, the tilt was sung into the Reformation Church, definitely at the detriment of the doctrine of regeneration. Frankly, the latter received scant attention in those days. Not one Reformation Creed dedicates a separate Chapter or Section to this foundational doctrine. But let the Church once and for all recognize that without the removal of "the cobra heart" as the starting point of God's saving activity "it is virtually all over!" How in the world can it be anything else? The repeated and lamentable downgrades of the Church in its history are there to demonstrate this again and again. The heart of the problem is always the problem of the heart, the mission control center of every human being!

see also Mt. 3:12; Acts 1:5) Peter “preaches up a Word storm and specifically a Gospel storm!” The first indication of the intervening grace of the Holy Spirit is “radical conviction” in the would-be recipients of the heart transplant. This is exactly what we could have expected from Jesus’ announcement that this would be the Spirit’s “first order of business” (John 16:8ff). Note well, however, that Peter’s hearers were “cut to the heart” (convicted) by means of the convicting message of Peter. He did not just preach up a Word and Gospel storm. He preached up a *radically convicting* Word and Gospel storm. “You are murderers. He repeated this twice (Acts 2:23, 36). Or in other more graphic biblical terminology, “Your ‘cobra’ hearts killed Jesus. Your ‘dung’ past left him for dead. And your ‘toxic’ life put him in the grave!” The impact clearly was overwhelming. Amazing numbers of hearers burst forth from the crowd before Peter was even able to complete his message, pleading with him “to come to their rescue.” He promptly had them call on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21) when he for all practical purposes told them to embrace the three New Covenant solutions as the only way to get rid of their three damning problem (Acts 2:39). Scripture goes hereby once and for all on record that “nice (or even solid and beautiful) messages preached by nice (or even solid and beautiful) pulpits to nice (or even solid and beautiful) folks in the pew” simply will not do, whether they are wretched sinners or wretched saints. So, when, upon the proclamation of the Word or more specifically of the Gospel, conviction and subsequent conversions in wretched sinners or subsequent repentance in wretched saints are non-existent or rare, evangelists as well as pastor-teachers may well do some very serious soul-searching. Did I truly and fully follow in Peter’s footsteps and modeled my message after his so as to reach the very hearts of my audience and to summon them to the action inherent in the message?

Of course, convicting messages are not without danger, as Stephen experienced. He cut his hearers to the heart just as Peter did to the folks at Pentecost (Acts 7:51-53). And they proceeded to stone him to death (Acts 7:57-58). But the benchmark principle here should not be missed. Unless we wish and even seek to risk the fate of Stephen by our biblical and therefore bold and incisive honesty, it is highly doubtful whether we ever will be graced with the awesome outcome experienced by Peter.

But there is more. Holy Spirit conviction will always be followed by both repentance, rooted in a godly sorrow, and faith as the twofold evidence of a heart transplant. Repentant faith (or believing repentance), in turn, will result in justification, God’s verdict of “not guilty,” based upon the blood of Christ as a ransom for all sins already committed or still to be committed as well as the righteousness of Christ, credited to the account of the repentant believer. Furthermore, once the Christian’s “cobra” turns into a Palace, the heart of Jesus, and the removal of the Christian’s “dung” produces a Peace Treaty with the Father, the time has arrived for the Spirit to take up residence in the Christian’s heart. By doing so he once and for all seals the awesome non-guilty declaration as permanent and irrevocable, which guarantees an eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14). But here is also an additional truth. Once the indwelling Spirit is the Christian’s host and sits on the throne of his heart, he implements the holiness of Jesus (Rom. 15:16). He does so by means of the Church, its teaching of the Word, its fellowship of believers, its celebration of the Lord’s Supper and its life time of prayer (Acts 2:42). It is noteworthy that all of the 3000 converts at Pentecost showed up in the Church the next Sunday.

It is indisputable that this is and only can be due to the gift of the Spirit following repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:39). But once the gift of the Spirit is a reality, the workshop of the Spirit to sanctify believers, “to stir them up to love and good works” (Hebr. 10:24), which is the Church, becomes *the* center point, similar to a permanent residence from which occupants

emerge to go to their labors and to which they return. There is therefore every reason to believe that folks who appear to call on the name of the Lord, but fail or refuse to assemble with God's people cheerfully and meticulously are still outsiders. And if they are not, they seriously endanger themselves as well as the Church, and are promptly called to task by Scripture itself. In the light of the unavoidable "Day," there are only two options, repent and attend, or fearfully expect judgment and the fury of fire (Hebr. 10:25-31, esp. 25-27). Surely Scripture does not mince words when it comes to God's honor and our eternal well-being. So neither should the proclamation of God's eternal Word!

To give all this some more depth perspective, while regeneration is the floor of the edifice of salvation, and justification its walls, sanctification is doubtlessly its roof, and thereby the crowning piece of the saving activity of the Triune God. There is no doubt about this in Scripture. Once the heart and righteousness of Jesus are in place, and once the Spirit indwells the heart as the mission control center of all true believers, no one and nothing can ever succeed in stilling their hunger and thirst for holiness. They throng into the assemblies of the Church to grow into an ever greater grasp of holiness by embracing the Word and sharing the Word and seek to embody that holiness by turning to Christ both in the Lord's Supper in their assemblies and in their personal prayers. This is the message of Acts 2:42. Not so incidentally, the order in which these four means of grace are recorded is quite telling. It starts with the Word proclaimed and shared. But then it turns to Jesus as the New Covenant (1 Cor. 11:25), and, finally, to prayer. Let us take a look at both.

First, the New Covenant grants three saving components, a new heart, a new righteousness and a new holiness. These three are, first of all, definitive. They are received once and for all through a vital *union* with Christ in his crucifixion, death, ascension and session in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:4-6). This is symbolized and sealed in Baptism, which therefore is administered only once. But the three New Covenant components also have a progressive dimension. Here, as we shall see further below, the progressive Gospel enters. This brings the realities of daily repentance and faith, daily forgiveness and daily holiness into view. They are continuously and increasingly received through an equally vital *communion* with Christ. They are symbolized and sealed in the Lord's Supper, which therefore is administered frequently. Well, for the proclaimed and shared Word to be obeyed, we need Jesus "desperately." For without him we can do nothing (John 15:5). But at the same time, through him, who strengthens us, we can do everything (Phil. 4:13). So in the public assemblies we immediately do and should flee to him in the Lord's Supper after every exposure to the Word. We do so to be graced with repentance, if and when the Word has brought conviction, with faith to obey the Word which is a perennial necessity, with forgiveness whenever the Word indicates this, and without fail with the holiness that is mandated in the Word as it is proclaimed and shared.

But secondly, whenever we face or are confronted with the Word outside the public assemblies, such as in personal "devotions," we also do and should immediately flee to Christ for the required response. But since in such scenarios we have no access to the Communion table, we do so in prayer, to be once again sent up for the daily repentance, faith, forgiveness and holiness as these are called for by Scripture and therefore needful by definition. In either instance we therefore make the indispensable "pit stop in heaven" in order "to seek (and find) the things above where Christ resides, seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). All this underscores the essential nature of the "how" and the "why" of both public assemblies and the private immersion in Scripture. Without both one can hardly expect to experience the holiness

that God requires for his fellowship (Hebr. 12:14), and that is a fearful proposition (Hebr. 10:31).

Not so incidentally, at this juncture the second dimension of the Gospel did emerge. The definitive Gospel is that “The Triune God saves triple wretched *sinners* in a threefold way.” But there is also the progressive Gospel. This is that “The Triune God saves triple wretched *saints* in a threefold way.” In sum, as long as they draw breath, both sinners and saints always do and will face the three components of their heart, their past and their lives, whether in radical and total corruption (sinners) or on their way to the radical and total solution (saints). Further, as long as they draw breath their present (sinners) or continuing (saints) wretchedness will also always necessitate that they must cast themselves upon the mercy of the Father and his promise, of the Son and his production, and of the Holy Spirit and his transportation. This is what it means that The Triune God saves, whether triple wretched sinners definitively or triple wretched saints progressively!

From this perspective it is frequently stated that the Gospel does not just need to be proclaimed to sinners, but that saints also need the Gospel and better proclaim it to themselves daily. The latter is an altogether proper mantra. But it must be done with the understanding that while wretched sinners should by all means expose themselves to the *definitive* Gospel, wretched saints must focus upon the *progressive* Gospel. Otherwise the mantra is murky.

Frankly, too often it is more than murky. It is misleading. The wretched saint should not proclaim the definitive Gospel to himself when he comes face to face with his deficiencies, failures, and faults of sin, and “desperately” seeks to overcome them. He has passed that stage. To do so anyway is basically for him to return to his definitive justification. One may glory in it. But at this stage one may not return to it. For neither one’s definitive justification, nor one’s definitive regeneration for that matter, ever can or ever will take care of deficiencies, failures or faults and lead to one’s sanctification. To hold to that is to find oneself in or to enter into a dead-end street, whether one recognizes it or not. It is essentially to look at one’s past and that will not do to overcome the wretchedness of the present. No, just as the triad of definitive regeneration, justification and sanctification can only be obtained through *union* with Christ, so the triad of daily repentance and faith, daily forgiveness and daily holiness can only be acquired through *communion* with Christ. In a word, this is ever to look at Christ solely and exclusively to make any headway in holiness whatsoever! This is the (progressive) Gospel that wretched saints should proclaim to themselves, not once, not many times, but throughout the day and that until Christ calls them home. When they, then, in their wretchedness commune with Christ, or more precisely, in their (less than) “nothingness” abide in Christ through the Word, proclaimed, read and shared, through the Lord Supper as “Communion” Service, and through humble, confident, fervent, unceasing, urgent and united prayer, they will experience the emergence of, if not excel in, heartfelt repentance and buoyant faith, the assurance of forgiveness and the mandated holiness, and never be content until *all* three are in experienced evidence as an amazing grace of God, as a remarkable gift of Christ and as a precious labor of the Holy Spirit. Not so incidentally this is and should be the death knell of everything that even reeks after arrogant legalism and presumptuous hyper-grace.

3. The Triune God Saves Triple Sinners *in a Threefold Way*

This brings us to the third and final aspect of the definitive Gospel. The first one was that the Triune God saves. The second was that the Triune God saves triple wretched sinners. The third

phase is that the Triune God does so in a threefold way. God has ordained the Church to be the “Agent” of his grace of salvation, the Word to be the “Instrument” of his grace of salvation, and Prayer to be the “Channel” of his grace of salvation. This completes the Good News!

First, the Church is God’s Plan A, and there is no Plan B. It is God’s army to confront, to battle and to conquer the unfathomable darkness that has overwhelmed the present world in general and all of mankind in particular. This makes it mandatory for the Church and its Ministry to seek and enjoy the smile of God’s pleasure (Zeph. 3:17). It will receive this smile when it is both full of the Word (Col. 3:16) and full of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). It will receive this smile when this One Twofold Mark manifests itself in its *fourfold activity* of Proclaiming the Word in Public, Sharing the Word in Fellowship, Absorbing the Word in the Eucharist and Pursuing the Word in Prayer (Acts 2:42), and in its *fourfold effect* of a Rich Culture of Discipleship (2 Tim. 2:2), the Faithful Implementation of Discipline (Mt.18:15ff; 1 Cor. 6:1ff; 2 Thess. 3:6ff), an Abundant Harvest in Conversions (Acts 6:7), and a Suffering in and through Opposition (Mt. 5:10-11; John 15:18ff; Acts 12:1ff; 14:19ff; Rom. 5:3; 8:34ff; 1 Thess. 1:4ff; Rev. 2:8ff; 3:7ff; 6:9ff; 17:6). The lack of an Abundant Harvest in Conversions is one of the indicators that the Church is losing its Revival quality. This should be recognized as a “wake-up” call, to say the least!

Further, the Word is God’s Instrument A, and there is no Instrument B. The Word is God’s weapon (Heb. 3:12) to overcome the unfathomable darkness it faces through regeneration (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22-24), justification (Acts 2:38b) and sanctification (John 17:17). This makes it mandatory for the Word and its Proclamation to receive the smile of God’s approval. It receives this smile when it is pursued zealously, properly and fully (2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2, 8).

Finally, Prayer is God’s Channel A, and there is no Channel B. Prayer is God’s stipulated conduit for us to receive whatever is contained in his Word, his promises, his injunctions, his prohibitions, etc., etc. (John 15:7; Jam. 4:2c). This makes it mandatory for Prayer and its Praxis to covet the smile of God’s acceptance. It receives this smile when it fully meets God’s benchmark in terms of subjective motivation (the hunger of the soul), objective standard (The written Word) and revealed goal (holiness of heart and life) (Jam. 1:5ff; 4:3; 5:16b-18).

By now it should go without saying that the training component is of paramount significance in each of these three areas. The Church requires Scripture teaching as well as Field training to be fully the Church in all its activities. It must increasingly act like an army to put itself in battle array in the face of a hostile world. The same applies to the proclamation of the Word. Its use should be persistently sharpened. This also pertains to the praxis of prayer. It should be constantly upgraded. But all this may well be ineffective unless the leadership as well as the membership of the Church is trained both God-ward and man-ward.

God-ward: In the training process the Church increasingly needs to bond with the Triune God, with the Person and Work of the Father who promises the New Covenant, with the Person and Work of the Son who produces the New Covenant, and with the Person and Work of the Spirit who transports the new Covenant. Reading through the Psalms regularly would go a long way to “taste” what bonding is all about, how to arrive at it, and what to expect from it.

Man-ward: In that same training process the Church needs to grasp the unfathomable darkness of the three problems that ravage all of mankind, the darkness of the cobra heart, of the dung past and of the toxic life. They are the threefold warrant of eternal damnation. It also needs to grasp the awesome glory of the three solutions in Christ, the glory of his heart, of his righteousness and of his holiness. They are the threefold title to eternal life. We better do not reduce this to a single title!

All this, then, is the focus of the next Sub-Section. But before I proceed three observations are in place. Two of them look backward and one forward.

First, it should be clear by now how the various aspects of the Gospel all fit snugly under the comprehensive and all-encompassing umbrella of the above definition of the definitive Gospel. It is the Gospel of God the Father. He promises salvation. It is the Gospel of God the Son. He produces salvation. In the same vein, it is the Gospel of the Spirit. He transports salvation. It is the Gospel of the Kingdom. It covers the whole earth and needs to be visibly established and recognized as such (Petition 1 of the Lord's Prayer). It covers regeneration as the entrance gate into the Kingdom, and needs to be obtained as such (Petition 2 of the Lord's Prayer). It covers holiness as the lifestyle of the Kingdom, and needs to be displayed as such (Petition 3 of the Lord's Prayer). Kingdom regeneration is intensely personal and has a narrow focus. It deals with man's mission control center as the radical determinant of the totality of his thinking, his will, his emotions, his speaking and his acting. Kingdom holiness, on the other hand, aims at that "totality." It covers the waterfront of life, all the aspects and all the phases of one's individual, corporate, societal, as well as cultural life.⁴² There is not one square inch of created reality of which Jesus does not say, "It is mine." Hence the indisputable necessity to heed the message that Ecclesiastes trumpets to the whole Church, "Fear God and keep his commandments, that is, pursue Kingdom holiness across the board, wherever, whenever and however, as the whole (sole) duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13)! It is often surmised that there is a Gospel in the narrow ("salvation") and in the "broad" ("societal") sense. This is a case of mistaken identity. It indicates a fundamental failure to grasp the comprehensive and all-encompassing nature of the Full Definitive Gospel. It encompasses the Total Person (Col. 1:21-23) in the Total World (Col. 1:19-20)!

Second, this Gospel is awesome both in its Full extent and in its Definitive quality. True Christians have been crucified with Christ, were raised with Christ, ascended with Christ and are seated with Christ in the heaven (Eph. 2:4-6). This means that they have "arrived," fully and definitively. Hence Paul exclaims, "My readers, open your eyes wide, you are in full possession of the riches of a glorious inheritance. The definitive heart of Jesus, the definitive righteousness of Jesus, and the definitive holiness of Jesus are already yours" (Eph. 1:18)! Indeed, both the extent and the quality of this accomplished reality are awesome. Neither one needs anything additional to be desired. That is why Peter does and can inform us that in Christ "all (!) things that pertain to the waterfront (!) of life and the whole (!) range of godliness" are already ours, completely and perfectly (2 Pet. 1:3a). It is God's blank check with our name imprinted on it (2 Pet. 1:4). What an enabling and empowering spur to cash it all (!) in through abiding in Christ (2 Pet. 1:3b). This brings us to the forward look. This will show us as well how much we stand in need of all this!

Third, to be sure, seated in heaven we are already perfect in that location and have everything that we ever need safely stored there in Christ as our personified full-service treasure chest (See also Eph. 2:10). But, complementarity of truth, we are also situated on earth, and that is an additional story. Here we are at war with an enemy who is armed to the teeth (1 Pet. 2:13;

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Some folks are very critical about the idea of "redeeming culture." I sympathize with the argument that only people can be redeemed. So, "redeeming culture is a misnomer! But I can hardly side with them in the conclusion that Scripture does not seek to impact society through obedience to Christ's Double Command. "Fear God and keep his commandments" (Eccl. 12:13) covers the waterfront of life, everyone in it, whether individually or corporately, and every area, every aspect, every phase of it, whether personally or societally. That this takes a radical life-style and a total life-time of study and action by all believers individually and jointly stands to eminent reason!

5:6). This requires us to put on the “full armor of God” (Eph. 6:13), if we want to stand a “chance,” facing his cosmic powers of darkness (Eph. 6:12). But this is only half the story. We are not just in a warzone. We are a warzone ourselves (1 Pet. 2:12) constantly under siege by indwelling sin. I hardly need to catalogue all the enormous vagaries of both battle fronts that turn us into “wretched saints” (Rom. 7:17; Jam. 4:9; Rev. 3:17). There is no way that we on our own and by ourselves can ever hope to be victorious over the Enemy Outside (Satan and his schemes of temptation) or over the Enemy Inside (indwelling sin or the flesh). We should be eternally grateful for the Full Definitive Gospel as formerly wretched sinners. But should we not as wretched saints be equally grateful for the Full Progressive Gospel which spells certain victory that comes our way solely as a gift from Christ through his indwelling Spirit, that is, by grace alone through faith alone? In other words, we stand in dire need of the Progressive Gospel in the present as much as we stood in dire need of the Definitive Gospel in the past. Without it we cannot and will not make it. Not ever!

This puts the training process in perspective. It is a soldier’s boot camp that is already under attack before we even make a start both from the outside and from the inside! To be very concrete, Satan hates it with a passion and will do everything in his power to prevent it from ever occurring, to derail it once it is on its way, or to curtail it in whatever way so as to make it ineffective. Candidly, and to our much needed consternation, in all this he has a devoted ally in our indwelling sin that is equally passionate in its virulent opposition. Without the kind of prayer that is evident in Daniel (Dan. 9:1ff: “12 hours”), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:4ff: “many days”), Anna (Lk. 2:36ff: “as much as 50 years”), the Apostles (Acts 1:12ff: “10 days”), and the Jerusalem Church (Acts 4:23ff: “hours?”) and the resulting tangible, experienced and activating presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31), it is more than questionable whether we even can or will succeed!

But all this is accentuated even more by an additional dimension. It is customary for folks who (admirably) seek to reinvigorate or revitalize the Church whether in their writings, their messages, their Seminars, or their Conferences, to remind their readers or audience of Jesus’ exhortation to “return to the height which they have abandoned” (Rev. 2:5). This height is customarily interpreted as Revival height. So far, so good, if not excellent! But we have already determined that Revival fires produce a spontaneous expansion of the Church. “Spontaneous expansion begins with the individual efforts of the individual Christian to assist his fellow He speaks from the heart because he is too eager to be able to refrain from speaking. His subject has gripped him. He speaks of what he knows, and knows by experience. The truth which he imparts is his own truth. He knows its force. He is speaking almost as much to relieve his own mind as to convert his hearer, and yet he is as eager to convert his hearer as to relieve his own mind, for his mind can only be relieved by sharing his new truth. And his truth is not shared until another has received it. This his hearer realizes. Inevitably he is moved by it. Before he has experienced the truth himself he has shared the speaker’s experience.”⁴³

This does and should put all of today’s re-invigorators and re-vitalizers in a terrible bind. Their readers or audiences have usually never experienced blazing Revival fires on lofty Revival heights. So how can they return to a place where they have never been in the first place? Regrettably most re-invigorators or re-vitalizers are not even aware of this. So they end up with seeking to return folks to what inevitably must be a biblically sub-par *status quo*. The only antidote is to start off by laying out the nature of spontaneous expansion and to present Peter’s Gospel that commences with repentance, continues with the forgiveness of sins and culminates

in the Gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38). Once this Gift is in evidence as a spontaneous experiential and activating reality, the training process has a fighting chance to succeed. Once the recipients are activated as such, they have arrived at the Revival summit and in a typical Antioch fashion are in a position (1) to be taught in a Classroom setting in order to refine their skills and (2) to be trained in the Field in order to enrich their action and to intensify their power surge (Acts 11:26). Incidentally, this explains why so many Classroom settings do not result in Field training. It takes Holy Spirit power, Revival power, for folks to get their feet moving and their hands dirty. So, when they enter the Classroom without it, how can we expect them to be zealous in heart determined in mind, eager in will and joyful in their emotions to “take the plunge?”

Now on to the next section to enlarge on all this and to give it some further concrete feet! This should also be helpful to get folks “over the hump” and enter the Field with determination, joy and confidence. In fact, it lays out ways and means to assist them in reaching Revival status and subsequently to take what at times may seem like a threatening, if not raging bull by its very horns!

C. Ecclesiastical Training

Ecclesiastical training is the second duty of the Evangelist. With that he has his work cut out for him. As the point-man in Evangelism, he must train and certify all of the ecclesiastical membership to share the Gospel and so to make disciples (Mt. 28:19). Just as the Pastor-Teacher must train and certify the membership to share the Word and so to teach these disciples to observe whatever God commands! Similarly as the Deacon must train and certify it to share its abilities, skills and “worldly goods” so as to enable the Evangelist and the Pastor-Teacher to perform their God-given duties without interruption and, as we shall see, to make sure that all

disciples will have the physical resources to stand shoulder to shoulder with them! The present focus is not the function and duties of the Pastor-Teacher or the Deacon. But to make a summary statement about each of these Ecclesiastical Offices is in place here to help determine the precise niche of the Evangelist. While Evangelists do and must labor in the world to make disciples by means of the proclamation of the Gospel, the Pastor-Teachers do and must edify the Church by proclaiming the Word from Genesis to Revelation, and the Deacons do and must function as the quartermasters of an Army to ensure first and foremost that Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers have the full wherewithal to pursue their calling. In short, the Evangelist labors on the outside of the Church in his evangelistic outreach, the Pastor-Teacher on the inside in his teaching capacity, and the Deacon both on the inside and the outside providing the logistics for all ministries.

Scripture further indicates that Evangelists have a one-pronged ministry, similar to a midwife. All that is required of them is to bring baby-Christians into the Church.

On the other hand, Pastor-Teachers have a two-pronged ministry. They must both teach *and* exhort (1 Tim. 6:2; see also Acts 11: 23 *and* 26), that is, they must lay out the total truth of Scripture *and* subsequently make sure that it is obeyed (Jam. 1:21-22). Teaching and exhorting are like Siamese twins that should be distinguished, but may never be separated. Frankly, teachers all too often are content when their hearers know their stuff. Exhorters are not satisfied until these hearers do their stuff. In graphic terms, teachers easily produce an audience that resembles “pythons.” The pew occupants enter the pigsty (Church) to get their piglet (sermon), and digest it for a week half asleep, only to return to the pigsty a week later for another piglet. Exhorters take profound issue with such kind of “Churchianity.” They seek to produce folks who do and will “mount up with wings like eagles, who ever renew their strength in order to run without ever getting weary, or to walk without ever experiencing fainting spells” (Is. 40:31). They also recognize from Scripture that the exhortation business must be a daily affair in order to be effective. How easy is it not to lapse or relapse into a python type of life style, and in the process to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, whether of omission or commission (Hebr. 3:13)? Hence they pursue their ministry as a matter of life and death. Scripture is crystal clear on this. To be sure, hearing the Word, even hearing it over and over again, and hearing it gladly, is an unconditional necessity. But it is and remains deceptive and damning unless and until the hearers take action and do it, whatever it says, without delay and without interruption (Jam. 1:19-25). After all, without holiness no one can and will even see the Lord (Hebr. 12:14). This cannot be sufficiently underscored.

Deacons, finally, have a three-pronged ministry. Scripture indicates that they must “share, care and show mercy” (Rom. 12:3-8). “Sharing” requires from them that they put their time, their energy, their talents, their skills, and their possessions on the line to put folks on their feet again. “Caring” takes this a step further and goes deeper. It tastes the sorrow of distressing times and the misery of over-burdening circumstances, and it is moved to bring relief. But “Showing Mercy” towers above both “Sharing” and “Caring!” It faces folks in terminal and excruciating circumstances. It finds itself on the “Jericho Road,” where every second counts and half measures are by definition insufficient!⁴⁴

By way of illustration, “sharing” enters the picture when I on a given day see someone walking on the side of a road and give him enough money to take the bus in order to get to his destination, and may buy him a hamburger to boot. This turns into “caring” when the next day that same person is once again walking on the side of the road, but this time in obvious pain. I

invite him into my vehicle and go out of my usual way to drop him off at the doctor's office. "Showing mercy," finally, is called for when on the third day he is lying in the ditch, quite unconscious and bleeding profusely after being hit by a vehicle. I quickly put him in the back seat and hurry him to the hospital to save his life. Scripture always uses the mercy terminology in end of the line cases. The Good Samaritan stops to save the life of a man who is at death's door having been beaten severely (Lk.0:25-37). Scripture calls this "mercy." The Publican cries out to God because he knows that without it he is not going to make it (Lk. 18:9-14). He calls for mercy.

The three terms present a kaleidoscope of service activities. All three are called for depending upon the nature and severity of the need. The beauty of the Office of Deacon is unmistakable. It does not only provide the logistics for the Office of Evangelist and Pastor-Teacher to run smoothly and efficiently. As mentioned in passing already, it also covers every possible need that did or may arise in the membership of the Church (In line with Acts 2:42b; 4:34-35, 37). The question has properly been posed what the precise purpose of Diaconal services is or should be. The prevailing view is that such services must be rendered in order to make the recipients self-governing and self-sustaining.⁴⁵ A recent proposal, however, emphatically moves beyond this. The Deacons must make sure that every individual member and every corporate unit in the Church will fully enjoy God's *shalom*, that is, the total well-being which he promises his people. No one in the Church should be allowed to fall short of this. *Shalom*, of course, includes self-government and self-reliance. But it is more than that. It is to bask in the joyful presence and the rich provision of God together with all believers and as an integral part of the community of believers as the Body of Christ!⁴⁶ This is undoubtedly a commendable additional step. Still we can and must take a further decisive and final step. But this requires some additional background information.

As we saw, the Evangelist and Pastor-Teacher depend upon the Deacons as their quartermasters. The purpose of their logistical support goes beyond self-reliance. But also beyond the enjoyment of God's *shalom*! Both Officers are supplied with everything necessary hotly to pursue their mandated ministries, 24/7, with all diligence, efficiently and effectively, and they are held accountable. Failure or refusal to do so will sooner or later find them unemployed. Well, Scripture states that the members of the Church have a mandate as well. It is incumbent upon them to evangelize (Mt. 28:19; Acts 4:31; 8:4), to speak the Word (Mt. 28:20; Hebr. 5:12) and to serve (Gal. 5:13), in fact, to do all three of them daily.

So, whether Deacons find themselves are (1) on the "Stakeholder's Boulevard" where they must invest in the lives of others so as to make a go of it, or (2) on the "Treatment Avenue" where they must patch folks up to give their lives a sense of normality, or (3) on the "Jericho Road" where they must rescue the terminal, by all means let the Deacons routinely get folks on their feet by (1) "sharing," relieve their pain by (2) "caring," or rescue them from catastrophe by (3) "showing mercy." Let the Deacons put them on the road to self-reliance as well, and make sure that in all this they can enjoy God's *shalom*. But all the standard volumes that have been written on the Diaconal Ministry make one thing crystal clear. The "sharing," "caring," and "mercy" ministries have boundaries. It is one thing to get people on their feet by paying the

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See for "Self-sufficiency" ("Self-reliance") as the desired purpose of Diaconal Ministries, Randy Nabors, *Merciful* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 56-57.

See for "The liberating and communal joy of redemption" (God's *Shalom*) as the desired purpose of Diaconal Ministries, Cornelius Van Dam, *The Deacon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), 17, 48, 65, 71, 76, 97, 140, 186, 189.

electric bill, by relieving their pain by paying the doctor's bill, or by rescuing from catastrophe by utilizing a hospital. But all these ministries must come to an abrupt halt when would-be recipients look for funds to pay for their booze, for their recreation, or for their extravagancies.

The boundary is clearly the practice of unholiness, in whatever way, and the habit of ungodliness, to whatever extent, that underlies all this! Well, the decisive and final Diaconal step beyond the communal *shalom* is to lead the needy into the evangelistic, teaching and serving certification process.⁴⁷ If they are members of the Church, they simply join all their fellow members. If they are not, they need to be evangelized until that end. This may take time and some on-the-spot flexibility. But evoking the pursuit and practice of holiness is and remains the final objective of all Church ministries, including the Diaconal one (Eph. 4:11ff). That this includes certification in all three biblically mandated areas should be clear on the face of it (Eph. 4:16).

All this both pinpoints and gives depth-perspective to the unique nature and purpose of the three continuing offices and their ministries. But something needs to be added. However unique they may be, their official practitioners are not lone rangers. They are and must act like a team and this by definition. A team has been defined as a small group of men with complementary skills (gifts) who are committed to a (well-defined) common purpose, (explicit) performance goals, and a (definite) strategy for which they hold both themselves and each other mutually accountable. The skills are essential for the operation and the productivity of the team. The common purpose sets the tone for the team. Performance goals are an integral part of team work. A common strategy makes for the proper collaboration of a team. And mutual accountability serves the aim of joint results.⁴⁸

All this is especially pertinent for an ecclesiastical Team since all the elements are fully mapped out already in Scripture, the purpose of the three ministries, the goals of the three ministries, the strategy of the three ministries, and the mutual accountability of the three ministries. A careful examination, summary and embrace of all the biblical data, therefore, by the mutually complementary Team members will ensure that they will labor peacefully and harmoniously together, be it each in the area of his own giftedness, to "make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19a) in the name of the Triune God by means of the Gospel of regeneration, justification and sanctification (Mt. 28:19b), "to teach them to observe all that God commands" (Mt. 28:20a) and in that process to enjoy the enabling presence of Jesus (Mt. 28:20b). After all, godly team members will always display a radical and total surrender to the dictates of God.

It is sanctified sense to recognize from Scripture that and how the occupants of the three continuing Offices should display the corresponding giftedness of Man-fishing, Speaking the Word and Service (Mt. 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) before they can be appointed.⁴⁹ These gifts produce a brilliance in the recipients that turns them into visionaries, be it only in their specific and

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Van Dam, 17, does mention that participation in the joy of the redemption of God goes hand in hand with the unencumbered functioning in the service of God. But this (regrettably) is not worked out in any detail.

Jon R. Katzenbach, Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1994), 43-64, esp. 45.

More about this threefold giftedness below! The point in this context is simply this. It stands to reason that those appointed and ordained as Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers and Deacons better be gifted in the areas of their labors. One does not hire someone who is gifted in carpentry as an electrician or a plumber, neither someone who is gifted in plumbing as a carpenter or an electrician, nor someone who is gifted in electricity as a plumber or a carpenter. Anyone who seeks to build a solid trustworthy business but would have such hiring practice would soon go bankrupt. Of course, it is no coincidence that the three types of Leaders dovetail with the three types of giftedness! God is a God of order, and his Word is structured accordingly.

unique calling. But this brilliance is both selective and complementary. Therefore, in order to function as a true and effective team Ecclesiastical Leadership should combine the three selective brilliances into a beam of light and consequently be willing and eager to be governed by a joint threefold vision that includes a joint purpose, joint goals and a joint strategy. This means that the various ecclesiastical ministries may not be placed under the umbrella of one Office, whether the Office of Evangelist, Pastor-Teacher or Deacon. Evangelist domination leads to a shallow Church. Lots of movement, alright, but it has not enough substance and soon peters out. Pastor-Teacher domination produces a stifled Church. Everything appears to be in place, but there is a pall of death. Deacon domination ends up as a “Social-Gospel” Church. The social dimension is pursued, but the Biblical Gospel stays into the background or is eliminated. In a word, the three types of leaders must act like a Triumvirate, also in the training of the membership in the three areas of making disciples, teaching them to observe God’s laws, and service.

Concretely, all teaching in each of these three areas should be done by the Pastor-Teacher. He must hand out short Manuals in each area and ensure that in time, whether sooner or later, the student-disciples make the biblical material fully their own. This concludes the first phase of the training process. The second phase is that each of the three Officers takes the trainees into their field of ministry and model it until the trainees become thoroughly familiar with what is shown them, and are comfortable to step out themselves. This marks the start of the third phase. The Officers, finally, observe and refine their trainees as they emulate their leaders, until they are ready to be certified. When the Leadership functions as a true Team, the ministry of the three Officers will be integrated. When the teaching phase takes place in each of the three areas under the auspices of the Pastor-Teacher, the Evangelist and the Deacon should be present to show that it is a joint ecclesiastical ministry, with the Evangelist having his occasional input, and the Deacon supplying the logistics for this as well. The same applies to the field work. In this regard the Evangelist should stand shoulder to shoulder with the Pastor-Teacher and the Deacon, the Pastor-Teacher with the Evangelist and the Deacon, and the Deacon with the Evangelist and the Pastor-Teacher.

All three Officers, however, should clearly understand that they are Nr. 1 only in their own niche, but Nr. 2 in the niche of the other two. To make this very concrete, the Pastor-Teacher should be in the field with the Evangelist at least one afternoon or evening per week. After all, he is instructed intentionally to do “the work of an Evangelist” (2 Tim. 4), which goes well beyond “occasional” evangelistic preaching or evangelistic counseling. So should the Deacon. After all, he is certified to do so. During the Sunday Worship Services, the Evangelist should be in the pew. So should the Deacon. They may not fail to assemble with the saints (Hebr. 10:24-25). When the Deacons are active as quarter masters and are hands-on involved in the acquiring or disbursing of necessary logistics, the Evangelist and Pastor-Teacher should cheer them on, support them, and whenever called upon join them in their ministries. In doing so they are simply Church members marching arm in arm with their fellow Church members. It goes without saying that in these scenarios the Church moves like an army without a periphery of stragglers and with no one left behind. In fact, quite the opposite! It is a trained army that is eager to sacrifice and to die (Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24) in order to rescue the perishing, to sanctify the rescued, and to serve as a temporary clinic to get the needy, the miserable and the hopeless to soldier on!

The Church may do well to celebrate the Triumvirate of Leadership with which God has graced it. In terms of appointment to Office there is an essential equality. In terms of function of

Office there is an operational diversity. When each Leader in gratitude to God embraces the two others as equals in appointment, in humility before God defers to them in the diversity of function, and in submission to God renders himself accountable to them by virtue of a joint ministry, there will be a seamless co-operative Leadership that cannot but make the Church flourish by God's grace. In it each Leader will pursue his "selective brilliance" to the max but bundle it with the others to form a widespread and far-reaching "beam of light" that cannot but make a powerful impact and have a prosperous outcome.

In fact, the Church may marvel about such Triumvirate because it reflects its Trinitarian God. In the definitive salvation of wretched sinners as well as in the progressive salvation of wretched saints all three Persons are equally God but are diverse in their function. In one of the most remarkable statements of Jesus to his disciples regarding the Holy Spirit he does not only underscore this diversity but also defers to him. "I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of sin" (John 16:7-8). This is clearly the "niche" of the Holy Spirit. There was not much "conviction" in the Book of the Father (OT), no conviction before the Flood, and little thereafter. The Exile was the result. There was not a lot of it in the Book of the Son either (Gospels). It produced the Cross! But in the Book of the Holy Spirit the floodgates were opened. In Acts 2 only already we read of three thousand folks in one day who were pierced to the heart and called on the Name of the Lord (Acts 2:37, 41). But in addition to "diversity," there was also the "unity" which was coined in Church History by the Church Fathers as the *perichoresis*, the "interpenetration" or "co-inherence" of the three Persons of the Trinity. It spells their "indivisible unity," "unshakable bond," and "undivided fellowship" in being, thought, will, emotion (love), word and action.⁵⁰ This comes to eminent expression in John 5. When the Father gives all of his life, all of his authority, and all of his judgment to the Son (John 5:22, 26-27), the latter responds by saying that "he can and will say or do nothing on his own initiative, his own accord, or his own authority but only say or do what he hears the Father say or see him do (John 5:19, 30; 7:16, 28; 8:38a, 42b; 10:18). We can only imagine how the Church would thrive if and when its Leadership would mirror the Trinity in its unity and diversity as much as this would be creaturely possible, with all that this entails in terms of being, thought, will, emotions, word and action!⁵¹

The following graph is inserted to provide a quick overview of the total Structure of the Church. It presents A. The three types of Ecclesiastical Leaders who function as Captains in the *Militia Dei*, God's Army, B. The gifted People who serve as their trusted Lieutenants in the Field of Operation, and C. The Church Members who are the Infantry and perform the duties of soldiers! For the purposes of combat and victory all three ecclesiastical layers are indispensable. No one, whether men or women, is allowed to be AWOL (See once again Judg. 5:12-27)!

A. The Leadership Layer

For this, see *Wikipedia*, under *Perichoresis*.

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The Triumvirate idea has been known and pursued throughout history. See *Wikipedia*, s.v. It is also in evidence in the Constitution of the United States with its division of political labor in the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial Branch. It spells unity as well as diversity. None of the branches is allowed to encroach on the others, maintaining diversity. But united together they can make powerful and effective history!

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Evangelist (Eph. 4:10c)
a. Must Evangelize

b. Must Train
EVERYONE
to Evangelize Daily | 2. Pastor-Speaker (Eph. 4:10d)
a. Must Pastor-Speak
(Teach & Exhort)

b. Must Train
EVERYONE
to Speak Daily

(Teach & Exhort) | 3. Deacon (Phil. 1:1)
a. Must Serve
(Share, Care, &
Show Mercy)

b. Must Train
EVERYONE
to Serve Daily

(Share, Care &
Show Mercy) |
|--|---|--|

B. The Gift Layer

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. The Area of Evangelism
(Mt. 4:19)

Gifted To:
Share the Gospel | 2. The Area of Speaking
(1 Pet. 4:10a//
Rom. 12:6b)
Gifted To:
a. Teach (Rom. 12:7b)
b. Exhort (Rom. 12:8a) | 3. The Area of Serving
(1 Pet. 4:10b//
Rom. 12:7a)
Gifted To:
a. Share (Rom. 12:8b)
b. Care (Rom. 12:8c)
c. Mercy (Rom. 12:8d) |
|---|--|--|

C. The Membership Layer

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Daily Evangelism
(Mt. 28:19;
Acts 8:4ff; 11:19ff
1 Cor. 10:32-11:1) | 2. Daily Speaking
(Eph. 4:15)
a. Teaching (Mt. 28:20)
b. Exhorting (Heb. 3:13) | 3. Daily Service
(Gal. 5:13)
a. Sharing (Eph. 4:28)
b. Caring (Rom. 16:1)
c. Mercy (Mt. 5:7) |
|---|---|--|

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D. Revival Training

Turning now specifically to what a Manual in the area of making disciples (evangelism) should cover, there is a variety of topics that need to receive due attention. But the most pivotal of all of them is the truly astounding biblical message regarding the divine blueprint for Revival and its fires, lovingly pledged by God in his inimitable grace and urgently prayed for by his saints in the hunger of their hearts. Revival, as Scripture defines it, lies at the root of all the components of God's plan that is designed to be implemented in the NT. It also functions as the fountain head of all the realities, the events, the proceedings and the activities that we encounter in the NT, starting in the Book of Acts. Concretely, without it there would be no NT Church. Period! Nor any of its Ministries! To underscore, it, and it only, made the NT Church possible and turned it and all its Ministries into an unstoppable, ever-on-going and ever-widening reality. Therefore to plumb the depth of this central biblical concept, in its Divine Origin, its Heavenly Essence and its Earthly Presence, is and ought to be the first order of business. Candidly, to be unaware of it, to misinterpret it, to ignore it, to sidestep it, or, what is the worst, to oppose it is deadly. It

jeopardizes Life itself in its various manifestations. All this will now be covered under Twelve Headings which are drawn from Acts 1-12, and presented in the order that they emerge in the text of this Book. Following this I will quickly enumerate and cover the topics that are essential for a Manual that seeks to produce an efficiently functioning, and a truly effective ecclesiastical Evangelism Culture.

The first focus, then, is upon the fountain head of all God's graces and saving activities that are first on display in the NT and then continue to make an impact in Church History until the Consummation.

1. Revival *Glory*⁵²

Scripture in no uncertain terms designates the New Covenant Salvation that originates from the person and work of the Father, is rooted in the person and work of the Son and is implemented through the person and work of the Holy Spirit as "The Great Revival," in contrast to "The Little Revival," which is the return from the Exile (Ezra 9:8).⁵³ However glorious and joyful the arrival in Canaan was after decades of exile (Ps. 126:1ff), it could not stem the tide of idolatrous corruption. Israel returned to the very sin of intermarriage that produced the exile in the first place as the unmistakable evidence of God's fierce anger. This precipitated the agonizing question whether now God's anger would burn forever (Ezra 9:14b; Ps. 85:5) as well as the equally agonizing plea for a brand-new Revival (Ps. 85:6). Apparently the presence at a geographical location was no guarantee for a walk with God and a life of godliness. Candidly, it never was and never will be, neither for Israel, nor for the nations. No, the burning need was for what may and must be designated as "The Great Revival," which would produce lasting peace and unmitigated joy, culminating in ever present GLORY (Ps. 85:9). Reflective of Psalm 85:6-13 and Acts 1-12, full-orbed Biblical Revival is the tangibly experienced, visibly displayed, joyfully celebrated, ever intensifying and spreading Presence of the Glory of the Triune God, rooted in the Mercy of the Father's threefold New Covenant Salvation, consisting of regeneration, justification and sanctification, encapsulated in the "felt" Delight of this threefold salvation by means of the implanted heart, the imputed righteousness and the imparted holiness

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Throughout the last two centuries many authors have written in defense of the Concept of Revival and answered its critics in the process, too many to enumerate here. Of course, both Jonathan Edwards and William B. Sprague come to mind. But it is encouraging to see a recent author Keller, Center Church, 54ff, emphasize the necessity of Revival fires that burn away the dross of the human heart. While biblically these fires have a wider target than just the heart, this is an excellent start. After all, we should never tire of emphasizing that "the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart" (See for this procedure, Phil. 3:1)!

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This contrast is indicated by the phraseology of Psalm 85:6, "Revive us *again*." Apparently there was an earlier "revival" prior to a second one. Psalm 85 appears to dovetail with Ezra 9. Both Chapters indicate that God withdrew his wrath (Ezr. 9:8-9; Ps. 85:1-3), only to inquire further, whether the wrath of God will *now* be forever (Ezr. 9:14; Ps. 85:4-5). This further inquiry is clearly occasioned by the sin of intermarriage which precipitated the wrath of the 70-year Exile. When the returnees from the Exile blatantly repeat this sin, both Ezra and the Psalmist wonder whether all bets are off about a second reprieve. The return from the Exile seemed an enormous revival (Ps. 126:1-3). But the terrible plunge into an awful sin shrunk it to a little one (Ezr. 9:8-9). Hence the plea of the Psalmist, "Revive us *again*" (Ps. 85:6). His further comments (Ps. 85:7-13) leave no doubt about the enormity of the Revival he asks for. Israel's return to its homeland is nothing ("little") compared to the reality of salvation (Ps. 85:7). It towers over the return from the Exile. Hence the designation of The Great Revival! In fact, the Psalmist indicates that this salvation is awesome, which could have never seen the light of day without the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

of Jesus, and substantiated by the activating Holy Spirit in the majestic, exuberant, and enriching Demonstration of the Twelve Mighty Revival marks or characteristics. In short, *Biblical Revival is constituted by the Presence of Trinitarian and Triadic Salvation Glory and covers the Waterfront of Life!*

By the grace of the Triune God it arrived as such in all its astounding beauty on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). (1) It is brimming and pulsating with Holy Spirit Life (John 7:38-39), on its many-faceted display in “the torrents of living water” of Acts 1-12! (2) It shows in the Prayers (Acts 1:14; 3:1; 4:24-31; 12:12). (3) It shows in a Consecrated Leadership (Acts 2:14; 5:29-32). (4) It shows in their Combat Eagerness, Readiness, Involvement, Success and Casualties (Acts 2:23, 36; 6:8-10; 7:51-53; 8:4ff; 10:1ff; 11:1ff; 12:1ff). (5) It shows in the Proclamation of the Truth of God’s Word (Acts 2:14ff). (6) It shows in the Conversions of sinners (Acts 2:41, 47; 5:18; 6:7; 8:12, 36; 9:31; 10:44; 11:21, 24). (7) It shows in the Assemblies of God’s people (Acts 2:42). (8) It shows in Holiness of life (Acts 2:43-47). (9) It shows in “boundless” Generosity (Acts 2:44-45). (10) It shows in Spontaneous Evangelistic Expansion (Acts 8:4). (11) It shows in the Impact upon Society (Acts 2:43; 5:11, 28; 8:6-8). And finally, (12) it shows in the Hot Pursuit of Christ’s Double Command of making and training disciples (Acts 4:19-20; 5:28; 6:2). Without this Holy Spirit Life and the full complement of its enumerated characteristics, the Church is at best anemic, ready to die and to pass on as a footnote in history.

The tragedy of a dead Church is that it can never have any salutary effect upon a dead world. Of course, such Holy Spirit life can never be man-made. But neither is it meant to be an “occasional” phenomenon. It would be truly preposterous to claim that “the torrents of living water” (John 7:37-39) were designed by Jesus to be intermittent, sporadic and serendipitous, let alone *providentially* (of all things) meant to turn into trickles or simply to vanish for large periods of time, such as for centuries or even decades. This view which has been and still is current, if not widespread in otherwise solid circles must be resisted with all the biblical means at our disposal. Surely the presence of these “torrents” is a matter of *Sola Divina Gratia*, in fact, *Sola Divina Maxima Gratia*. But their downgrade into trickles or their disappearance cannot be anything else than *sola mea culpa*, in fact, *sola mea maxima culpa*. All of Scripture identifies both trickles and disappearance as the great guilt, the inexcusable shame and the reprehensible reproach of a Church that stands in dire need of a very sobering repentance, or else. This must be hammered home in the footsteps of Jesus and his Letters to the Seven Churches (Rev. 2-3) in every possible Training Class. Otherwise the road is blocked from the very start to electrify the trainees to spontaneous evangelism. After all, it is repentance, and repentance only, that leads to a Spirit-filled life (Acts 2:38), which brims over in all the various marks of Revival, including evangelistic zeal, eagerness, and outreach that counts the burning of Revival fires as “the only thing needful” (Lk. 10:42) and treats everything else like the “dung” it is and will prove to be (Phil. 3:8).

2. Revival Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer is and should be the starting point of all Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13). It is God-centered to the core. The first petition pleads for the “Holy Father” (John 17:11) to put the Canopy of his Name, that is, of the sum total of all his perfections, over the totality of this earth. The second petition pleads with the Father to regenerate people. The third petition pleads with him to sanctify them. All too often the Lord’s Prayer is recited as a mere ritual. But for it to be a

heartfelt reality, the petitioners also do and must plead with the Father ever to keep them under the canopy as a matter of life and death, ever to involve them in the dispensing his regenerating grace, and ever to include them in the granting of his sanctifying grace. From this perspective the first petition is the foundational bud from which the bloom of the Kingdom of Christ over all the nations emerges (Mt. 28:18), the second petition the foundational bud from which the bloom of the first part of Christ's double command, to make disciples of all nations, arises (Mt. 28:19), and the third petition the foundational bud from which the bloom of the second part of Christ's double command, teaching them to observe all that God commands, evolves (Mt. 28:20). Surely, the first three petitions are majestic in their monumental essence and application.

Turning now to next three petitions, the fourth one pleads with God to provide (just) enough "wherewithal" to climb the hill of the worldwide Kingdom, the hill of immortal souls, and the hill of radiating holiness. The materialism of too much baggage, which all too often is quite excessive, would only be a regrettable hindrance in targeting the three summits. It should not be missed that the Church as a whole does and must climb the hill of the nations to establish the authority of Christ everywhere, then, under the leadership of the Evangelist climb the hill of souls to rescue them from their abject darkness, under the leadership of the Pastor-Teacher the hill of holiness to turn the rescued into salt and light, and under the leadership of the Deacon the hill of the logistics so that both the leadership and the membership always have the earlier mentioned "wherewithal" to climb the three hills with uninterrupted vigor and determination. Scripture is, indeed, clear that in order to climb the three hills effectively the total Church, its leadership as well as its membership must be eager radically and totally to surrender everything in order to reach the three summits. This is tantamount to embracing from the heart and displaying in a hands-on fashion both suffering and death. Scripture means business in this regard, such radical and non-negotiable business that it cannot be missed (Mk. 8:34-38)! It may well be that a large percentage of Church goers, leaders as well as members, opt to be virtually AWOL in order to avoid the agony and anguish of the cross, a sad reason, indeed. But Scripture is crystal clear. The Church, without exception, is either determined to suffer and die, and succeeds in both, or ... it suffers and dies. In time and for eternity! Whoever is ashamed of Jesus and his word in the face of an adulterous and sinful world can expect a spine-chilling pay-back. Jesus will be ashamed of him when he enters the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Spine-chilling, indeed, to say the least!

Nothing short of total, self-denying surrender will do in the eyes of God. In the light of this the fifth and sixth petition are starkly telling. They confess that we are neither very good nor very powerful soldiers, especially compared to God's explicit benchmark. Who can deny that we stand in need of much forgiveness (Ps. 130:3-4)? Even if we pour out our hearts and lives for the sake of the Kingdom, like David (Ps. 40:9-10), we still have to own up to the fact, again with David (Ps. 40:12), that our iniquities are more than the hairs of our head. Further, we also stand in need of God's constant vigilance on our behalf in the face of the Enemy. Even when we give it all we've got, we have to concede that we are essentially powerless (John 15:5). So, who can deny that we constantly stand in need of the strength that only God can supply (Eph. 6:10)?

But thank God, the second triad in the Lord's Prayer does not have the last or final word. When we recognize that the odds against reaching the three summits are humanly speaking overwhelming—we often mire down in our ever threatening comfort-zones, not even recognizing that we way too much fall down on the job and really do not measure up as soldiers—, God himself comes to our rescue. "Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory!" This (Divine) triad is AWESOME (Capital case). But it has a (human) triad of reflective implications

that are equally awesome (Lower case). Praise God! Mine is the Kingdom, in and through You (Rev. 5:10)! Mine is the Power, in and through You (Acts 1:8)!! Mine is the Glory, in and through You (Ps. 85:9)!!! This is an astounding threefold promise as well as a deeply challenging mandate. Frankly, blessed is the prayer warrior who prays this promise in order for it to be on mandated display in “Living Revival Colors.”

All in all, the Lord’s Prayer is really a School of Prayer in which the Church is enrolled by definition. Once more, blessed is the person who can truly vouch that he graduated from it, that it is no longer a mere ritual for him, but a solid and abiding God-centered reality which is both woven in the warp and woof of his existence and towers over it in all the areas and aspects of his life. A quick look at one of its graduates may ascertain whether this is indeed the case. Facing the unfathomable darkness of demonic oppression in her daughter the mother cries out to the Son of David to come to the rescue. What takes place in that scenario is deeply moving. It basically comes down to a second School of Prayer to display what to expect from a graduate of the first School. Jesus coaches her until she receives her degree in the second School as well, and with this he challenges the Church of all ages to measure itself by her. Starting with an “intolerable burden,” she moves on to a “sense of despair.” From there she continues with “total surrender,” and ends up with an “unwavering faith.” Yes, Jesus coaches her from beginning to end, when he starts out by being unresponsive, continues with a negative reply, gives a full explanation of this reply, and ends up marveling about her faith. He wishes her to up the ante, up the ante, up the ante, and when she finally arrives where Jesus wants her, his rescue is immediate (Mt. 15:21ff).

The Church is not always in tune with all this. The disciples show that when they want to shut her up. Regrettably, ecclesiastical bureaucracy is more often than not a stranger to Revival fires in general, inclusive of the type of prayer that the woman displays, is frequently impatient with soul shouts, and glad to see it absent or disappear. But it should not be this way! It is Jesus’ benchmark as a matter of life and death. Therefore it is the standard by which the Church will be measured. Without a massive number of graduates from both Schools it is unthinkable that the unfathomable demonic darkness will ever be pushed back, let alone vanish altogether. Jesus himself testifies to this further when he chides his disciples, “No wonder that you are getting and going nowhere. Demonic darkness can only be overcome by men of faith who mean radical and total business in prayer and fasting” (Mt. 17:17ff; Mk. 9:24ff, esp. 29; Lk. 9:37ff)! Anna is the model for this kind of Revival Prayer, as she consecrated herself to that, going homeless, sleepless and foodless for possibly as many as fifty years (Lk. 2:36-38). The ball is clearly in the Church’s court. Intolerable burden, sense of despair, total surrender, unwavering faith, they are rare, way too rare, if they exist at all! Candidly, no one can deny that this calls, cries out for heartfelt repentance across the board, and subsequently for the renewed or new obedience that accompanies all instances of repentance!

And then to recognize that the Lord’s Prayer and its validation in the second School is only the starting point in prayer! When its reality is an indisputable fact, it meets at least eight requirements. They resemble twelve “spark plugs” which are designed to send the “prayer engine” into high gear. The first six requirements are broadly foundational. Prayer from the Heart of the King, in the Name of the King, according to the Word of the King, in the Spirit of the King, in the Holiness of the King, in the Body of the King! The second six are intensely personal. Prayer in Utter Humility, in Buoyant Confidence, in Heartfelt Fervency, in Unceasing Persistence, in Urgency and in Brotherly Consensus! The bottom line is indisputable. The Church has more, much more, than its work cut out for it if it wishes to return to the Revival summit from which it has routinely fallen during its history (Rev. 2:5)! It is sobering to

recognize that one can see only heaps of stones where the seven churches that Jesus addresses first thrived, then sputtered, and finally fell by the wayside.⁵⁴

3. Revival *Leaders*

The first impressive feature following the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is the emergence of Peter. From being a fearful denier of Jesus he turned into a veritable powerhouse. Stephen, James, Paul, John, etc., soon followed suit. The NT testifies to their powerful “rivers of living water” in glorious detail. As we already saw, these “rivers” never were, never are and never will be meant to be temporary or intermittent. So, we must and can expect to see the same display of Holy Spirit power in today’s Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers and Deacons, as they fearlessly and tirelessly pursue their calling. Genuine leaders have by definition a clear vision. Since ecclesiastical leaders have the Scriptures as their guide and companion, they can always develop a clear as well as proper vision. So they should, by means of a prayerful, careful and diligent examination of all the biblical data! Subsequently, they lay down this vision in a concise and clear blueprint that will enable them to communicate it effectively. This will be followed by the determination of an explicit strategy to implement it. The fourth and central phase is pivotal. They must be in hot pursuit themselves to turn their vision into reality. At this juncture they may not delegate any part of it to others. They are the point men. Sooner or later God will crown their labor and toil with success. “Living water,” especially torrents of it, cannot but make alive! When this is witnessed, it will make folks sit up and take note, which does and should produce followers. These followers, then, must be trained to become part and parcel of the hot pursuit of their mentors. This will eventually allow for selective delegation to involve and mature them. Finally, the end line is not reached until all followers develop their own vision, which has the seven-phase process start all over again. This vision may be a sub-vision, a joint vision, a contiguous vision, or a companion vision as long as they are all accountable to Scripture and always keep the team concept up front and intact.⁵⁵

Incidentally, the ecclesiastical training of followers has a dimension that has only been mentioned in passing. It is not complete until their certification in evangelism, speaking the Word or service is crowned with their giftedness. Scripture distinguishes three types of gifts, leadership gifts (Eph. 4:11), ordinary gifts (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) and extra-ordinary gifts (1 Cor. 12-14, esp. 12:4ff, 28ff; 14:1). The difference between the latter two is significant. No one needs to be concerned for not having an extra-ordinary gift. One may wish for them. But

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Some warmly recommended volumes on Prayer are E. M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*; Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*; Austin Phelps, *The Still Hour* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005).

In short order, the Seven Constituent Marks of Effective Leadership are the following: (1) Creative (and Compelling) Vision (2) Detailed (and Pointed) Blueprint (3) Transparent (and Recognizable) Strategy (4) “Hot” (and Sustained) Pursuit, (5) Visible (and Quantifiable) Success (John 12:24) (6) Dedicated (and Lasting) Followers (7) A Newly Emerging (and Tested) Leadership (2 Tim. 2:2). The Indispensable Teamwork is predicated upon two facts. Every Leader can and may claim no more than Selective Brilliance. Only the combination of the several brilliances can produce God’s beam that can and will be “the light of the world.” Hence NO Lone Rangers! These may win skirmishes, but can never win wars. Further, the Church is an ARMY. Hence all its constituents, leadership as well as membership, must stand shoulder to shoulder, march arm in arm, and act hand in hand. Hence NO excuse to be AWOL! On this earthly scene soldiers who decide to absent themselves in the heat of battle face execution.

basically they are God's extras. In fact, in this context every believer is urged to seek the higher gifts, namely of faith, hope and, above all, love (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13). While he endorses all extra-ordinary gifts, Paul seems to say, "Never mind the others," when he compares them with the three highest ones.

But the ordinary gifts are in a different category. Scripture is crystal clear. Every believer is graced with an ordinary gift (Rom. 12:3b; 1 Pet. 4:10). For the sake of clarity, to distinguish them from leadership gifts and extra-ordinary gifts, I will address them in terms of giftedness. There are three types, an evangelistic giftedness (Mt. 4:19), a speaking giftedness (1 Pet. 4:11a) and a service giftedness (1 Pet. 4:11b). Paul, furthermore, divides the speaking giftedness into two, teaching and exhorting, and the serving giftedness into three, sharing, caring and showing mercy (Rom. 12:6-8). These types of giftedness emerge when God's people take their threefold certification seriously and go all out to climb the hills of souls, holiness and service under the watchful eyes of the threefold ecclesiastical leadership. In other words, resolute and vigorous practice, in fact, such practice only, makes permanent, that is, makes for the rise of permanent giftedness.

This threefold giftedness is invaluable in the Church. It may well be pivotal for the Church as an army-on-the-march. First, it makes the recipients unstoppable in their niche. Second, it sets the stage for them to be appointed to a leadership position that corresponds with their gift. Third, they can assist the leaders in the certification process of the members by help training them in the field. Fourth, it makes for a smooth leadership transition. When age or other factors make retirement inevitable, a new crop of gifted folks is waiting in the wings to take over. Fifthly, gifted followers are eager to spread their wings and pursue their own vision. Successful leaders resemble a powerful locomotive that pulls a ministry train. Followers in general are always happy to take a comfortable seat in the train, to eat in the dining coach and to go for a night's rest in the sleeping coach, but in the process let the locomotive do all the heavy work. But gifted followers are a breed apart. They are gift-wrapped in heaven. As such they do not just want to leave their snug comfort zone in their luxury compartment. They would regard such zone idolatrous and therefore would refuse to own one. Candidly, they cannot wait to turn into a locomotive themselves. All this gives more than credence to the assessment by one of God's choice servants that the failure (refusal?) to take God's Word on giftedness serious, in fact, to ignore its teaching on the topic, and to sidestep its implementation "tragic." In fact, he calls "the missing gifts a, if not *the* tragedy of the Church."⁵⁶ This stands to reason. Since every believer

See A. W. Tozer, *The Tragedy of the Church: The Missing Gifts* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, Inc., 1978), 22, 23, 33-34, 35, 37-38, 39. Tozer does not classify the Spiritual gifts in the same way I do. He does not distinguish between the ordinary (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) and the extra-ordinary (1 Cor. 12-14) gift areas. But some of his comments are invaluable. "Paul clearly teaches that each Christian believer ought to demonstrate a proper gift, bestowed by God the Holy Spirit, and that together believers would accomplish the work of God as a team;" "In the illustration of the physical body, the members are all designed for specific functions (such as, the eye, the ear, the hand, the lungs). These are all designed to cooperate and act and serve in concert with each other;" "The Church cannot rise to its true stature in accomplishing the purposes of God when its members operate largely through the gifts of nature, neglecting the true gifts and grace of the Spirit of God ... I would have to say that about ninety percent of the religious work carried on in the churches is being done by ungifted members. I am speaking in this context of men and women who know to do many things but fail to display the spiritual gifts promised by the Holy Spirit;" "So brethren, the Spirit of God, His presence and His gifts are not only desirable in our Christian congregations, but absolutely imperative;" "The Holy Spirit must be to the members of the Body of Christ what the brain is to the eyes and the ears and mouth and hands and fingers and toes. The Bible does say 'it is God who works in you to will and to do' (Phil. 2:13);" "The Holy Spirit desires to take men and women and control and use them as instruments and organs through which he expresses himself in the Body of Christ ... We enlist people and tell them to get busy doing God's work—failing to realize the necessity of the Spirit's

has received an ordinary giftedness, its implementation would turn the whole Church to a man and woman into an unstoppable army.

It goes without saying that an ecclesiastical leadership that intentionally “grows” such followers is part and parcel of a Church that cannot be overcome by the very gates of hell. It is a leadership in the footsteps of Jesus, of Paul, and of all the luminaries in Church History. It is a Revival leadership! To round off this kaleidoscope, it is a leadership that has been graced with the Gift and the Filling, if not Fullness of the Holy Spirit. He is the only one who can account for the unstoppable “torrents of living water” that flow forth from a Revival leadership and a Revival membership.⁵⁷

4. Revival *Combat*

Ever since God decreed that there would be a radical and total enmity between the forces of darkness and the forces of light (Gen. 3:15), a spiritual war has been raging throughout world history. Both Jesus (John 15:18ff) and his apostles, such as Paul (2 Cor. 7:5; 9:4; Eph. 6:10ff), Peter (2 Pet. 2:1ff) and Jude (3ff) repeatedly testify to this. But John portrays it in its most detailed form (Rev. 12:15ff). The battle takes place on two fronts, on the inside (1 Pet. 2:11) and the outside (1 Pet. 2:12). The forces of darkness always and by definition give it their utmost (1 Pet. 5:8). They never slumber nor sleep even if it seems like that they are not rocking the boat. As long as they can lull folks to a spiritual sleep, they are content to lay low. But when they see their chance, they will go on their killing sprees. Church History is there to prove it in the many times of heart rending persecution and martyrdom. Regrettably both the individual Christian and the corporate Church frequently lack that same tenacity. Especially in times of seeming peace they relax and quickly slide downward. However, the battle always was, is, and will be at its fiercest in two scenarios.

First, when the individual Christian finally wakes up (1 Cor. 15:34), is utterly serious in waging the always present inside war (Rom. 7:24; 1 Pet. 2:11) and uses all the means that God puts at his disposal in terms of the Spirit, the Word and prayer to gain the victory every time and everywhere! Scripture attests to this victorious Revival combat (2 Cor. 7:6ff), even if it frequently attests to the apparent lack thereof as well (Rev. 2:4, 14-15, 20-23; 3:1-3, 15-19).

Second, when the corporate Church intentionally goes all out in its attack on the demonic darkness on the outside in both making disciples and teaching them to observe whatever God commands! This Revival combat is woven in the warp and woof of the NT, especially in the Book of Acts and in the autobiographical statements of the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 11:16ff). Jesus had told them in no uncertain but still general and objective terms, “No seed will produce much fruit, unless it does first” (John 12:24). But he followed this up by hammering it home, where the

anointing (and giftedness) if a spiritual result is to be produced.” By way of a graphic illustration Tozer points out that he has “ungifted hands” to play a musical instrument, such as a violin, a piano or an organ! His hands can hardly even hold a screwdriver to do a small repair job. The application is self-evident. For Official Church Ministries only choose folks with the type of giftedness that corresponds with the requirements of their intended Office. In short, don’t ask a plumber to do an electrician’s job or a carpenter’s job, etc., etc. You are bound to ruin the man and shortchange the job. So don’t appoint and install someone with evangelistic giftedness as a Pastor-Teacher, or as a Deacon for that matter, etc., etc. You put him in a bind and jeopardize the ministry that is given him! Candidly, all too many have been the times that the Church succeeded to mismanage its people! Too often this added “the insult” of criticisms or complaints, however understandable, to “the injury” of appointments in the wrong niche of Kingdom service which is never justifiable!

rubber hit the road, very subjectively and very personally, when he uttered the basically spine-chilling challenge, “As the Father sent me to my death, I send you to yours” (John 20:21b). He was even more direct when he told Peter in his face that he was going to die a martyr’s death (John 21:18-19). The bottom line is this. As the Jesus told his disciples, “as the Father sent me to my death, so I send you to yours,” so the disciples should tell the leaders of the Church, and the leaders the members of the Church, including the parents, and the parents their children. This and this only will turn the Church, corporately and individually, into the promised and mandated Revival Church for which Jesus died, and for which he sent his Spirit of power and abundance! Of course, death does not have the final word. Neither, for that matter, is the Church’s filling up what is lacking in the suffering of Christ (Col. 1:24). The resurrection has, both with Jesus and with his Church. In the end, in the judgment, all tears will be dried (Rev. 7:17) and every martyr’s death will be avenged (2 Thess. 1: Rev. 6:10-11). The slight and momentary affliction will prove to be the precursor of an awesome and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17). And in the meantime, on this earthly scene, tears will turn into shouts of joy and the tearful sowing of seed will be rewarded with an abundant harvest (Ps. 126:5-6), while the death of martyrs will procure folks who are willing and eager to suffer and die for this harvest to become a reality, a harvest of souls and holiness to the glory of God!

5. Revival *Proclamation*

“Sowing seed,” namely, the seed of the Word,” according to Jesus, is indeed the only way to arrive at an abundant harvest (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23). This was one of the mysteries of the Kingdom (Acts 13:11). In fact, it was the mystery how the Kingdom would be implemented and would advance worldwide, something that was not disclosed in the OT. But Jesus revealed it, and Peter put it immediately into practice upon the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17). His proclamation⁵⁸ is and should be imitated as the Church’s model. It is fully biblical. It explicated Joel and followed the text meticulously. According to Joel, the Day of the Holy Spirit was, first of all, The Day of Miracles, both on the ground level and in the sky. This fitted Jesus during his earthly ministry (on the ground) and on the Cross during the three hours of darkness (in the sky). Then, secondly, it was the Day of the Lord. Once again, Jesus proved to be the Lord in his resurrection and ascension, with references to the Psalter. Thirdly, it was the Day of Salvation. This was accentuated by Peter when he summoned his audience to repentance with a view to the forgiveness of sin and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. But his message was not only biblical to the core. It was also convicting. Twice he cut the heart of his hearers by calling them murderers (Acts 2:23, 36). In the end, his message was equally a call to action. Frankly, every proclamation

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Basic to the use of the word “proclamation” is the Greek verb *kerussein*. It is customary to differentiate between “preaching” and “teaching.” Careful examination of the use of *kerussein* in the NT indicates that this is not justifiable! *Kerussein* is the umbrella term that governs all speaking activities, such as teaching, exhorting, counseling, etc. As such all these do and should have heralding or proclamation quality. This indicates that they come with divine authority! “Thus says the Lord!” God is not an equal partner with other participants at a dialogal round table. This does not mean that heralds, proclaimers of God’s truth cannot verbally interact with folks. But it does mean that in any interaction God’s Word has the final commanding say which requires submission. Evangelism and apologetics fall under this heralding or proclamation rubric as well. Both these undertakings always do and should boldly and pointedly apply authoritative truth to wretched sinners (Evangelism) or opponents (Apologetics), however “gently and respectfully” (1 Pet. 4:16). At any rate, this is why especially in the present context I prefer to avail myself of the “proclaim/proclamation” terminology (See also Is. 52:7) and seek to refrain from the use of the term “preaching!” Apart from the fact that in its everyday use it is not a clearly delineated concept, it has too many strikes against it.

should have these three components, the call to repentance, the pledge of forgiveness and the promise of the Holy Spirit, whether the audience consists of wretched sinners in need of the Definitive Gospel or of wretched saints in need of the Progressive Gospel.

6. Revival *Conversions*

When the “torrents of living Holy Spirit water” begin to flow both souls and holiness are bound to follow. God opens floodgates for a purpose! With regard to souls, the Lord Jesus told his disciples emphatically that his Church would do “greater works” than he himself (John 14:12). This is clearly no reference to either miracles or holiness. No one did more miracles and was more holy than the Son of God. It can only refer to conversions. Acts 2 validates this with its record of 3000 conversions, to be followed by 5000 in Acts 4 and further multiplication in Acts 5 and 6. All this leads to the conclusion that every Church is and should be a Greater-Works Church. This is denied by folks who hold that the Acts experience in terms of massive numbers of conversions is not sustainable and does not need to be viewed as the standard by which the Church is judged. After all, so goes the reasoning, “The Church of Today is different from the Early Church. Stop comparing the two.” In short, it is a perfectly understandable scenario that the “Holy Spirit torrents of Revival water” can providentially turn into trickles and at times may even vanish with all that this entails. Allegedly, history is there to prove this. Frankly, this assessment is unacceptable. This is also the strongly worded “Message” of God’s choice servant, quoted earlier, which covers all of the NT, inclusive of Acts, “I contend that (the Holy Spirit) is able to do for us all that he did in the days of the apostles. Oh the power that is ours—the potential that we possess because He is here. Our franchise still stands! There has been no revocation of our charter ... When I read my New Testament, who can say, ‘But this portion is not for you. That portion is not for you’? ... Nobody! Any kind of teaching or exposition, so called, that shuts me out from the privileges and promises of the New Testament is wrong. The man who tries to do so is a false teacher.”⁵⁹

However, there is another feature to be recognized. When a Church identifies and embraces itself as a Greater-Works Church, it fully understands that this comes with a humanly speaking impossible price, namely, radical and total obedience to the summons to shoulder the cross in radical and total surrender-suffering and surrender-death. Without such cross no crown! It is to be feared that the assessment which ascribes the many and extensive historical downgrades and lulls to God’s providence in reality hides behind it in order to forego walking the often rocky and all-demanding trail of suffering and death which is required to see the Greater Works become a reality. What other conclusion is possible when the Church is losing one war after another, such as in the Middle East that is overtaken by Idolatrous Islam, in Western Europe where Atheistic Secularism reigns, and the USA that increasingly embraces an Immoral Humanism, and does not really seem to be deeply disturbed that the Name of our God is blasphemed in all that?

Scripture lays the blame for such blasphemy squarely at the feet of the Church (Ezek. 36) that fails or refuses to be a genuine Revival Church with all that this entails. Frankly, it is high time that all of us are taught by our Lord himself (Rev. 2-3), namely, that downgrades and lulls are the guilt and shame of the Church and stand in need of heartfelt repentance rooted in a godly sorrow. In his Letters to the Seven Churches Christ does not talk in terms of providence. Neither should any of us. Further, he clearly does not allow any Church, or any part of Church History

for that matter, to hide behind it. Neither should we. No one should fall victim to the fallacy of the historical perspective. History is not the norm. The Word of God is. And that Word promises and mandates “torrents of Holy Spirit water” and “Greater Work,” Works, such as in evidence in Acts 2. To be sure, a Greater Works Church can only emerge by the grace of God. But for any shortfall the Church has only itself to blame, better confess this in godly sorrow, and in repentance should (must!) seek a return to Revival heights.

7. Revival *Assemblies*

It is remarkable that in Acts 2 all 3000 converts flocked to the Church to hear the Word, to fellowship, to partake of the Lord’s Supper and to dedicate themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42). Present day open air preaching, in crusades or otherwise, do not even come close matching this. Historically logistics inform us that if 3000 folks were to come forward in a crusade, only 5% end up in the Church, if that much.⁶⁰ Why this vast difference? Well, we rarely see Peter’s proclamation imitated as the only authoritative model. The usual proclamation can hardly be called “deeply convicting.” Hence, folks do not interrupt the message, cut to the heart. Then, they are rarely called to godly sorrow and a heart-rending repentance. But to top it off, the promise of the gift of the Spirit is usually conspicuous in its absence. So, how can we expect that folks flock to the Church as the Workshop of the Spirit to seek holiness if they have not received the Gift of the Spirit? In short, when the full Revival Gospel is not presented with all that this entails, the outcome is bound to be calamitous for the audience as well as for the Church. Jesus informs us that it is to our advantage that he departs from this earth in order to make place for the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). Apparently to have the Holy Spirit reside within us (John 14:17) is to be preferred to having Jesus’ physical presence with us. This gives depth perspective to Peter’s Message which has the Gift of the Spirit as its crowning piece (Acts 2:38). Candidly, we can only grasp this when we recognize that he is the only one who can and will transport what the Father promises and the Son produces. What would or could we do without him? Nothing, absolutely NOTHING! So, we better not grieve him (Eph. 4:30) by our neglect, quench him (1 Thess. 5: 19) by our indifference, or outrage him (Hebr. 10:29) by our sins. Instead we better love him for taking charge of our lives, cherish him for taking up residence in our heart, rejoice in him for writing God’s law upon it, thank him for appointing us as his instruments, praise him for empowering us to make disciples, and worship him together with the Father and the Son for whom he is and for what he does.

8. Revival *Holiness*

There is no doubt that the 3000 converts who thronged the Assemblies to partake of the four means of grace (Acts 2:42) were interested in one thing only, namely, to seek obedience (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), to be sanctified by the same Holy Spirit who regenerated them and sealed their justification (Rom. 15:16), to be transformed into the image of Jesus (Rom. 8:29), and in this way to worship God in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 96:9). Frankly, nothing less will do for genuine Churchgoers, whether in the past, the present or the future. Of course, the worship

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See for this, a.o., Larry Gilbert, *Team Evangelism* (Lynchburg VA: Church Growth Institute, 1992), 33.

service should be geared to that end. Frankly, an ideal service should be conducted along the following lines which would also honor the order in which Acts 2:42 presents the four means of grace. It should start by worshipping up a storm in communal song (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) to reach the heart through the emotions. Then it should preach up a storm to reach the heart through the mind (2 Tim. 4:2). Following “the Word” the audience should be divided in small fellowship groups as modeled at Pentecost (Acts 2:42ab). They must make sure that everyone grasps the message, takes it seriously, and is communally exhorted to take the action required by the message. Finally, it should partake of the Lord’s Supper in order to receive from Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone the obedience required by the message, while praying up a storm to reach the heart through the will. Without either Holy Communion or prayer the way to heartfelt obedience is not just blocked, it does not exist (John 15:5; Jam. 4:4)! Candidly, no Sunday service should pass by in which the audience has not experienced a distinct renewal of its mind and the transformation that accompanies this to one degree or another, and so to present itself increasingly as a living sacrifice which is marked by holiness and warrants God’s stamp of approval (Rom. 12:1-2).⁶¹ Once again, we are confronted with the cross (living sacrifice) as the only means to gain a crown.

9. Revival *Generosity*

One of the most telling marks of a godly life is a heart’s surrender to generous giving. Those who are committed to the essential Revival principle in generosity never claim anything to be their own. Everything belongs to the Lord, not only our “earthly possessions,” and is solely designed to be the means to climb the hills of souls, of holiness and of service (1 Chron. 29:12-14). So, if there are needs in the Church that would prevent “climbing” even to the slightest degree all of the membership rushes to meet them, even if folks have to sell their property to do so (Acts 2:45; 4:34-37). This is *Revival* generosity! Frankly, this is to be expected once they receive the Gift of the Spirit, and harbor a holy hunger never to grieve him (Eph. 4:30), never to quench him (1 Thess. 5:19), and never to outrage him (Hebr. 10:29) by conforming themselves to an all too worldly materialism. In a few broad strokes, “giving” start with the tithes as “the rental” God charges for the use of his property. Refusal to comply is “theft” and warrants eviction (Mal. 3:8ff). This is not just a temporary Mosaic stipulation. Abraham paid the tithes prior to Moses (Gen. 14:20), and after Moses Hebrews refers to it with approval (Hebr. 7:9-10). Besides Jesus endorses it during his earthly Ministry (Mt. 23:23). But the tithes are only ground floor. Giving a coat away when one possesses two of them conceivably brings it to 50% (Lk. 3:11), while a widow ups it to 100% (Lk. 21:1-4). All this paves the way for the awesome display of generosity recorded in Acts and for the extensive guidelines for generosity Paul shares

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R. L. Dabney, *Evangelical Obedience* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 34, 52, got it right. By virtue of the biblical “principle that truth is in order to godliness,” he insists that “the end (objective) of ever oration is *to make men do* (italics, Dabney!).” In other words, all proclamation of God’s Word does and must aim at taking action, the action required by the text! A Century later we are told that proclamation should focus on “The Big Idea” as the “Take-Away.” This is lamentably regressive. “Ideas” are there to be stored in the refrigeration system of one’s mind. No further action required! This cannot be biblical. No, the message must pinpoint both “The Big Truth” and “The Big Action,” and then send the audience to Jesus in the Lord’s Supper to receive from him “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

with the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8-9). The Church would do well carefully to take note of these guidelines and follow them.⁶²

10. Revival *Evangelism*

Biblical evangelism, which by definition is both membership spontaneous and leadership intentional, is not an energetic “patch” one puts on an ecclesiastical garment that does not qualify as the much needed battle attire which is indispensable to mark the Church as a Greater-Works Church. Candidly, such garment is not geared to enter the rough and tumble world of evangelistic outreach, just like an army that is equipped with summer uniforms only will soon be destroyed when it meets well-clad enemy forces in a bitter cold winter setting. The bottom line is this. Seeking to put an evangelistic patch on an anemic type of Church that according to the painful statistics has no more than 5% ever share the Gospel, is a biblical anomaly! It does not reflect the utterly clear blueprint of Scripture. To be sure, “patches” may win occasional battles in occasional conversions, for which we must be doubtlessly thankful. But it will never win the war when the Church fails to commit itself *in toto* (Judg. 5:17), or when it mires down in endless soul searching whether it should make a move or not (Judg. 5:15c-16). No, to win wars the Church in its totality must mightily march, in fact, must rush into battle, all the people together with their leaders, risking their lives, in the full recognition that ultimately the battle is evidently the Lord’s and therefore in the equally powerful confidence that he will guarantee their victory (Judg. 5:13-15b, 18-22) to the utter dismay of the enemy (Judg. 5:28-31). However, the spine-chilling fact may not escape anyone that the refusal to enter the battle field without hesitation and in full battle attire, and so to “come to the help of the Lord,” invites God’s bitter curse (Judg. 5:23). Well, here we have it! To don the full battle attire is to display all the twelve Revival marks of which the spontaneous and intentional making of disciples, evangelism, is an essential as well as an organic part. This is to say, only a full-orbed Revival Umbrella Culture can and will lead to a full-orbed Kingdom Evangelism Culture as one of its subdivisions. Both Cultures are both radical and total.

11. Revival *Societal Impact*

It has been the remarkable testimony of judges in Revival times that their court rooms remained empty. This stands to reason. Folks with the heart of Jesus, the righteousness of Jesus and the holiness of Jesus are overwhelmed with the Revival experience of the peace of God, the joy of God, and the glory of God. So out of the window go clashes with the police, murder, adultery, thefts, and false witness, as well as the overwhelming work load of judges. Revival times always put an imprint upon society, whether it is in the form of empty court rooms, blue laws or anything similar. When the imprint fades or vanishes, the nakedness of the Church is on display. We should pity and challenge folks who pedantically disdain Revival times for their sake and for the sake of the Church. We must be similarly pained by those who heartily embrace the biblical concept of Revival, but who nullify its permanent reality by designating it as providentially occasional, intermittent and serendipitous. This prevents them from providing the antidote to times when torrents of Holy Spirit water turn into trickles or simply vanish. They cannot and will

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In 2 Cor. 8-9 Paul covers at length the reasons for, the content of, the way to, the display of, and the end-product of generosity!

not view spiritual downgrades or lulls as sinful and shameful. Hence they cannot and will not issue a summons to godly sorrow and heartfelt repentance. Their powerful descriptions of Revival times always energize. Their deep desire for Revival times is heartwarming. But their concept of Revival times ends up as a major, if not a decisive barrier to their occurrence or re-occurrence. This is lamentable.

Once again, Revival times are always due to the sovereign grace of God. But their absence is equally due to the irresponsibility of the Church that fails to embrace the twelve marks of Revival as promised and mandated, refuses to shoulder the intolerable burden, the sense of despair, the total surrender and the unwavering faith necessary for it to be or become a reality. So, Christ's bottom line stands. The only antidote is to shout an ever continuing summons of repentance from roof top pulpits until the heart of the Church breaks in shame and seeks to return to the Revival summit from which it fell, and at times plunged (2 Cor. 7:9-12; Rev. 2:5).

12. Revival Pursuit of Christ's Double Command

Last but not least, a Revival Church recognizes that the two sections of Christ's double command contain the only obedience that he demands from his people. In fact, everything that God ever did, ever does or ever will require is bundled up in them. They are both simply profound and profoundly simple. They are simple to grasp, but profound in their range and implications. Since it is a Divine mandate, it by definition warrants the total and hot pursuit of the Church as its grand and magnificent obsession. It fully recognizes that the only reason why this bankrupt world still exists is on display in Revelation 5. The Lion-Lamb decided to extricate a Church from it through his Cross and his Resurrection (Rev. 5:9). Hence its continued existence as Christ's breeding ground of new Christians. It recognizes as well the only reason for its own existence, which is also on display in Revelation 5. It must enter this world as its fishing ground as king-priests, that is, as lion-lambs to catch those for whom Christ died (Rev. 5:10). This sheds light on Christ's double command, which is found in the bud in the Lord's Prayer, is disclosed in full bloom immediately prior to our Lord's ascension, and becomes an operational entity at Pentecost. In praying the Lord's Prayer the Church pleads to be sent into the world. In hearing the Lord's double command it is fully determined to obey. In receiving the Lord's Spirit it is fully empowered to do so (Rev. 5:6).

This concludes the focus upon Revival and its marks, and sets the stage for the conclusion of this section. The Church must be taught to observe what God commands also in the area of evangelistic outreach. This is what training is all about. The gift of the empowering Holy Spirit produces a pulsating spontaneity. The content of the enabling Word makes for a skillful Army. Through the Holy Spirit the Church is "seized by the power of a great affection."⁶³ It is so in love with Jesus that it is filled with the love of Jesus. This makes it go after souls (2 Cor. 5:14, 16, 20). Through the Word the Church is imbued with the intricacies of a functional expertise. It is so keen upon outreach that it hungers to grasp the directives of Scripture. This makes it effective with souls. So, here we go as we zero in on ten major topics that comprise the relevant data of God's Word.

E. Topical Training

For the Church as a whole to arrive at an Evangelism Culture it must be thoroughly acquainted with Ten Topics, which do and should form the substance of an Evangelism Manual.⁶⁴ Based upon the Person and Work of Christ Topic 1 is “Holy Spirit Revival (inclusive of its Twelve Marks) as the Dynamics for the three Ministries of the Church.” The remaining nine Topics are the following. 2. “The Structure of the Church as the Launching pad of its three Ministries.” 3. “The Gospel Message: Two Dimensions.” 4. “The Gospel Messenger: The Believer.” 5. “The Gospel Target: Fallen Mankind.” 6. “The Gospel Method: Prerequisites.” 7. “The Gospel Magnetism: The Holy Spirit.” 8. “The Gospel Momentum: Prayer.” 9. “The Gospel Modes: Six-fold.” 10. “The Gospel Mobilization: Five Principles.” Thus far we have already seen the sum and substance of topics 1, 2, 3, and 8. The details of topic 6 will be addressed in Part II that deals with the ways and means of hands-on evangelism. This leaves us with topics 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10. Topics 1 and 2 are introductory to the Evangelistic enterprise. Topics 3 through 10 seek to convey its substance. All Ten Topics will now pass in review, some of them in short order, others more extensively.

1. Holy Spirit Revival: *The Dynamics*

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Once again, this Manual can be obtained from the author upon request, together with the Evangelism Booklet and the Evangelism Tract.

This Topic has been covered above under the Concept of Revival. But by way of reminder, Biblical Revival based upon the Cross and Resurrection of Christ and rooted in the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the Divine Source from which the Church in all its aspects and facets originates as well as the Dynamics behind the effective implementation of all its Ministries. This is to say, all the various components of a Biblical Church, of its Emergence, of its Presence, of its Fellowship, of its Ordinances, of its Activities, of its Leadership, of its Membership, of its Evangelistic, Sanctifying and Diaconal Ministries, etc., etc., must be preceded by the word Revival for them to manifest and mirror the Life of God that is promised by God the Father, produced by God the Son and transported by God the Holy Spirit, and evidenced by means of a new heart that leads to the fear of God, a new righteousness that results in the peace with God, and a new holiness which paves the way to the fellowship with God. All this spells “Glory,” the Glory of the Presence and the Presence of the Glory of God by virtue of the New Covenant.

Especially in the Reformed tradition the call for the Reformation of the Church usually receives top billing over the call for Revival. There may be two reasons for this. First, the Reformed tradition started in the 15th Century with what is universally designated as The Reformation. This made the term dear to its heart. Second, the Revival concept has historically been a rather murky one. Unanimity about its definition has been hard to come by. So, it is no wonder that it did not receive top billing. Frankly this is a serious error. All of God’s saving accomplishments and activities have a Revival nature, promised by the Father, produced by the Son and transmitted by the Spirit. This includes the Church and its Ministries. The Church must first and foremost be a Revival Church and its Ministries Revival Ministries. When they are such, they are pulsating with life, and as such wide open to any reformation process that transforms them until they are in conformity to biblical standards. Churches that are not Revival Churches can conceivably strive to reach this conformity! But even if they were totally successful, they would only be entitled to a reputation, being essentially dead (Rev. 3:1b). All this can only underscore the utter significance of and need for Revival Status of all God’s Institutions and Revival Quality of all their Ministry activities and goals!

2. The Structure of the Church: *The Launching pad*

The essentials of this Topic have been covered above at well. But once again by way of reminder, the threefold Leadership of the Church, Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers, and Deacons, have a threefold duty. First, they must execute their Office in making disciples, training disciples and providing the logistics that make this possible. Second, they must train all of the Membership to evangelize, speak the Word and supply the logistics that enable the whole Church to pursue these three mandates. Third, they must spur the total Membership on by their example to persist in the obedient pursuit of these mandates until their giftedness emerges and the Church in all its aspects and areas is an unstoppable force for God.

3. The Gospel Message: *Two Dimensions*

This Topic has been fully covered. But to make it unforgettable, the Gospel is essentially the New Covenant Message. As such it has two dimensions, a Definitive and a Progressive dimension. The Definitive Gospel is that the Triune God saves triple wretched sinners in a threefold way. What the Father promises and the Son produces, the Holy Spirit transports. The

promise, the production and the transportation aim at the definitive regeneration, the definitive justification and the definitive sanctification of wretched sinners. This comes about through the Church, the Word and Prayer. The Progressive Gospel is that the same Triune God saves triple wretched saints in the same triple way. What the Father promises and the Son produces, the Holy Spirit transports. The promise, the production and the transportation aim at daily repentance and faith, daily forgiveness and daily renewal. This comes about through the Church, the Word and Prayer.

4. Gospel Messenger: *The Believer*

The customary wisdom is that the fields are quite white, anticipating a rich harvest, were it not for the fact that the laborers are so few. Of course, this is seemingly suggested by Jesus himself (Mt. 9:37). But this is to misread New Covenant History. To be sure, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray to the Father to open the flood gate of laborers (Mt. 9:38). But, candidly, their prayers were gloriously answered at Pentecost when 3000 folks received the heart of Jesus, the righteousness of Jesus and the holiness of Jesus. This changed everything. According to Holy Scripture, anyone who is graced with a heart transplant displays a New Vision, anyone who is graced with a new righteousness exhibits a New Passion, and everyone who is graced with a new holiness embarks upon a New Mission.

The New Vision is described by Paul in his Second Letter to the Corinthians. When he died and rose with Christ (2 Cor. 5:14, 17; see also Rom. 6:6, 11), which produced the new heart in his regeneration, he was no longer blind (John 3:3), but could truly see. For the first time he saw Jesus for whom and what he was, in his Person and his Work, and he surrendered radically and totally to him, in his own person and labors! But he also saw his fellow humans for the first time for whom and what they were. He did not gauge and experience them any longer as male or female, old or young, sick or healthy, rich or poor, powerful or weak, etc., etc. He looked at everybody, yes, everybody, first of all, as either saved or lost! This is an awesome reality. It is tantamount to someone with an x-ray vision who first of all sees in literally everybody and literally everything what is substandard, defective, flawed, malfunctioning, unreliable, and in need of repairs or the opposite, up to standard and all that this entails. Frankly, this would be burdensome if it were not recognized at the same time as a deeply gratifying privilege. Burdensome, always in a potential repair mode! An even greater privilege, the honor and joy to labor in order to get things right!

The New Passion is disclosed in the Book of Isaiah. When Isaiah is confronted with the triple holiness of God, he goes through the floor. I am not just a basket case. I am a casket case (Is. 6:5). But when the coal from the altar, the atoning blood of Jesus, enters the casket, cleanses him from top to toe, and he emerges as a most beautiful human specimen, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, he exhibits a New Passion. When God implies that there is a ministry vacancy, he immediately cries out, "Here I am, please, send ME" (Is. 6:8)! He does not just "answer when God calls," in the words of the hymn writer. *He puts in his application.* He wants to go to work! Frankly, what else can one expect from anyone who does not just "doctrinally" understand, but is personally overwhelmed by the heartfelt recognition that he has been turned from a spiritual corpse into a star-like existence?

The New Mission is laid out by Jesus himself in the Gospel of Matthew. "I am the Lord of the Universe, and I am ordering you to 'go and make disciples of all the nations on this earth'" (Mt. 28:18-19), and they went, risking life and limb. Was not this what Jesus had told them

earlier in greater detail as well? “Just as the Father sent me to my death, so I send you to yours” (John 21:21)! But be fully assured that your cross of propagation, your suffering and death as a burgeoning seed full of promise, will produce an amazing crown, a veritable abundance of fruit (John 12:24). In fact, your ministry will turn into a Greater Works one, producing conversions, conversions, conversions (John 14:12), until I have assembled all my elect (Rev. 7:4-8), my “innumerable multitude” (Rev. 7:9).

Candidly, it is a sobering and well-known fact that this New Vision, this New Passion, and this New Mission are not as much in evidence as they should. This caused one author to publish a volume on Matthew 28:19-20 under the title “The Great Omission,” and no one took issue with him!⁶⁵ That this must be remedied should be a rule of thumb! Well, there are two ways to go about this. It cannot be forced. So it must a Gospel message. The Church should determine to proclaim the New Covenant Gospel, that is, the total content of the three doctrines of regeneration, justification and sanctification, a million or more times, not until all the members of the audience protest in exasperation, “stop, stop, stop, you are harassing us, by now we can dream it in our sleep,” but until it hits their heart of hearts and they exclaim in wonderment, “We got it! We got it! We got it! God has graced us with a New Vision, a New Passion, and a New Mission! We now see folks all the time for what they are. We now have an intolerable burden all the time for their salvation. We now are chopping at the bits all the time to move. Use us, use us, use us, in the making of disciples. If you fail or refuse to do so, you abuse us, and you certainly will lose us!” At that very moment but not until then, the prayer for laborers that Jesus told us to pray is gloriously answered. The believer, every believer, turns into an actual laborer!

But there is a second way as well. Scripture designates us as appointed co-laborers of the Father who promised the New Covenant (1 Cor. 3:9), labels us as appointed ambassadors of the Son who produced the New Covenant (2 Cor. 5:20) and classifies us appointed instruments of the Holy Spirit who transports the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:3). What an indescribable threefold honor! This should be reason enough to be shamefaced when we find ourselves to be AWOL, to display a godly sorrow unto repentance in sackcloth and ashes, and to make amends longing to rise to the very occasion for which God saved us (2 Cor. 7:10-11). As zealous co-laborers of the Father we will proclaim his Word with zeal (John 2:17) and authority (Mt. 7:29). As eager ambassadors of the Son we will display the love of Christ that is all set to suffer and die (2 Cor. 5:14). As active instruments of the Holy Spirit we will exhibit the power and discernment (2 Tim. 1:7) that enables us to be truly and fully the Father’s co-laborers and the Son’s ambassadors! In the process we will put on vivid display and in living colors that the “few” of Jesus (Mt. 9:37) glorious turned into the untold “many” through the transportation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:41), and that these “many” were not just an optical illusion, a mere window dressing, by functionally shriveling back to only a “few” practitioners who are fully determined to embody the indispensable “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26) as the crowning piece of God’s saving activity!

5. Gospel Target: *Fallen Mankind*

The aim of this section is to facilitate evangelistic outreach by covering the biblical data that provide a depth perspective upon “the man we meet in the street.” These data come under the two headings of “personal depravity” and “structural depravity.” Both give a discerning

assessment of the Gospel target that should enable the Church's outreach to be more perceptive in dealing with people, which in turn should improve the effectiveness of Gospel communication, and hopefully of Gospel productivity as well. In today's world the problem of structural depravity in all strata of society is well understood, diagnosed and reported, whether it pertains to the political realm, the work place, the business world, economic transactions, race relationships, sexual interactions, etc., etc.. Unacceptable practices, whether shady, manipulative, exploitive, fraudulent, illegal or downright criminal, seem to be omnipresent. But the cure does not appear to keep up with the diagnosis. Corruption raises its ugly head again and again. Well, it should be recognized from the start that structural depravity can never be countermanded, let alone overcome, unless personal depravity is fully dealt with. So here we go with the "infra structure" of personal depravity.

On the one hand, according to Scripture has a fundamental "sameness" that keeps it on the wrong side of the Great Divide. All humans have the three problems of the cobra heart, the dung past and the toxic life in common. None is exempt. The Flood demonstrates this. Even those who were conceived seconds before it hit mankind were swept and drowned, and that deservedly so, for in Adam's fall we sinned all! Further, all of humanity possesses the knowledge of the one and true God. He makes himself known in creation, in history and in the human constitution so that it cannot be missed (Ps. 19:1-3; Acts 14:16-17; Rom. 1:19-21; 2:15). Finally, all humans suppress this knowledge in unrighteousness and ungodliness (Rom. 1:18). In general, there are three types of suppression.

The (admittedly) Immoral Man brazenly steps on the law of God, appears to do so with impunity, and applauds his fellow suppressors in the process. He does all that in the full recognition that this deserves God's judgment. So Scripture does not need to argue that. The Immoral Man does not contest this. In fact, he admits openly that it is unavoidable (Rom. 1:28-32).

Furthermore, the (so-called) Moral Man looks down his nose at the Immoral Man, is convinced that he himself keeps the law, and concludes from all the tokens of God's goodness that he is immune to the judgment. In this scenario Scripture sets the record straight. It shows that the Moral Man who pronounces judgment upon the Immoral Man is just as guilty as his counterpart. He may be convinced that he keeps the law. But he is thoroughly mistaken. The law exposes him as a sinner as well. But what about the multitudinous tokens of God's goodness? Do they not spell immunity by definition? Far from it, Scripture declares. They are designed to lead to repentance. But this is nonchalantly waved away. In fact, the untold summonses to repentance are interpreted as occasions not to repent. This is the irony of all ironies (Rom. 2:1-4)!

Finally, the (seemingly) Religious Man has his own thought pattern. He does not step on the law. God forbid! He does not simply keep the law. He goes beyond this. He teaches the law. That should give him a permanent pass. But Scripture makes short shrift of this illusion as well. You who teach folks not to commit sins, such as adultery, why do you hypocritically indulge yourself in them? And, please, do not appeal to your circumcision. For the true circumcision is the circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:17-29)!

Here Scripture lays bare the common thread. The Immoral Man has a foolish heart (Rom. 1:21). The Moral Man has an impenitent heart (Rom 2:5). And the Religious Man has an uncircumcised heart (Rom. 2:29). All three categories of people possess a cobra heart!

But according to Scripture there is an additional dimension. On the one hand, all humans are essentially the same. But on the other hand, they are also vastly different. This is what Jesus indicates when he tells off the (religious) population of Capernaum and Bethsaida. If I had

shared my message with the (moral) merchants in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago (Mt. 11:21), and if I had done so with the (immoral) residents of Sodom and Gomorrah, they would still be around today (Mt. 11:23). That this is an intriguing statement, everyone should admit. Are the folks in Tyre and Sidon as well as those in Sodom and Gomorrah less unregenerate, after all? Of course, this cannot be. The King of Tyre in his arrogance that cries to high heaven is likened to Satan (Ezek. 28:1-19), the city of Sidon is deserving of the most terrifying judgment (Ezek. 28:20-23), and the occupants of Sodom and Gomorrah are invariably portrayed as the bottom of the barrel (Is. 1:9-10). So, what does Christ seek to get across? Well, he indicates that human beings are vastly different in putting up *barriers* to God's truth, including the Gospel. This goes hand in hand with their accomplishments. The more and the greater the human accomplishments, the larger and higher the human barriers! Historically the accomplishments of, say, the Japanese people are sky high. So are the barriers and the end result of the Gospel proclamation is telling. Only one half of one percent of the population is Christian. Koreans, on the other hand, were a down trodden people. The barriers were small and low. So they were all ears when confronted with the Gospel. Today 30% or more of the Koreans call themselves Christians. Korea is also the home of one of the largest Christian Churches.

All this is to say that religious folks have clearly the highest barriers. They have achieved a lot. They are teachers of the law! Moral folks have achieved less. They only keep the law. So they are easier to approach. Immoral folks are at the bottom. They step on the law and often end up in jail, which spells the end of all achievements. So, they are inclined to listen more than the others. Frankly, I love to share the Gospel in a jail setting. When I tell inmates, you have a "cobra" heart, they nod. "Yes, I have defiled a girl." When I tell them, you have a "dung" past, they nod again. "Yes, I have burglarized a place." When I tell them, you have a "toxic" life, they nod once more. "Yes, I have murdered someone." The moral folks are vastly different. When I tell them their three problems, they are often indignant. "I led a good life and the goodness of God is there to prove it." The religious folks are the most difficult to reach. "We are the embodiment of our tradition. Don't dare touch it!" Besides, they have accumulated enough points to have more than a reasonable chance to enter heaven. So to demolish the hills of their achievements is bound to meet with a murderous rage (Acts 7:51-60). So what are we to do?

Well, first of all, we must come up with an honest assessment of the people we encounter. Do they have lots of achievements and barriers, less achievements and barriers, a few or no achievements and barriers to speak of? Secondly, we must plead with God for two graces. Lord, give me the wherewithal to climb any and all barriers I encounter. Let me not be discouraged, but let me love folks more than they love themselves, and let me persist in spite of all indifference, ridicule, opposition, opposition, and even persecution, until it becomes totally impossible to continue. But there is a second grace to be obtained. Lord, you walk away and distance yourself from the arrogant who lean on or even boast in their achievements (Ps. 138:6). Please, come back, and take them on. Break their pride, and have them in all humility call on the Name of the Lord in heartfelt repentance (Acts 2:21).

Frankly, in view of the several categories of people the making of disciples is far from an easy undertaking. But we have no choice. We must prayerfully bite the bullet! However, there is a way to ease oneself into an evangelistic outreach, and to become "comfortable" with it. Let us start with children, our own children as a training ground. And let us do so at the earliest possible age, when there are no achievements and no barriers.

In Part II of this volume, I lay out in detail how to go about doing this. But for now, this approach has two great possible rewards. When obedient parents evangelize their children they

may see them intentionally enter the Kingdom at an early age. Further, when obedient parents become comfortable in evangelizing their children, this is bound to become a launching pad for wider evangelistic labors. But let me go on record already at this time that the parental evangelization of their children leaves much more to be desired than is commonly recognized. Some parents deny the need of it altogether. Others simply fail to do so, or do it halfheartedly. Again others are short sighted in making the preparation for life, such as education, a priority over the preparation for eternity, and often squeeze out the latter. A final category shares only a truncated Gospel. But what is the tragic end-result? There is no Church that does not have parents who grieve over their children and grandchildren. Some of them may be indifferent. Others may be worldly wayward. Again others may be openly hostile. Candidly, it is high time that all parents mean business and that the Church sees to it that they do! First, for the sake of God who entrusts his children to them. Second for the sake of the children who sooner or later will face eternity. Third, for the sake of training in Gospel outreach as a by-product! Not so incidentally, the Church cannot and will not be successful unless and until the parents are operating on all six, if not eight cylinders! So the blueprint of family evangelism, as presented below, shows that it will be a demanding undertaking.

This brings us to the “structural depravity,” the “organizational corruption,” that is in evidence everywhere, such as in the marriage, in the family, in the state, in the church as well as in the business! These five entities, all mentioned in Scripture, have two structural features in common. They are both “one-and-many spheres” and “authority relationships.” To underscore, every one of these (horizontal) “one-and-many spheres” is also a (vertical) “authority relationship,” and *vice versa* every (vertical) “authority relationship” is also a (horizontal) “one-and-many sphere.” In the one-and-many spheres the two poles, “the one” and “the many,” are co-essential. Remove the “one,” the marriage, the family, the state, the church or the business, and the “many” vanish as well, the partners, the members, the citizens, the believers, or the participants. *Vice versa*, remove “the many” and the “the one” ceases also. In the “authority relationships” the two poles, “the rulers in authority” and “the subjects under authority,” ought to be co-functional. When authority is perverted, the subjects are in disarray. When the subjects are unruly, authority is undermined.

Now, it is the “genius” of created reality that it is impossible for humans to extricate themselves from these two structures. They always find themselves in one or more “one-and-many spheres” and in one or more “authority relationships.” They are inescapable. This is simply the way it is.⁶⁶ This, of course, poses the question what is behind this? Well, in both structures the God of Scripture unmistakably puts his stamp, if not his signature on the totality of his creation. In their being (metaphysically) they are a reflection of the Triune God. The created “one-and-many spheres” mirror the Uncreated One-and-Many of the God of the Universe, One God in Three Persons. The created “authority relationships” mirror the Uncreated Authority Relationship in God, with the Father in charge and the Son subject to him. In short, in these virtually ubiquitous “spheres” and “relationships” we incessantly encounter the God of Scripture everywhere.

Based upon this reality it makes eminent sense that for the correct interpretation of both the “spheres” and the “relationships” we must (epistemologically) turn to “The Book of Instruction” to make a go of it. Even the efforts to put unsophisticated toys together with the label, “Minor Assembly Required,” will end up in frustration unless the printed Instructions are followed to the

Incidentally, it is also in evidence in the animal kingdom as well as in the inanimate world. Think of an Elephant family in the animal kingdom, and of a floor consisting of many tiles or of furniture with many pieces in the inanimate world.

letter. How much is this not applicable to the handling of the unfathomably exquisite and sophisticated universe? Listen to the prophetic word, “To the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament! There will be no dawn for those who fail or refuse to go that route. Ironically, when they end up with the ruins of a broken world, they will be furious and first heap contempt on their earthly government, looking horizontally, and subsequently, looking vertically, curse God” (Is. 8:20-22)! In short, the study and evaluation of both the “one-and-many spheres” and the “authority relationships” must mirror the interpretation of God in order not to make a total mess of things. But there is still more.

To embark (ethically) upon the only kind of behavior that can and does sanitize society in all its spheres and relationships one must mirror the conduct of God. The inter-Trinitarian life of God as an Uncreated One-and-Many Sphere is governed by self-denial in love and holiness. Which earthly father would have his son die to rescue others, and which earthly son would willingly agree to go that route? That same life as an Uncreated Authority Relationship is governed by sacrifice in love and holiness on the part of the Father who is in authority and by submission in love and holiness on the part of the Son who is under authority. Once again, which human father would sacrifice his son for whatever purpose, and what human son would immediately submit to such plan of action?

Note well, first of all, that it is the self-denial as the foundational category in the horizontal one-and-many sphere that splits into sacrifice and submission in the superstructure of the vertical authority relationship. Note, further, that self-denial, sacrifice and submission neither can nor will ever materialize unless there is the bedrock of mutual love, which in turn is impeccably pure in its essence and application. The Book of John lays all this out in an astounding fashion when it describes the Father’s sacrifice and the Son’s submission. Says the Father to the Son, “I surrender all my life, all my authority and all my judgment to you” (John 5: 21, 26, 27)! How does the Son respond? “I will never speak anything or act on anything out my own initiative! To the contrary, I will only and ever mirror what I hear you say and reflect what see you do” (John 5:19; 8:28, 38, 55; 10:37)! The self-denial in the inter-Trinitarian life of God spells unmitigated and uninterrupted “peace.” The sacrifice and submission in that life signifies complete and never-ending “harmony.” Both together do and will engender radical and total “prosperity.” One look at Revelation 21 and 22 is and should be more than persuasive to get this across. Of course, this “crown” comes with a price, the “cross” of self-denial in the one-and-many spheres, resulting in sacrifice and submission in the authority relationships. This does not come out of thin air! It must, and only can, be set in unstoppable motion by boundless love and an impeccable holiness. Both ensure that “cross-bearing” was, is, and will be intrinsically a praiseworthy and thankful affair, not in the last place for the joyful anticipation of an indescribable “crown.”

Against this backdrop the grim and cauldron-like reality of the world, past, present and future, must sink in, and sink in deeply. The peace, harmony and prosperity of marriages, families, states, churches and businesses are so easily disturbed. At times it seems that it only takes the drop of the hat for them to end up in self-destructive disarray. In fact, they are all potential or actual warzones by definition. Without the ameliorating common grace of God frightful hostility and hateful infighting would be soon the order of the day. A stand-out sample is the well-known but not well-diagnosed *Apartheid* regime in South Africa during the late 20th century. Where was even the least evidence of the self-denial, the sacrifice or the submission that our God displays and demands from all his creatures? Where was even the least trace of the love and the holiness that we find in God and that we must pursue as a matter of life and death?

Frankly, this sample can be multiplied innumerable times by pointing out the revolts, the murders, the rapes, the robberies, the court manipulations that mark oppressive societies, hawkish wars, regional wars, world wars, genocides, ethnic cleansing, all on a large scale, with their counterpart on a smaller but equally destructive scale in turf battles, such as in the marriage relationship, in the family circle, in the political area, in the court system, in the business world, and last but not least in the church, yes, also in the church, both corporately and individually (Jam. 4:1ff; 3 John 9-10).

It should be abundantly clear that in this self-tormenting and groaning train wreck of a world, from the perspective of both God and Scripture, only God and Scripture can offset its often agonizing and seemingly endless woes, whether big time in its tyrannies, its revolutions, its warfare, its calamities, its famines, its earthquakes, its floods and its deaths, or on a smaller scale in its daily trials, its sicknesses, its depressions, its struggles, its unemployment, its battles, its worries, etc., etc. According to Scripture, through the fullness of God in Christ he reconciles all things to himself, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace through the blood of the cross (Col. 1:20). Therefore this Gospel reconciliation of peace (harmony and prosperity) extends also to the multifaceted corruption that is inherent in “structural depravity.” But in order to succeed in effecting this reconciliation remedy, two things should be understood. Unless the solution of ‘personal depravity’ is in place, the “structural depravity” can never be stopped. The “personal depravity” feeds it. Further, both the personal and the structural depravity are so deep-rooted, that only the full Gospel can and will dig them up and eliminate them. Further they are so widespread that it literally requires “all hands on deck.” Finally, apart from a Revival Culture there are so bitterly few hands to fasten the sails of the Ship of the Church so as to catch the wind of the Holy Spirit that it requires nothing less than an equally deep-rooted godly sorrow unto heartfelt repentance to turn the tide.

In graphic terms, both the ecclesiastical leadership and membership have been designated by virtue of their regeneration, justification and sanctification as the very Gospel physicians to treat the woes of a world that is without God and without hope (Eph. 1:12). In short, they are “on call,” wilting in the heat of the day and sleep-deprived during the night to attend to the dying. I pray that the present volume can and will serve as a wake-up call, a Paul-like wake-up call, “Wake up from your stupor, as is right, and do no longer go on sinning the sin of omission, or do you not even have the knowledge of God? I say this to shame you into girding yourself and be an imitator of me, pleasing everyone in everything, not seeking your own advantage in your comfort zone, but that of many that they would be saved (1 Cor. 15:34; 10:33-11:1). Better yet, a Gospel wake-up call, a Christ-like one, “I am standing at your door and am knocking. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and provide you with all the Holy Spirit ‘wherewithal’ to conquer the lukewarm wretchedness of your self-congratulation. You will become an imitator of me and a model for all believers worldwide in turning folks from idols to serve the living and true God, and in the process to be waiting for my return from heaven. I promise you that you will sit with me on my throne, as I conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne (Rev. 3:15-22, esp. 16-17, 20-22; 1 Thess. 1:6-10). In short order, Scripture trumpets once again, as it has done, is doing, and will do it so many times in all kinds of scenarios and circumstances, “as the physicians that you are, heal yourself first, and you will be able to do all things through Christ who strengthens you as you weep over the self-destructive enemies of the cross and seek to turn them into disciples in order to teach them whatever God commands (Phil 4:13; 3:18-19; Mt. 28:19-20).

6. Gospel Method: *Prerequisites*

This topic is to be covered extensively in Part II of this Paper. But while leaving the way in which to convey the full Gospel for a later context, let me introduce here two accompanying dimensions that always must be kept in mind. They are widely known as the “relational” and the “confrontational” component. Roughly speaking, in the former component the focus is for the presenter to get to know people so as to establish a bond of trust in each other. In the latter one the aim of the presenter is for people to get to know the Gospel so as to establish a bond of trust in God. Frankly, presenters often fail to recognize, and so to practice, the Biblical complementarity of truth in this area.

Frequently, they are so intent on building relationships first that they have a difficult time solidly to verbalize the Gospel or even to arrive at a Gospel presentation. But when they do, it is in such a piecemeal or abridged fashion that it is not the full Gospel which is shared. Further, one of their counsels is that “one should not learn to listen in order to reply, but learn to listen in order to hear!”⁶⁷ There is an awful lot of truth to this. To listen and truly “hear” creates a bonding, which leads to a mutual trust. But exclusively to insist on such bonding before the Gospel can be presented in full does not appear to dovetail with the overall ministry of the apostle Paul. His missionary journeys usually had him “on the go.” So, he hardly had time to build long term relationships. But this did not make him less effective. Besides, the content of the Gospel more often than not created controversies for him (Acts 17:7). In one instance he was fiercely attacked and left for dead (Acts 14:19), and in a second instance his hearers recognized that he “turned their world upside down” and angrily decided to go to court to stop him (Acts 17:6). Quite clearly Paul was no stranger to confrontation. Even where he was not intentionally confrontational, his message was perceived as such. This should not come as a surprise. After all, the presentation of the Cross which is a pivotal component of the Gospel is “a stumbling block for Jews (giving their allegiance to works righteousness) and a laughing stock for Gentiles (putting their premium on human rationality)” (1 Cor. 1:23). Candidly when I look back upon my evangelistic ministry the most glorious conversions did occur when the hearts of sinners were squarely and boldly confronted with the convicting truth of God at the point of their rebellion, their filth and their destructive conduct. It was not always a “pretty picture.” But it was certainly effective.

Besides, to put a one-sided emphasis upon “endless listening” does not quite fit the biblical picture either, and definitely not the ministry of Jesus. When Nicodemus “defines” him as “teacher who clearly comes from God” (John 3:2), Jesus emphatically interrupts (!) him. In fact, he does so immediately. For all practical purposes he puts his finger in Nicodemus’ solar plexus, and tells him that apart from rebirth he is as blind as a bat, and therefore cannot really see him for whom and for what he is, namely, “God the Son, the embodiment of the Kingdom, who came to teach and to be lifted up to die” (John 3:3, 14). When someone comes on your turf, there is a bonding of sorts to start with, and you can speak straightforward immediately without fear! Jesus goes a little slower with the woman at the well. After all, in this instance he is on her turf. But he quickly bonds with her when he offers her a drink that would open up “a spring of water in her that would well up to eternal life” (John 4:14). When she responds eagerly, he exposes her utter need for a Savior (John 4:16-26). Later in John’s Gospel he immediately challenges the

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This is strongly recommended by Allan Dayhoff, *Church in a Blues Bar* (Fairfax Station, VA: Evangelize Today, 2017), 13.

Jews who profess faith with the pointed statement, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free (John 8:31-32).

Based on all the biblical evidence we can only conclude that the well-known and oft repeated maxim, “Preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary,” is very tenuous to say the least. In fact, it has been countered by a superior alternative, “Preach the Gospel, and since it’s necessary, use words.”⁶⁸ The rationale behind this corrective alternative is significant, “‘Preach the gospel; use words if necessary’ goes hand in hand with a postmodern assumption that words are finally empty of meaning.⁶⁹ It subtly denigrates the high value that the prophets, Jesus, and Paul put in preaching ... The Gospel is a message, news about an event and a person upon which the history of the planet turns ... It appears that the emphasis upon proclamation is waning even in many churches that identify themselves as evangelical. Yet proclamation is the central task of the church ... Without words, what can our actions point to but to ourselves ... A godly life cannot communicate ... redemption by grace alone through faith alone ... We can’t be good news. But we can herald it ... Verbal communication of the Gospel is the only means by which people are brought into a right relationship with God ... How can they believe without hearing? ... And how can they hear without a preacher” (Rom. 10:13-14)?⁷⁰

On the other hand, there are Gospel presenters as well who seem to revel in an insensitive, if not abrasive type of confrontation. Street preachers who yell at passers-by that they are hell-bound! Blog writers who seem to condemn everybody who takes issue with them! This does not dovetail with Paul’s ministry either. Writes he, “I have become all things to all people,” whether Jews or Greeks, “that I by all means would save some. I do it all for the Gospel that I would share with them in its blessings” (1 Cor. 9:22-23). And, “We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were

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See Ed Stetzer, “Preach the Gospel, and since it’s necessary, Use Words” in *Table Talk* (June 2012, Vol. 36, No. 6), 16.

Incidentally, all too often in Church History has “Christian Apologetics” led a chameleon type of existence. When the Enlightenment and “Modernity” ruled the roost with its Foundationalism of facts, logic, or a combination of the two, Evidentialism jumped on that Foundational jump wagon. When Postmodernism destroyed Enlightenment Foundationalism, Christian Apologists have been known to change course as well, and became advocates of a post-modern approach to reach post-modern folks. Paul in his day encountered Modernity in the Stoic philosophers and Post-modernity in the Epicurean protagonists. He faced them both squarely and equally with Truth! The Truth of God’s Self-disclosure in Nature and the Truth of God’s Self-disclosure in Christ. He argued that they suppressed the Truth of Nature in ungodliness and unrighteousness and conveyed to them God’s Command to repent. He argued further that they better take this Command seriously since they would face the Truth of the Risen Christ in the Universal Judgment (Acts 17:22-31). All this goes to say that we should not seek to become “post-modern” (anti-foundationalist) today in our Gospel presentation, just as we should never have turned “modern” (fact- and logic-foundationalist) in the past. Of course, the Christian does have a sure foundation (versus Post-modernity). But that foundation is the Truth of God, in Nature, in Christ, and in his Word (versus Modernity). Paul proclaimed the first two, Peter the last one (Acts 2:17ff). Both practiced a Gospel Apologetics, an Apologetics of Hope. That’s why they were able to lay the foundation, as all Biblical Apologetics should and would for a summons to repentance (Acts 2:38; 17:30) as the only way to turn from “hopeless” into “hopeful.” Today’s Church better follow in their footsteps, refusing to fight the enemy with the tools produced by the enemy to fight and dethrone God. The former leads to victory (Acts 2:41, 47b; 17:34). The latter ends up in disaster. Both Modernity- and Postmodernity-Apologetics have confessed that they have seen little or no fruit upon their “labors.” History is there to underscore this. Frankly, what else can we expect when we raise apostate “fleshly weapons,” (Modernity) “arguments” or (Post-modernity) “procedures,” that are designed to construct a “brave new world” without God and apart from God, and therefore “against God? Paul opts for weapons precisely to destroy these “arguments” and “procedures” because they vitiate the knowledge of God, and in the process seeks “to take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4-5)!

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Stetzer, 16-17.

ready to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but also our own selves” (1 Thess. 2:7-8). In this he followed in the footsteps of Jesus. Jesus never minced words. Otherwise he would never have encountered the vitriolic opposition that ended up with his crucifixion, the severest and cruelest penalty of death. But he related to people. He kept company with tax collectors and prostitutes, and bonded with them as well as with the ordinary everyday people of his day. He was compassionate, kind, and gentle. He gave them food to eat. He healed their sicknesses. He gave them eyesight. He raised them from the dead. It made at times an indelible impact.

I have experienced similar kinds of impact. The first convert God gave me called on the name of the Lord after a weekly study of Romans that lasted nine months. So did a number of couples and whole families after bonding with them through many visits, joint outings and frequent Home Bible studies. My residence has warmly welcomed folks that were demon possessed. Two of them had their demons thrown out, were glorious set free and turned to Christ. It has invited fornicators, adulterers, drug addicts and alcoholics who were not always the most pleasant folks. In fact, they were often belligerent and at times easily angered. One of them managed to vomit upon the rug in a drunken stupor without remembering anything. But more often than not the pay-off was a heartfelt conversion. Of course, a timely spoken, challenging and convicting word that hit the rebel spot was always intermingled with an open heart and an open home.

In all this we better imitate a man like Paul who as a Gospel presenter displayed the complementarity of truth to the full. His was and therefore ours should be “a steel fist in a (very) velvet glove.” He was unshakable in his commitment to truth. He was willing to die for it (Acts 14:18-19; 2 Cor. 1:8-9) and confronted everyone who compromised it, whether unbelievers (Acts 13:8-11) or believers (Gal. 1:6), including Peter (Gal. 2:11), regardless the possible consequences. He was equally unshakable in his commitment to his hearers. He was willing to die for them as well (2 Cor. 4:10-12) and bent over backward for them in his attitude, demeanor and care (Acts 20:31). In short, he was adamant and uncompromising about the “whole counsel of God” and sought to get this across (Acts 20:21; 2 Tim. 2:25). He equally displayed a self-denying humility and sacrificial gentleness which he prescribed for all of God’s servants (2 Tim. 2:24).

Clearly, compassionate listening to people and focusing upon their horizontal problems without ever speaking boldly about their three vertical problems, armed with the New Covenant Gospel, leaves them in their darkness. This is basically to fail them miserably. Similarly, speaking brashly about their three vertical problems without ever listening to their horizontal problems, looking in the process for a ready opening for the Gospel, easily comes through as unsympathetic and inconsiderate. This is basically to fail them miserably as well! Bottom line, presenters of the Gospel must learn to display their heartfelt “presence” with the lives of their hearers, and their total “openness” in listening to and interacting with them.

In short, they must not just “contact them,” but as much as possible seek to “connect” with them,” to “relate” to them, to “click” with them, and so “share the Gospel message” with them in a “contextualized” manner that makes sense to them, hopefully a lot of sense.⁷¹ All this is necessarily variable, flexible and fluid. It is such in terms of the personality, traits and skills of the presenter. It is such as well in terms of the person and circumstances of the hearer. It is such, finally, in terms of the place and time of the encounter. But both the personal touch and the biblical boldness must be present.

Candidly, both *will* be in evidence when the ears of the presenter will hear the heart rending cries of sinners who are bound for hell before they get there (2 Tim. 2:26), and fills him or her with the zeal and eagerness to prevent this by the grace of God! The personal touch should and will be present when they come face to face with the broken, often messy, obstinate, or seemingly unsalvageable lives of sinners. The biblical boldness must and will be present when they envision their eternal destiny.

In short, this comes down to a display of the complementarity of truth, a combination of heartfelt identification which has a listening and truly hearing ear and a courageous tongue that will speak clearly and firmly to the most basic needs. Incidentally, Scripture requires “a gentle demeanor” for a very good reason. After all, salvation is of the Lord (2 Tim. 2:25a). This demands “straight talk” because of the need for repentance to embrace truth (2 Tim. 2:25b). It also insists on “a respectful attitude,” because it embodies a desire to serve all those who are created in the image of God, however slanderous and reviling they may be (1 Pet. 3:16).

Now, the sequence of “contacting,” “connecting,” “clicking,” “relating,” “sharing,” is hardly ever a uniform experience. Some of the links in this chain may be more pronounced than others. At times one or two may be missing. Further, available time or time spans and conditions as well as individual personalities or character traits and situations play a significant role in the way the sequence works out. Frankly, in each instance the sequence resembles a snowflake. Even if all snowflakes are and remain snowflakes, each one has its own structure! The variables are virtually endless. But one thing must always be kept in mind and guide every outreach. Each component in the sequence, each link in the chain, should be pursued to the max as circumstances allow or dictate. This also emphatically pertains to sharing the Gospel. Once Paul is our model, hearing the cry of hell bound sinners before they get there is, will and must always have the priority in aim and intensity over any type of identification with their humanity, including their suffering, however breathtakingly brutal this may be (Rom. 9:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:11-

12; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24).⁷² This echoes the near universal consensus that (Pastor-Teacher) Word-Ministry does and always must have the priority over (Diaconal) Deed-Ministry.⁷³

Let me conclude this section by quoting a powerful as well as insightful “summary” statement. It biblically blends “the relational” and “the confrontational” dimensions together. It listens and hears, but also seeks to speak. Still there is a transcending quality to it that dwarfs all the present theoretical proposals about the proper “method.” It is bound up with the manifest presence of “spontaneity” that must be uniquely there to be effective in multiplying the salvation of sinners and the planting of Churches. Candidly, what is present on the “inside” of folk manifests itself on the “outside.” Some have experienced the healing power of relationships. So they seek to build them. Others have tasted the effect of the Gospel. So they promote it. Both, of course, are able to substantiate their “method” with relevant data from Scripture.

But in the summary statement we come face to face with a third type of people. These are “special.” They are filled with “LIFE” to overflowing! They are like the Samaritan woman. They drank the water that Christ gave them (John 4:14). For all practical purposes they “drank life” (John 7:37). In fact, they “ate and drank” Christ (John 6:35, 53-58) who is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6)! This “intake” resulted in “springs of water that welled up to eternal life” (John 4:14). They could not but overflow. In short, the life in their innermost being, that is, “the life on the inside,” gushed “rivers of living water” “on the outside” (John 7:38). They could not help themselves. They gushed “spontaneously.” And what they gushed was “Gospel life!” “Gospel life” in both demeanor and word!

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Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, 10-11, describes the proper blending of the “relational” and the “confrontational” in the following way, “Spontaneous expansion begins with the individual effort of the individual Christian to assist his fellow, when common experience, common difficulties, common toil have first brought the two together. It is this equality and community of experience which makes the one to deliver his message in terms which the other can understand, and makes the hearer approach the subject with sympathy and confidence—with sympathy because the common experience makes approach easy and natural, with confidence, because the one is accustomed to understand what the other says and expects to understand him now ... The speaker speaks from the heart because he is too eager to refrain from speaking. His subject has gripped him. He speaks of what he knows, and knows by experience. The truth which he imparts is his own truth. He knows its force. He is speaking almost as much to relieve his own mind as to convert his hearer, and yet he is as eager to convert his hearer as to relieve his own mind; for his mind can only be relieved by sharing his new truth, and his truth is not shared until another has received it. This his hearer realizes. Inevitably he is moved by it. Before he has experienced the truth himself he has shared the speaker’s experience ... The speaker’s expression of his experience intensifies it ... He gets a deeper sense of its reality and power and meaning. In speaking of it he pledges himself to the conduct and life which it involves. He proclaims himself bound by it, and every time that his speech produces an effect upon another, that effect reacts upon himself, making his hold upon his truth surer and stronger. But this only if his speech is voluntary and spontaneous.” In this context Allen marvels about two realities. First, the amazing expansion of the Church where this “spontaneity” is woven in its warp and woof, this in contrast to the scenario where a paid professional is in charge as the point-man! The latter “is not delivering his own message because he cannot help it. He is not speaking of Christ because Christ alone impels him.” He is salaried with a forty hour workweek. Historically “spontaneity” spawns “multiplication.” All believers contribute to it, producing as much as a 20-fold expansion in a short time. Professionalism is married to “addition.” The paid laborers are few and remain a few. As a result the Church may be grateful if it grows by a few percentage points. Second, when “spontaneity” does “find out its own ignorance, it is generally eager to learn and to inquire further for itself. It confesses its plight and seeks help.” If nothing else, this explains and warrants the need for the Antiochian type of *Ministerial* Leadership. Standing shoulder to shoulder, and marching arm in arm with a spontaneous Membership, it keeps the expanding action knowledgeable, pure and so going full tilt as Christ intended it (Eph. 4:11ff). At any rate, in this way “the spontaneous expression of truth experienced strengthens and advances the speaker.”

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Timothy Keller, *Ministries of Mercy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 1997), 116, calls “the ministry of the word the more radical and basic of the two ministries, in that it goes to the root or the fount from which all human brokenness flows.”

I very much doubt whether “relationship building” was even an issue in Revival times. There is a natural affinity between “spontaneous communicators *of life*” and “occupants of a house of peace” (Mt. 10:13). “Living water” tends to bond quickly. Remember the Samaritan woman. When thirsty folks drink, the bonding occurs at that very moment, and at the deepest possible level. Church History is there to demonstrate this. Every time Revival fires were burning brightly and Revival Life took over, conversions were the order of the day (Acts 2:47) and new Churches would spring up rapidly.

All this must prompt us to plead with God for the third type of people to populate the Church so as to be the rule rather than the exception. We must look deep into ourselves to see whether we are the recipients of the water of Christ that by definition turns into a spring of water that is life (Christ) in us, and did, does, and will well up to life (Christ) in others (John 4:14). We simply cannot pass on what we do not have ourselves. Since it is the water of Christ the “outflow” is always determined by the “inflow.” So we better make sure that we do not dry up on the inside and experience desert like conditions. This takes abiding in Christ 24/7, like branches in a vine, through the Word and Prayer (John 15:7). But when and if upon self-examination we do and may conclude that our lives are adorned with veritable “rivers of living water,” we can expect them to have a multiplying effect (Acts 6:7).

Well, here is the summary statement, which is truly awesome. May God grant that it will have a definitive and activating impact upon everyone who reads it!

“Spontaneous expansion (in terms of both the conversion of people and the planting of new Churches) begins with the individual effort of the individual Christian to assist his fellow, when common experience, common difficulties, common toil have first brought the two together. It is this equality and community of experience which makes the one to deliver his message in terms which the other can understand, and makes the hearer approach the subject with sympathy and confidence--with sympathy because the common experience makes approach easy and natural, with confidence, because the one is accustomed to understand what the other says and expects to understand him now ... The speaker speaks from the heart because he is too eager to refrain from speaking. His subject has gripped him. He speaks of what he knows, and knows by experience. The truth which he imparts is his own truth. He knows its force. He is speaking almost as much to relieve his own mind as to convert his hearer, and yet he is as eager to convert his hearer as to relieve his own mind; for his mind can only be relieved by sharing his new truth, and his truth is not shared until another has received it. This his hearer realizes. Inevitably he is moved by it. Before he has experienced the truth himself he has shared the speaker’s experience ... The speaker’s expression of his experience intensifies it ... He gets a deeper sense of its reality and power and meaning. In speaking of it he pledges himself to the conduct and life which it involves. He proclaims himself bound by it, and every time that his speech produces an effect upon another, that effect reacts upon himself, making his hold upon his truth surer and stronger. But this only if his speech is voluntary and spontaneous.”⁷⁴

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See Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, 10-11. In this context Allen marvels about two realities. First, the expansion of the Church where this “spontaneity” is woven in its warp and woof is nothing short of amazing, this in contrast to the scenario where a professional is in charge as the point-man, paid to do a job! The latter “is not delivering his own message because he cannot help it. He is not speaking of Christ because Christ alone impels him.” He is salaried to put in a forty-hour workweek. Historically “spontaneity” spawns “multiplication.” All believers contribute to it, producing as much as a 20-fold expansion in a short time. Professionalism is married to “addition.” Besides, the paid laborers are few in number and remain few in number. As a result the Church may be grateful if it grows by a few percentage points. Second, when “spontaneity” does “find out its own ignorance, it is always eager to learn and to inquire further for itself. It confesses its plight and seeks help.” If nothing else, this explains and warrants the need for the Antiochian type of

Clearly, what is fundamental in this “summary” is much more than “relationship building” and “confrontational speaking.” It is the display of Gospel life, Holy Spirit authenticity that is experienced by its “owner,” and cannot but spill over into the life of the community which recognizes authentic Gospel life for what it is and is attracted by it and to it. This is where and how biblical bonding takes place. It is not just bonding in a relationship, or even in a Gospel presentation. It is bonding from life through life unto life, from the Spirit through the Spirit unto the Spirit, that is, from Christ through Christ unto Christ, and ultimately from God through God unto God (Rom. 11:36)!⁷⁵

Additional details about the intricacies of this type of outreach are to be covered in Part II of this Paper. The way in which to present Gospel truth efficiently and effectively will also have to await Part II. But the aim is always to get the Full Embodied as well as Expressed Gospel across. This Gospel is like a diamond with many facets. Scripture does not always start its presentation with the same facet. Jesus addresses “the Pharisee Nicodemus” with the facet of “regeneration” (John 3:3, 5), “the Samaritan woman-at-the-well” with the facet of “justification” (John 4:16-18), and “professing Jews” with the facet of “sanctification” (John 8:31-32). Once again the complementarity of truth emerges, which allows, if not calls for an insightful strategy. But eventually, of course, that is, sooner or later, the Full Threefold New Covenant Gospel must be “owned” by everybody who is “targeted” in the evangelistic enterprise. This cannot and may not be compromised in any way, shape or form. After all, it is a matter of (eternal) life and (eternal) death. But the way to arrive at that objective is not always the same. As such the concrete presentation of the Gospel may be and usually is person- and situation-variable, which is, once again, flexible and fluid.

7. Gospel Magnetism: *The Holy Spirit*

All that has been covered thus far will not be fruitful unless it is part of the “torrents of living Holy Spirit water” (John 7:37-39). It cannot be repeated often enough that without the presence of the Holy Spirit the Church cannot and will not be the magnetic field that draws folks into the

Ministerial Leadership. Standing shoulder to shoulder, marching arm in arm, and acting hand in hand with a spontaneous Membership, it renders the actors increasingly knowledgeable and their actions increasingly pure, going increasingly full tilt, just as Christ intended it (Eph. 4:11ff). At any rate, this integration of leaders and members does not only pave the way for “the spontaneous expression of truth experienced to strengthen and advance the speaker.” It also safeguards the Church from being victimized by lone rangers set to disrupt its over-all ministry, or by novices who would jeopardize the quality of its ministry.

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A sample of this kind of bonding is supplied by Andrew Bonar, *Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, 248. He quotes the following letter to M'Cheyne, “I hope you will pardon a stranger for addressing to you a few lines. I heard you preach last Sabbath evening, and it pleased God to bless that sermon to my soul. It was not so much what you said, as your manner of speaking that struck me very much. I saw in you a beauty of holiness that I never saw before. You also said something in your prayer that struck me very much. It was, “*You know that we love you.*” O Sir, what would I give that I could say to my blessed Savior, “*You know that I love you.*” This letter from a (total) stranger, of all people (!), teaches us something significant. Both relationship building and Gospel presentation may and should be pursued as much as this is possible, given the circumstances, the timeline and the people involved. But neither one can or may be the substitute of “rivers of living water,” that is, authentic and manifest Holy Spirit “life” that can be perceived. It can be “tasted,” even if it defies conceptualization. It is not “human” in origin or quality. It is from “above” (Col. 3:1; Jam. 3:17). It is Christ-in-us (Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4a)! As such, he is “The Present Hope of Glory” (Col. 1:28) for and in us and “The Potential Hope of Glory” through us for others (1 Pet. 3:15a)! This letter also may well alert us to the reason why Revival times are so rare. There are too many desert-like Church leaders and Church members, in whole or in part. At best they “trickle,” rather than “overflow.” In non-Revival times this is the rule rather than the exception. Once we recognize and admit this we will undoubtedly learn to plead with God to have mercy on all of us!

fold. Scripture slowly but surely builds the case of the indispensable necessity of the Holy Spirit in transporting the New Covenant! In the early goings of the OT the Spirit is shown to be present, to fulfill his “beautifying mission,” in a fourfold way, present with creation, with artisans, with the nation of Israel, and with office bearers, such as judges, kings. But there is no Scriptural record that he is ever present in individuals as individuals. This spells the fundamental difference between the OT and the NT, as indicated by Jesus himself. “When the Spirit of truth arrives at Pentecost, he will not only dwell with you, but also enter in you and dwell in you” (John 14:16-17; see also 16:7-11). The implications of the OT vacuum are stupendous. It explains why Israel is shown to be no better than a “Barren Desert” (Is. 32:15), a “Cemetery” (Ezek. 37:1ff), and a “Dead Sea” (Ezek. 47:1ff). A Desert kills. A Cemetery buries. And a Dead Sea kills everything else. The unfathomable darkness of Israel’s rebellion, guilt and pollution could not have been pinpointed more graphically. But ... in each of the three contexts a majestic antidote comes to the Revival rescue and an electrifying proclamation has the final transforming word. “Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert turns into a fruitful field (Is. 32:15). “I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live” (Ezek. 37:15). “Torrents of living (Holy Spirit) water will emerge from the temple and turn the Dead Sea into a large body of fresh water, harboring an abundance of all kinds of fish and growing a cash crop on its banks” (Ezek. 47:1-12). The contrast in these picture-like descriptions could not have been more overwhelming.

The unfathomable darkness literally cries out for the promise of the Spirit. Well, just like the presence of the Spirit in the early OT is fourfold, so the promise in the later OT and the early NT is fourfold as well. The Spirit of Fullness is pledged to come upon Jesus (Is. 11:1ff; 61:1ff), the Spirit of Truth upon the Disciples (Prov. 1:23; John 14:13), the Spirit of Abundance and Power upon the Church (Joel 2:28ff; Mt. 3:11-12; John 1:13; Acts 1:8), and the Spirit of Salvation upon the Church and the World (Is. 44:3-5). The comprehensive nature of this fourfold promise should not escape anyone. In graphic terms, Christ is the Water Tower that covers all the nations. The Truth is the pipeline through which the Holy Spirit water flows to all the nations. The Church is the reservoir from which the Holy Spirit enters into all the nations. The People of God are the sprinkling system that waters all the nations.

This fourfold promise was fully implemented. The Spirit of Fullness descended upon Jesus at the time of his Baptism (Mt. 3:16). The Spirit of Truth was breathed upon the Disciples on the evening of Resurrection Day (John 20:22-23). The Spirit of Abundance and Power arrived at Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff).

To get a full picture of this Abundance, a fourfold terminology must be explained, Baptism with the Spirit, Gift of the Spirit, Fillings with the Spirit and Fullness of the Spirit.

The Baptism with the Spirit is *once and for historical* event, never to be repeated. Poured out upon the Church he is there to stay in perpetuity. The once and for all character also applies to the display of vivid the eye-catchers, tongues like of fire, noise like a powerful wind, and the type of tongue speaking in which all the attendees simultaneously heard the message in their own native language without the need for interpretation. None of these three phenomena have occurred again.

The Gift of the Spirit is a *once and for all personal* event, received upon repentance and forgiveness (Acts 2:38). It is small consolation for any Church member to be part of a Fellowship where the Spirit is clearly present, but not to be graced with the Gift of the Spirit. Those who do not have the Spirit of Christ do not belong to him (Rom. 8:9).

Fillings with the Spirit are *repeated historical and personal events*. They either empower recipients to ministry without the explicit need for repentance (Acts 4:31) or for personal holiness following repentance (Eph. 5:17).

Fullness of the Spirit stands for a *constant outflow of power* in ministry and holiness. Only two men are explicitly honored as such in the NT, Barnabas who surrendered his property to have ecclesiastical needs covered with the proceeds (Acts 4:36; 11:24), and Stephen who surrendered his life with a shining face (Acts 7:55). “Infillings” are clearly mandated and necessary. But “Fullness” is awesome and should be the admirable target for all Christians. “Spontaneous Revival times are here again!”

Finally, the Spirit of Salvation became operational at Pentecost as well (Acts 2:41). His presence added a fourfold “plus” over the OT. First, a quantitative plus, from a trickle of conversions to a flood! Second a qualitative plus, from a desert into a fertile field! Third, a principal plus, the mighty advance of the Kingdom through the sowing of the seed of the Word! Jesus informs us that this was one of the mysteries of the Kingdom. What was hidden in the OT was now revealed. Sow the Word ... Sow the Word ... Sow the Word, stand ready to do so in season and out of season (Mt. 13:11, 18-23; 2 Tim. 4:2). Fourth, a strategic plus, *all* hands on deck, leadership as well as membership. Scripture tell us that even the pastor-teachers must do the Work of Evangelists (2 Tim, 4:5). They may not stay in the area of their niche, their giftedness, let alone in their comfort zone. It further records that in the early Revival culture of the Church *all* the people were filled with the Spirit, and *continued* to speak the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31)!

Frankly, enough said at present apart from one reminder. The need for the presence of the Holy Spirit is so pivotal that grieving him (Eph. 4:30), quenching him (1 Thess. 5:19) or outraging him (Hebr. 10:29) by sins of either omission or commission is and must be self-destructive, if not suicidal! Those who fail or refuse to tremble at this reminder (Is. 66:2) should know that it is terrifying to fall in the hands of the living God (Hebr. 10:31). This is as true in the NT dispensation as it was in the OT. The Book of Revelation with its judgments is a perpetual reminder of this fact!

8. Gospel Momentum: *Prayer*

This Topic has been covered already. But without going into detail it may be helpful to give some additional information about Four Pillars that undergird the Biblical Prayer Edifice, and supply Scripture references for the Twelve Spark plugs of the Biblical Prayer Engine that have been mentioned already.⁷⁶ The following graph aims to do so.

I. The Four “Pillars” of the Prayer Edifice: “When, What, Why and Where?”			
1. When	: Kingdom Entrance	: Mercy	(Gen. 32:26; Lk. 18:13)
	Kingdom Fabric	: Mercy	(Gen. 18:23; Lk. 18:1)
2. What	: Throne room	: Communion	(Lk. 6:12; Phil. 4:6)

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An extensive Paper that treats both the Four Pillars and the Twelve Spark plugs in great detail is available upon request from the author of the present Paper.

Thanksgiving	: Sufficiency	(Eph. 5:20; 1 Th. 5:18)
3. Why : From Nothing	: “The Below”	(1 Ki. 18:43; John 15:5)
To Everything	: “The Above”	(1 Ki. 18:45; Phil. 4:13)
4. Where : Personal	: Private	(Mt. 6:6; Acts 2:21)
Church	: Public	(Acts 4:24)

II. The Twelve “Sparkplugs of the Prayer Engine”

A. Six Foundational Prerequisite Parameters

1. Starting point: The New Heart (The Heart of the King) (Jer. 29:13)
2. Ground: The Name of Jesus (The Name of the King) (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24)
3. Content: The Word of God (The Word of the King) (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14)
4. Origin: The Holy Spirit (The Spirit of the King) (Eph. 6:18; Jude 20)
5. Fabric: Holiness (The Holiness of the King) (Jam. 4:3; 5:16)
6. Fire Hearth: “Small Groups” (The Body of the King) (Mt. 18:19-20; Acts 13:2)

B. Six Personal Requisite Hallmarks

7. Mindset: Humility (Humility of the King) (Ps. 40:8-10, 12; Is. 64:5ff; Jer. 14:7; Heb.5:16) 8. Nucleus: Confidence (Confidence of the King) (Hab. 2:1; Mt. 21:22; Jam. 1:5-7)
 9. Heartbeat: Fervency (Fervency of the King) (Ps. 63:1; Jer. 29:12-13; Rom. 12:11-12; 15:30; Jam. 5:16)
 10. Resolve: Unceasing (Persistence of the King) (Dan. 6:10; Lk. 18:1, 7; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 1:16; 1 Th. 3:10; 5:17; 1 Tim. 5:5)
 11. Dynamism: Urgency (Urgency of the King) (Ps. 38:22; 66:19-20; 95:7-8)
 12. Harmony: Consensus (Alliance of the King) (Mt. 18:19; Phil. 2:2; Rom. 15:30)
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9. Gospel Modes: *Six-fold*

The following point by point “chart” covers the major ways to get the Gospel across. These are partly essential and partly person-variable. Part II of this volume aims to give all of this the necessary feet!

1. God’s Foremost Method of Evangelism is *always* God’s man (1 Thess. 2:7-12; 1 Tim. 4:12-16). He is “The Displayed Word.” (See also E.M. Bounds, *The Power of Prayer*.)

2. Scripture’s Fundamental Manner of Evangelism is an all hands-on-deck Multiplication rather than a single man’s Addition (Acts 11:19-20). What comes into view is “The Multiplied Word.” If everyone, that is everyone, sows in abundance, Greater Works Multiplication, by the grace of God is bound to be or become a reality (See also Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*.)

3. The Church’s Primary Means in Evangelism is “The Spoken Word” in preaching, crusades, radio, TV, market outreach, door-to-door evangelism, etc.

4. The Believers' Interpersonal Means in Evangelism: is "The Shared Word" in Home Bible Studies, growth groups, friendship outreach, Christian hospitality, etc.

5. The Kingdom's Expanded Means in Evangelism is "The Written Word" in books, pamphlets, tracts, and other literature.

6. The Christian's Entrepreneurial Mode in Evangelism is "The Marching Word" in Hot Pursuit of all possible Opportunities in turbulent gatherings, danger areas, calamities, ghettos, shady districts, etc., all of which involves a smaller or greater measure of Biblical risk-taking.

10. Gospel Mobilization: *Five Principles*

To cover this topic I take my cue from both John 21 and Luke 24. They present four indispensable principles (John 21) which do and should serve as catalysts for the ever ongoing Mobilization and one power-pack (Luke 24) to ensure the unstoppable Mobilization of the total Church, its leadership as well as its membership. John 21 is the perfect counterpart of John 1. In John 1 Christ recruits the disciples whom he trains and equips for their ministry for three years, as recorded from John 2 through John 20. In John 21 he sends them out. Luke 24 focuses on their empowerment.

The four principles of John 21 come in the form of four numbers, "153," (21:11) "3," (21:17) "1," (21:19) and "0" (21:22). The "power-pack" of Luke 24:49, as we shall see, could well add the number "100" to this series of four.

"153" (John 21:11) is the number of the fish that was caught. The mandate to make disciples of all nations may well have looked ludicrous. Only eleven men sent out to take on the whole world? Who is kidding whom? One could easily expect a smile of unbelief. Well, that smile went by the wayside before it had time to make an appearance. The "153" is the key. My apostles, always remember that you have an Abundant God!⁷⁷ The Battle Is Mine! To drink from that well is to send all doubts packing in the footsteps of David as he attacked Goliath, certain of victory (1 Sam. ; see also similar episodes in)! The principle is clear. Without an Abundant God, Nothing! With Him, Everything! (See for a parallel John 15:5 and Phil. 4:13). But there is much more. There is also the "3."

"3" times (John 21:17) Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" Customary wisdom is that Christ's "3" questions match Peter's "3" denials. That may be true. But it is not verifiable from the text. So it is better not to go this route. It would make us sit (snugly?) in the stands while watching Christ going after Peter. That would be a travesty. What the text does say is that the third time Peter anchors his love in his Master, which is tantamount to swearing an oath. "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you." Now everybody is in the arena hearing the "thunder" in Christ's voice with which he addresses the total Church. "Do you love me, do you love me, do you love me," expecting from all of us to echo Peter's heart's cry, "You know everything. You know that I love you!" This puts the principle embodied in then "3" in living color. An Abundant God will accompany you. But you also stand in need of an Abundant Love.⁷⁸ Without either one you are not going to make it. You will back down from your mandate, sooner or later. But there is yet still more. There is the "1."

⁷⁷ Divine Abundance applies equally to the Father (Ezek. 36:25-27), the Son (John 10:16 // Is. 53:11, Lk. 19:10), and to the Holy Spirit Acts 2:1ff.

⁷⁸ Abundant love must be the hallmark of the Church in its totality (Acts 2:42-47), its evangelistic leadership (Eph. 4:11), as well as its people (Acts 4:31; 11:19-20). Such love reflects Jesus (John 4:4; 10:16), in fact, is "the love of Jesus" (2 Cor. 5:14).

(There is) “1” certainty, Peter (John 21:18-19), in fact, “1” inescapable certainty that you can count on, you are going to die for me, you are going to die a martyr’s death. In this, follow in my footsteps, and embrace it as a non-negotiable imperative.” Of course, the question may, if not will arise what stamps all this as a universal principle of mobilization. Well, Christ’s message is not meant for Peter only, while we may merrily go our way. No, it merely particularizes for Peter what covers “the waterfront” of the Church. “Unless a seed dies, it will not yield any fruit. But if it does, it will produce much fruit (John 12:24)! Having an Abundant God and an Abundant Love is not sufficient to face and take on the nations. You must be eager to embrace an Abundant Death.⁷⁹ Here is the principle that does and should govern every ministry. If you fail or refuse to do so from the heart, you cannot possibly be a channel of life (2 Cor. 4:10-12)! You will wither in discouragement, dismay or defeat in the face of a humanly speaking impossible task, often aggravated by the ridicule or hostility of the nations. Embrace an Abundant Death from the get-go, and you won’t wither, not ever! In fact, Christ ups the ante even more, when his voice seems to take on what humanly could be described as a “fever pitch.” You have no choice but to deny yourself. It is not just that you would fail to be a channel of life. No, you will forfeit your own life, if you don’t lose it for my sake and the Gospel’s (Mk. 9:34-35). All this encapsulated in that (1) imperative “Follow Me!” Note, however, that this principle is the third one. There is order in the house! It is the order of a gracious God. First, he shows himself and Abundant God. Then, we arrive at our Abundant Love. When and to the extent this twofold Abundance is in place, the way is and cannot but be paved to face and welcome an Abundant Death “for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s! But there is still one principle to go. This is the principle of the “0.”

The “0” stands for Abundant Contentment. When someone is shocked by the blunt announcement of the certain “fate” that awaits him, chances are that he will inquire into the future plight of his companions. Well, so did Peter (John 21:21-22). But Jesus cuts him off with a response that is curt and to the point, “None of your business. You follow me!” In other words, surrender fully to my words and to my providence, and find in both your total satisfaction (Phil. 4:11).

John 21 is an awesome Chapter. In it Jesus gives a fourfold blueprint of victory that does not mince words. It is both utterly glorious and deeply challenging. Your Abundant God, your Abundant Love, your Abundant Death, and your Abundant Contentment are necessary to ensure, if not to guarantee that you will conquer all the nations on earth. But there is one more indispensable item to consider. This is found in Luke 24!

It is the need and certainty of God’s 100% empowerment. Even with the four principles in place, the Apostolic Mission will still be a failure. Go home, Jesus tells his disciples, until you are “clothed with Holy Spirit power from on high” (Lk. 24:49).⁸⁰ Without it you are a “desert,” a “cemetery,” a “Dead Sea,” and incapable of the much needed Abundant Love, Abundant Death, and Abundant Contentment. That Peter had a track record of love for his Master dating well back is indisputable (Mt. 16:16; John 6:68; 21:7). But without Holy Spirit power he still denied him three times (Mt. 26:69ff; John 18:15ff, 25ff).

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The propitiating death of Jesus and the propagating death of the Church are closely intertwined, but with the understanding that the death of Jesus is foundational for the death of the Church and calls it into being. Phil. 2:12-13 parallels this.

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This empowerment applies to leadership and membership alike (Acts 1:8; 4:31). The total Church must thirst for Jesus, come to Jesus and drink from Jesus to “gush” torrents of living Holy Spirit water (John 7:37-39)!

From all this two things are and must be crystal clear. When “living Holy Spirit waters” rise within us, surge through us, and inundate the nations, we have only 100% God to thank in Abundant Adoration. But if those “waters” recede in us, trickle through us, and leave the nations dry and barren, we must shoulder the 100% blame for our shameful and guilty anemia in godly sorrow and heartfelt repentance, fully in the footsteps of Daniel (Dan. 9:1ff) and Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1ff).

When, finally, we arrive at a Spontaneous Ecclesiastical Evangelism Culture through Classroom instruction and Field training, the Five Pillars of all Christian Ministry will also be on display in the embrace of the first part of Christ’s all-embracing Double Command.

Pillar 1. I MUST be Holy (Lev. 19:2) in the successful pursuit of making disciples (evangelism). After all, it is a Divine Command (Mt. 28:19)!

Pillar 2. I CANNOT be Holy in the successful pursuit of making disciples (evangelism). After all, without Jesus I can do nothing (John 15:5; Rom. 7:19, 24)!

Pillar 3. I THIRST to be Holy in the successful pursuit of making disciples (evangelism). After all, I long to produce “rivers of living Holy Spirit water” (John 7:37-38)!

Pillar 4. I PRAY to be Holy in the successful pursuit of making disciples (evangelism). After all, this is the only channel to achieve what I must, what I cannot produce myself, but for which I thirst (John 14:13; 1 Thess. 5:17; Jam. 4:2c)!

Pillar 5. I SHINE, being Holy in the successful pursuit of making disciples (evangelism). After all, Jesus promises to grace his Church, leaders as well as members, with the “Greater Works” of conversions (John 14:12).

Frankly, these Five Pillars must accompany all of us throughout our life time everywhere and in everything, including in “the making of disciples.” This spells, also in this area, unconditional surrender to God’s Law, unremitting humility in our diagnostic self-knowledge, abiding hunger for God’s smile of approval, uninterrupted dependence upon God’s intervening grace, and inexpressible joy about successful ministry (1 Pet. 1:8), reflective of the unshakable conviction and certainty that “From God, through God and unto God, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36)!⁸¹

Following Part I of the present Paper I have inserted Intermezzo I. This should serve as a spur to treat the Classroom instruction as well as the Field training with the utmost of seriousness. It indicates, if not demonstrates that too much is at stake to be “lukewarm,” “tepid,”

“Success” is often decried as a worldly commodity and leaven that must be shunned by God’s people. Instead, “faithfulness” should be the supreme and exclusive goal! Success is fully in God’s hands. So leave it there! To be sure, “faithfulness” is, indeed, a biblical requirement (1 Cor. 3:2). But the promise of success is repeated again and again in Scripture (Josh. 1:8). To Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls*, 11-12, the godly thirst to be successful in the Kingdom is fully part of our faithfulness. He said it well, “When, God forbid, success is not forthcoming, at least your heart should break!” Charles Haddon Spurgeon followed suit, when he exclaimed, “Don’t tell me that you are a fisherman, if you never caught any fish,” just like you cannot call yourself a baker, if you never baked a loaf of bread! Besides, biblical success is poles apart from worldly success. Biblical success can only be achieved by self-denial, worldly success by self-assertion. A reference to Jesus should put all of this to rest. That he was faithful is indisputable (Rev. 3:14)! But he did not come to earth to be just that. He came to see his offspring. He came to prosper, to see an outcome, the outcome of the anguish of his soul, and not to be satisfied until he saw it (Is. 53:10-11). There is no way that God will be pleased, if we are satisfied with anything less. But, once again, this has consequences of the utmost gravity. In order to reach “the satisfaction of souls and holiness,” it requires our *via dolorosa*, our “death march,” as it required the *Via Dolorosa*, the “death march,” of Jesus. In Part II of this volume we simply have to face the question how to walk that way and how to turn it into a death march unto victory and life, in short how to turn it into a “success!” By way of afterthought, folks who are exclusively occupied with “faithfulness,” without any regard of the outcome, may well end up either construing or simply treating failure as a success, in spite of all indications to the contrary!

in the embrace of both. For the moment, “enough said” about all this. Following this Intermezzo, on to Part II! Once we recognize how to arrive at a Revival Evangelism Culture in a Classroom setting, we *must* learn how to *display* it in the Field! It is interesting to note that Christ in his Precious Double Command mandates in no uncertain terms the “What” and the “Who.” But he does not stipulate the “How.”⁸²

Nevertheless, guided by definitive Biblical principles and following clear-cut Biblical patterns, combined with person-specific, circumstance-specific and culture-specific sanctified sense and flexibility, there is no doubt that we can establish an efficient and effective way to carry out Christ’s mandate to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19)†

Intermezzo I

“COMMUNISM and CHRISTIANITY”

A Summary of Douglas Hyde, *Dedication and Leadership*
(Notre Dame, IND: Notre Dame Press, 2014)

Douglas Hyde, a one-time communist atheist turned into a Roman Catholic theist, basically argues that Christianity better “best” Communism in all the admirable features that are necessary to win the war for God and against evil. He argues that in the display of these admirable features Communism basically took a page out of the Book of God for “A Bad Cause.” For this reason it stands condemned. The heinous evil it inflicts on the masses as well as on its adherents is intolerable. On the other hand, Christianity appears to ignore this page for “A Good Cause.” For this reason it miserably fails. It is not sanitizing society and the world.

A Cause or “Movement” worthy of the name is invariably characterized by (100%) *idealism, zeal, exceptional dedication, single-minded devotion to the cause, and willingness (eagerness) to sacrifice* (16, 20). Recruiters are and must be audacious in making *big demands* from their potential followers and calling for *impressive sacrifices* from them in money and time (18).

The “Cause” is and must be ever present in every individual adherent, whether in eating and drinking, in walking and talking, when asleep and when awake. The upshot is *an immense and dynamic force when all individuals collectively make a contribution to the cause* (26).

Recruiters draw out dedication, zeal, and sacrifice as well as all the growth potential of every individual adherent, inspired by a clear, simple and memorable guiding light and goal, such as, “do not just explain the world, give it your all change it,” or, “you have a world to win,” in the unwavering confidence that it can and will be achieved (30-32).

The drawing card to any pulsating “Cause” or “Movement,” which not so incidentally demands the whole (!) man, is to see it *in action* in and by Cause or Movement adherents, who throw themselves into the pursuit of the Cause or the Movement with body and soul. Total dedication, which is not self-centered but aims at a totally transformed society and a fully changed world, leaves a quiet life, laziness and selfishness behind, and is eager to make all the necessary sacrifices, will always be an admired drawing card (37-38).

A recruit is immediately asked, if not required to join “the present action,” “the action of the moment.” This kindles a desire for “instruction” to be effective in it and so to serve the “Cause” or “Movement” successfully. In this way theory and action, action and theory, those seeming opposites, intersect, merge, stand shoulder to shoulder, move arm in arm, and advance hand in hand (43-45).

Instruction aims to meet felt needs that result from involvement in action, binds tutor and student together, and seeks to mold as well as change individual lives in order to mold and change society and the world. Such instruction takes place in small enough classes, which do not allow anyone to remain behind mentally or on the sidelines emotionally. It uses small syllabi, which must be read before classes are in session by all participants, covers all the material in “question and answer” form, in which all students must participate to ensure a thorough grasp of it. It must inspire to regional and global action, which is designed to drive out well-defined and demonstrated “monstrous” evil in heart-felt indignation and aversion with well-defined and demonstrated fundamental solutions. All this calls for and ensures the kind of dedicated and sacrificial action that marks total warfare in word and deed until the victory is achieved (46-61).

Such instruction also has total confidence in “the human material” and does not rest until every student turns into an accomplished leader in his her own niche and in the full display of his or her potential, be it all in the framework of the “Cause” or the “Movement” (62-72). Hence the unwavering practice to make great demands, fully expecting that they will be met. In its battle against the French at Dien Bien-Phu the cadres were told that they almost certainly would die, clambering and slithering over the dead and rotting bodies of their erstwhile comrades. They would surrender their lives not just in the fight against an oppressive colonialism or for their country, but for a suffering and suppressed humanity all over the world in order to make this world a better place. They would be Martyrs for a Cause and gladly embraced the challenge.

The tutor is and must be thoroughly schooled in the ideology as well as the goals of the “Cause,” and seeks by means of a carefully prepared, as well as an explicit and ever updated tutor’s guide to pass on all the information in the syllabi in a comradely atmosphere and a helpful manner in order to transform the students, to equip and inspire them to action, and in the process to end up with full-time leaders. The latter goal is reached when they are the best they can be, and so shine in their every-day vocation or public endeavors, that they naturally assume positions of leadership which allows them day and night to serve the “Cause” or “Movement” maximally (73-104).

“Action” should not allow for interruptions and must take place in the framework of careful and winsome “campaigns” with immediate objectives, for participants not to lose heart and to defect, as well as well-grasped long-term goals that will give them opportunity to intermediate self-criticism, allow them to learn from their mistakes, grant them time to correct them, and

continuously cultivate and improve themselves. In the process personal interests are subordinated to the interest of the “Cause” or “Movement,” partial interests to total interests, temporary interests to long term interests, and the interest of a nation to the interests of the world as a whole (105-122).

The bottom line is to produce ever steel-hardened, ever self-cultivating, and ever unstoppable “cadres.” Such “cadres decide everything!” Cadres for a “Cause” or “Movement,” who are always and everywhere cadres first of all and above everything, are foundational to “techniques,” although all possible attention should be given to the development and proliferation of the best “techniques,” whether in the area of publicity methods, of printed propaganda, of simple and catchy ideas, of, constant contact with the masses, of graphic films, of the spoken word, or of ever alert and superb preparatory or curative “organization” (123-146). Cadres are always under the care and supervision of authoritative cadres’ secretaries who take careful note and keep files of their class attendance, learning, their potential, their over-all involvement, their progress, their unique excellence, and so not only determine their niche in the hot pursuit of the “Cause” or “Movement,” but also guide, streamline, and correct them where necessary.

The tragedy is that cadres with a bad ideology and a bad cause, without regard for God, without a proper view of the nature of man and of the world around them, start off on the wrong foot, and especially by virtue of their idealism, their dedication, their zeal, their sacrifice, their organization, and their planning, end up as men’s jailors, however much they set out to be their “saviors” (147-148).

Every “New Cause,” or “New Movement” invariably starts out with all the exciting hallmarks enumerated thus far, whether for “better or for worse.” Christianity is an “Old Phenomenon.” This means that for it to be the force it should be, with all these hallmarks in place “for the better,” each new generation must be “evangelized” anew, in fact, be “Christianized” all over again, until it emerges as a generation of “leaders.” Such generation asks itself constantly, “What must ‘I’ do as a Christian.” First, to relate my “faith” to every facet of my life and society! Then to state from the very depth of my heart, “There is nothing too good or even good enough for the Cause of God and of Truth!” And, finally, to go out to make my actions match my words with unrestricted dedication, unstoppable zeal, and unlimited sacrifice, individually and collectively! After all, if Christ died for ‘me’ to make me his ambassador, no sacrifice is too much to honor ‘him’ in that capacity” (149-157)!

Hyde eventually recognized the destructive horror of the atheistic Stalinism of his day and as a result embraced theistic Roman Catholicism. However, he became increasingly disenchanted in his new environment. In the hey-day of his communism he was a 100%-er. He inhaled and breathed out communism 24/7. But in his new found “faith” his “fellow travelers” were at best anemic 50%-ers, if that. They were distracted at the drop of a hat by anything at all from what should have been their grand and magnificent obsession. When he unsuccessfully called them out, he began to put question marks, not only behind the genuineness of “their faith,” but also behind the reality of their theism. Commentators opine that by the time he died he had arrived at the third phase of his life. Starting as an “atheist” he turned into a “theist,” but ended up as a “skeptic.” Whether this assessment is correct, is hard to tell. But one thing is crystal clear. A theism which is neither hot nor cold is not only suicidal (Rev. 3:15-16). It proves to be a killer-machine as well. In the course of Church History it may well be that hundreds of millions of children, grand-children and great-grandchildren entered into a Christ-less eternity because their forebears were too lukewarm even to have an interest in being or becoming 100%-ers.

When we scan the masses in Asian and European countries that at one time were under the sway of Christianity, this number may be way too conservative. In this type of scenario Jesus commands the tepid to rekindle their zeal, and issues a call to repentance to that effect, of all things as an expression of his love! So should we on both counts, following in our Master's footsteps (Rev. 3:19).

PART II

“HOW TO *DISPLAY* AN ECCLESIASTICAL CULTURE OF SPONTANEOUS KINGDOM EVANGELISM”

A. What is a Disciple?

Since the nature as well as the grand objective of all evangelism is “to make disciples,” the first order of business is, in addition to finding out who are identified in Scripture as disciples, to establish what a disciple is (and should be) all about, and how he does (and should) function. This is pivotal since there is no way a genuine disciple would wish to stay or hide in a comfort-zone. To the contrary, he would not have a comfort-zone! His deepest desire would be to “soar like an eagle.” Well, here are first the basic biblical data, followed by some wider features as well as the salient characteristics of all disciples with some conclusions at the end. Frankly, the salient characteristics are overwhelming when taken seriously. They portray that a genuine disciple is like Paul's proverbial athlete (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Since only one can get the gold medal, he literally gives it all he's got, in disciplined, intensive and prolonged training as well as in fierce, combat-like, winner take-all competition, producing rivulets of sweat in the process. In the case of the Christian, as a disciple in the full sense of the word, he is more than prepared to see his sweat turn into drops of blood in the footsteps of his Master (Lk. 22:44; see also Hebr. 12:4), mingled with tears (Rev. 7:17c). All this not only, like Jesus, for the joy of the final outcome (Hebr. 12:2, but also, like Paul, for fear to be disqualified! If the latter in its sobriety and urgency applies to the Apostle Paul, it certainly applies to all of us as well. Once this is

grasped corporately and embodied individually, the vivid display of an ecclesiastical evangelism culture is bound to follow.

The basic biblical data are as follows.

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1. The term “disciple” occurs some 250 times in the NT, but only in the Gospels and in Acts. Doubtless the substance of discipleship is also in the OT and in the Rest of the NT, and must be taken into consideration when scanning the notions of “Disciple” and “Discipleship.”⁸³

2. According to Scripture the *whole* Church consists of “disciples” (Acts 9:36; 13:52; 14:20) as a community of *believers* (Acts 6:7; 14:22; John 8:31) who possess the Holy Spirit (Compare John 14:15ff, 15:26ff with Acts 9:17; 13:52; 19:1ff). This means in concrete terms that every Christian must immediately apply to himself whatever in Scripture he encounters about Biblical Discipleship.

3. By itself the word “disciple” is “formal” in nature, and as such has no substantive “content.” It refers to a mode of existence and life. A “disciple” is simply a “learner,” a “pupil,” a “student.” However, the context and scope of its Biblical use intensifies this greatly. Basically, being a genuine “disciple” is “overpowering” in its implications and applications! It “implies the existence of a personal attachment that shapes the whole life of the ‘learner,’ leaving no doubt who deploys the formative power”⁸⁴ It entails radical allegiance to the teacher, involves total absorption of his teaching, implies unreserved commitment to follow him as model in word and deed, and displays unwavering obedience to whatever is commanded and heartfelt surrender to whatever is demanded from him, regardless the time, place, situation, circumstances or outcome.

4. Every “disciple” is personally “called” (Mt. 10:1ff). This “call” is a matter of a careful divine choice (Lk. 6:13-16; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1). But the purpose of the call is telling. It is to be “sent” as an “apostle” (Mt. 10:5ff; 16ff). Those who are thus “sent” should harbor no illusions. They can count on “victory,” alright (Mt. 10:7-15). But this is to be won through exhausting and at times heart-rending “battle” (Mt. 10:16-25). The Flow Chart in Paul runs from finding Faithful Men to train Faithful Men to the point that they are able to train Faithful Others (2 Tim. 2:2). This should facilitate smooth transitions from an outgoing to an incoming leadership. It also should have a “snow ball” effect in that the pool of “Faithful Others” is steadily growing.

Here are the wider features.

1. “To make ‘disciples’ of all nations” (Mt. 28:19) is “to evangelize” them. This means that “true Disciples” embrace and display the truth of the Gospel. As such they possess the Definitive Heart of Jesus in Regeneration (John 3:3, 6; Rom. 6:6-11), the Definitive Righteousness of Jesus in Justification (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:21), and the Definitive Holiness of Jesus in Sanctification (Heb. 10:10). Furthermore, Regeneration provides them with a New VISION to see the “lost” for what they are (2 Cor. 5:16), Justification with a New PASSION to seek the “lost” (Is. 6:8), and Sanctification with a New MISSION to go after the “lost” (Mt. 28:19-20).

2. Since in the New Covenant the Father promises the new heart, the new righteousness and the new holiness (Ezek. 36:25-27), the Son produces them, and the Holy Spirit transports them (John 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 15:16), a biblical disciple has the “Trinitarian” weight and

Jesus (Mt. 10:24; Mk. 4:34; Lk. 14:26, 27, 33), John the Baptist (Mt. 9:14), the Pharisees (Mt. 22:16), and Paul (Acts 9:25) ALL had “Disciples.” Jesus had the “Twelve” but also others (the “Seventy,” Joseph of Arimathea).

G. Kittel, ed.; G. W. Bromiley, tr., *Theological Dictionary of the NT* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), Vol. IV, s. v.

compulsion behind him as a co-laborer of the Father (1 Cor. 3:9), an ambassador of the Son (2 Cor. 5:20) and an instrument of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:3), charged with proclaiming the “Triadic” Gospel!

3. All this endorses the assertion that the Prayer for Laborers, urged by Jesus before Pentecost (Mt. 9: 38), has been heard and answered, starting at that very Day. Since every Christian/Disciple has a New Vision, a New Passion and a New Mission by definition, every Christian is also and simultaneously a New Laborer BY DEFINITION! In principle, therefore, the Laborers are ABUNDANT in number, three thousand new “recruits” in one day already at Pentecost, men and women (Acts 2:39), with the number of men in short order turning into five thousand (Acts 4:1), and further “multiplication” to follow soon thereafter (Acts 6:7), tripling, if not quadrupling the Pentecostal “laborer” force.

4. But in practice they MUST be thoroughly trained to be operational and effective! This training must occur at length with the help of three Training Manuals to be handed out to and studied by each new “convert/disciple” and to be modeled by the “trainers.” These “Manuals” cover the spreading of the Gospel (Mt. 28:19), the teaching of the Word (Mt. 28:20; Heb. 5:12), and the activity of serving (John 13:14; Gal. 5:13), and correspond with the three Ministries of the Church, the Ministry of Evangelism, Speaking as well as Serving under the Leadership of Evangelists (Eph. 4:11c), Pastor-Teachers (Eph. 4:11d) and Deacons (Phil. 1:1). These Leaders must both fulfill their calling and train their “converts/disciples” to observe what God commands them in all three areas. This means that after 1/3rd in the Classroom they must take their students 2/3rd into the field.⁸⁵ Refusal, failure, or half-heartedness in doing so is always “the ominous beginning of a tragic end (Jer. 48:10)! The present context deals only with the “how” of training in Evangelism.

Now on to some salient characteristics, a catalogue of explicit Biblical Requirements for every Christian who as a believer is a “disciple-apostle” (“apostle” with a lower case “a”) by definition! This guarantees that a Church, characterized by “discipleship/ apostleship” quality will never be parked on “dead center,” will not even be satisfied with “live center,” but will be one that is perpetually on the move as it faces, then marches against and finally conquers “the gates of hell” (Mt. 16:18) in terms of the Grand Command (Mt. 28:19-20).

1. In principle the ultimate “Trainer” is the Lord Jesus Christ with original authority (Mt. 28:18). But in practice, after his Ascension, the intermediate trainers are the Church Leaders as his acting spokesmen with delegated authority (2 Tim. 2:2). In a word, “Thus says the Lord” is and should be part of the warp and woof of every training process. The Church can be assured of “Victory” because of Jesus’ promise that he will “always and everywhere be with it” (Mt. 28:20b). But, frankly, “all sure bets” that are contained in this promise are “totally off,” when the Church is content “to march” poorly, slovenly or fails “to march” at all! Failed as well as failing churches are scattered throughout the landscape of Church history.

2. A Disciple follows his “Trainer” (Mt. 4:19; Mk. 1:16-20), whatever the cost (Lk. 19:21), adheres to his “Trainer,” regardless of what others do (John 6:68), surrenders radically and

⁸⁵ In this regard, Theological Seminaries, Christian Colleges, as well as Churches for that matter, are near-universally failing or refusing (?) to imitate” Jesus, as well as men, such as Paul (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thess. 1: 5). I fear that an all too fleshly aversion to “die unto life” (John 12:24) lies at the root of the failure or refusal (?) to “march into the field together,” shoulder to shoulder as trainers and learners/trainees. The bottom line is the evidence of the painful result that there is a vacuum of competent and effective laborers in “the second (or third) generation.” This may well have produced and continue to produce the grim picture that is in evidence throughout Church History.

totally to his “Trainer” (John 11:16), and renounces everyone and everything else for the sake of the “Trainer” (Lk. 14:26, 33).

3. A Disciple apprentices with the “Trainer” and “gets his feet wet” with him (Lk. 9:1ff, 23ff; 10:1ff). mirrors his “Trainer” to a “T” (Lk. 6:40; 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 11:1), experiences the same consequences as his “Trainer” (John 15:18), shoulders and pursues his Mission in the footsteps of his “Trainer” (Mk. 3:14; Lk. 6:13; John 20:21), and is fruitful in sanctification (John 15:8), which consists of personal holiness (1 Thess. 4:4) as well as multiplication (Acts 6:7; 1 Thess. 1:8).⁸⁶

4. In short, a Disciple is “made” in order to “make” Disciples to “train” Disciples in order to “make” Disciples to “train” Disciples in order to make Disciples to “train Disciples,” etc., etc. (2 Tim. 2:2). This is clearly designed to produce a “snowball” effect which is an essential characteristic of a genuine Spontaneous Ecclesiastical Revival Culture.⁸⁷

Finally, here are some conclusions!

1. Clearly, what Jesus fully expects to “reap” from every one of his disciples is fruit, more fruit, much fruit, in fact, incessant fruit (John 15:1ff)! But because “making disciples” or “evangelism” is a “command” (Mt. 28:19), and therefore an *essential* component of the believer’s *sanctification*, it is also an essential part of “fruit-bearing.” Of course, “making disciples” in conversion and “training disciples” in holiness do not constitute the identical fruit. They must be distinguished. At the same time, “What God has joined together (in the activity of fruit-bearing), let not man separate” (Mt. 19:6). They are both an authentic and necessary part of biblical fruit bearing. In sum, faithful to his Master and in the footsteps of his Master a “Disciple” has an intolerable burden to prosper, to be productive, to be successful, to be fruitful in “hot pursuit” of the Grand Command to “make” as well as “train” Disciples (Mt. 28:19-20).⁸⁸

2. The fact that such is only possible through “suffering” and “death” (John 12:24; Phil. 3:10) once and for all distinguishes, in fact, separates him from all those who are worldly in their pursuits as “enemies of the Cross” (Phil. 3:18), “who set their minds on earthly things,” and “whose end is destruction” (Phil. 3:19). As has been mentioned already, a genuine disciple, in short, is *double-crossed*. He first humbly embraces Christ’s “Cross of Propitiation,” and then joyfully shoulders his “Cross of Propagation!” In doing so he surrenders to Christ’s adage, “I die for you. You die for me. And this is *not* negotiable!” To grasp this is to embrace C.T. Studd’s statement, “Since Christ died for me, no sacrifice of mine is too great to return to him and his service!”

3. Of course, to emphasize the joint fruit-bearing in terms of “souls” and “holiness” is all too often countermanded by the often heard argument that “conversions” are a product of sovereign grace. They are not in our hands or up to us. Frankly, is “holiness” in our hands and up to us? Is this not equally a matter of grace only? If Scripture means anything (John 15:5; Rom. 7:21), can we really add a nano-part to our “sanctification” any more than a “nano-convert” to the Church (Acts 2:47)? This shows the topsy-turvy nature of our (lack of) understanding of biblical truth. Well, what is the solution? James is crystal clear in spelling this out. “You do not have, because you do not ask” (Jam. 4:4). No holiness

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See for a plea to take multiplication utterly serious and for ways to pursue it, Francis Chan, *Multiply: Disciples making Disciples* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012).

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For some hands-on literature on “Discipleship,” see Michael A. Milton, *The Demands of Discipleship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005).

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See for this Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls* (2014), esp. 2-3, 7-8, 11-12.

without incessant prayer! Similarly no conversions without incessant prayer! Who is or should not be shamefaced in either instance? Those who are not so sure about the necessity of this bottom line are heartily recommended to read selected volumes on prayer.⁸⁹

4. It is no secret that the well-documented New York Revival in the early 1900's was started by eventually untold numbers of Christians offering up untold prayers in an untold fashion for the grace of God to be revealed in "making" an untold number of "disciples" (conversions) as well as subsequently "training" an untold number of "disciples" (holiness). No wonder that there was an untold effect! Candidly, when our hearts break as they should, when we do not see holiness, which is a promise as well as a mandate, so our hearts must break as they should, when we do not see conversions, which is equally a promise and a mandate. Both are inherent, in fact, essential to Christ's "Grand Double Command" (Mt. 28:19-20) on its way from Pentecost onward to an "innumerable" godly multitude (Rev. 7:9). So let us not, as is too often the case, hide the "terrible falsehood" of "human irresponsibility" behind the "glorious truth" of "Divine Sovereignty" to get ourselves off the proverbial hook. After all, "Cursed is the man who does the work of the Lord with slackness (Jer. 48:10; see also Judg. 5:15b-17, and 23, in contrast to Judg. 5:12-15a, 18-22) Once again, "Enough Said," I trust!

Now on to three basic training steps! They are kept simple because they admittedly add up to a profound paradigm shift. Historically paradigm shifts have often met with initial resistance. After all, they call for a break-through approach that moves beyond the "traditional," the familiar," and so with the "comfortable!" But once the "promise" of such shift clearly proves to outdistance the not so effective, if not the troubled and troubling *status quo*, the price of the temporary "pain" of adjustment is gladly paid. This is a historical fact. It is my prayer that history will repeat itself and the first three "baby" steps will be understood, embraced, endorsed and implemented. They are designed to acclimatize the Church to the Full Training regimen envisioned in and mandated by Scripture.

The following is highly recommended: Austin Phelps, *The Still Hour* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005). Every sentence seems to resemble a "shaming" bumper sticker for folks, that is, for most, if not all of us, who do not appear to have a hunch of what Revival Prayer is! Recommended as well are, E.M. Bounds, *Power through Prayer*, Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*; Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon on Prayer and Spiritual Warfare* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1998); Louis Gifford Parkhurst, Jr., ed., *The Believer's Secret of Intercession, Compiled from the Writings of Andrew Murray and C. H. Spurgeon* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1988); O. Hallesby, *Prayer* (1965), Robert Candlish, *The Prayer of a Broken Heart* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, n.d); Paul. E. Miller, *A Praying Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2017).

B. Three Basic Training Steps

Step I: Grasping the Full Gospel

All volumes on Evangelism in one way or another concede, if not bemoan the fact that the Church by and large falls short in its obedience to the first part of Christ's Grand Double Command. The publication of the volume "The Great Omission" spells this out most emphatically.⁹⁰ Now, in a time period when a spontaneous expansion by means of the membership of the Church is sorely lacking, and when the lack of it is not precisely a burning issue for the leadership of the Church, the question does and must arise how to proceed with seeking to return the Church to the Revival height that it has abandoned (Rev. 2:4). Frankly, the most progressive leadership, eager to make a change, often invites evangelistically minded men to come and show them what a University Campus ministry, a Street Preaching ministry, a Mall ministry, a Door-to-Door ministry, or any similar

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A volume with a similar message is, John S. Dickerson, *The Great Evangelical Recession* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013).

ministry is all about. However, not only is such invitation far from a common occurrence, but also the best that can be hoped for is that at the end a few folks will carry on such ministry after the point-men have departed. The rest will continue to rock along. Frankly, there must be a better way to take a number of infant steps toward what hopefully may end up with a spontaneous expansion of the Church. The latter should be the objective from the very start.

First, the invited point men would do well to face the whole congregation, say in a Sunday service, with the Full New Covenant Gospel. This takes on extra urgency when we hear a recent volume express the startling surprise as well as the deep dismay of the author that the contours of the Biblical Gospel are virtually fogged in. His efforts to lift that fog, enthusiastically received by many men of repute, came down to the following. “The Gospel is centered in the Cross, the embrace of which in faith and repentance results in forgiveness. Thus Acts 2:38!”⁹¹ However, this falls short of the Biblical Data and is really a curtailed Gospel. After all, at least two truths are overlooked.

The first one is that the Cross cannot be separated from the Resurrection. They are the Twin Pillars from which the Gospel message arises and on which it rests (Lk. 24:46-47). Frankly, it can be no other! Part I made it crystal clear. In exterminating sinners, the Cross also terminates their three problems of the cobra heart, the dung past and the toxic life. In re-originating them, the Resurrection also originates their replacements in the three solutions of the heart of Jesus, the righteousness of Jesus and the holiness of Jesus. In short extermination and re-origination are equally indispensable. So, to ignore one of the Twin Pillars, or even to tilt to one, is fraught with danger.

But there is a second truth that meets with a stony silence. Acts 2:38 emphatically adds the Gift of the Spirit to the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sins is not the end all. The first shortcoming hides from view that only the Resurrection does and can provide the threefold title to heaven. All by itself the forgiveness of sin is not and cannot be sufficient. Not even when repentance is properly identified as the way to receive it. Without holiness it is impossible to fellowship with God (Hebr. 12:14)! The second shortfall removes the transporting Holy Spirit from one’s line of vision. He does not only implant the heart of Jesus and seals the righteousness of Jesus, he also implements the holiness of Jesus by his indwelling which makes itself known by the power-presence (Acts 1:8) of “rivers of living water” (John 7:37-39). Without the Spirit, no power, no holiness, and no spontaneous expansion by definition!

In short, to focus exclusively on the Cross and not to proclaim the Resurrection with vigor is to steer folks away from the threefold title to heaven. That this is a grave danger can hardly be disputed. To focus on forgiveness and not to proclaim the Gift of the Spirit with equal, if not transcending vigor is the kiss of paralysis. This puts an audience in a grave danger zone as well. The combination of both failures may well end up as a “kiss of death!” To make this crystal clear is the first order of business!

Step II: Grasping Christ’s Double Command

The second order of business is to show that it is indeed the mandate of Scripture that everyone is and must be involved in Evangelism, and therefore stands in need to be trained and certified. Technically, it would be the duty of the Pastor-Teacher to spell this out in a

series of messages on the Message of the Full Gospel, its Trinitarian Source and its Triadic objective, and its implications for the Messenger. But at least, the invited point-man or point-men should cover this so as to leave no doubt. The thrust should be that “Evangelism is part and parcel of our sanctification!” For a simple reason, it is a “command,” a “command” of Jesus who has all the authority in heaven and on earth! By all means meet him in Revelation 1:14-17, “with his hair white as wool, even as white as snow, his eyes like a fiery flame, his feet like polished bronze, his voice like the roar of many waters, a sharp double edged sword extended out of his mouth, and his face like the sun shining in full strength!” No wonder that John falls down at his feet as though he was dead. This has to be emphasized until his command does or will turn into our flesh and blood!

But beyond this, to facilitate the grasp of this and to ease them into taking action, in my Schools of Evangelism I routinely ask young unmarried people the question whether they would want to wed folks who are not certified to evangelize their children, to share the Word with their children, and to serve their children. The answer of young women as well as young men is invariably the same. “No, no, no!” “No,” on each count! Frankly, this is where the rubber hits the road! Now the stakes are high! “The eternal future of their children is in the weigh scale!” But then there is a follow-up question, addressed to the leadership, the evangelists, the pastor-teachers and the deacons, each one in charge of one-third of the threefold training. The rubber needs to meet a second road. “What happens to your young people, if you fail or refuse to certify them in all three areas?” Usually a variety of answers is given. “They will never turn into strong Christians.” “This does not bode well for the future of the Church!” Or something similar! Of course, these answers are very apropos. But I am driving at a more pointed reply that will make them sit up, have them do some hard thinking, and virtually compel them to take action. “If they put first things first--frankly, as the only thing needful--, they will never marry unless and until their would-be partners are judged by the leadership to meet the threefold standard of God’s Word.” If this catches on with both the parents and their young people, it will turn the Church into veritable beehive of activities. At least, it would be a solid start. Both of them will go to great lengths to study the three Manuals until they know them inside out, and be eager to get trained in the field. After all, their grand-children and children would be the eternal beneficiaries! Hopefully, this would be sufficiently contagious to spill over in the rest of the Church.

But there is one more step to take that ups the ante! Scripture is quite clear. Every Christian has received a special gift from the Holy Spirit in one of three areas, evangelism, speaking the Word or service (Mt. 4: m; 1 Pet. 4:10-11, see also Rom. 12:3-8). When that gift emerges in the field of action, the recipient becomes “unstoppable.” This elicited a second question to young people. “Would you wish to wed someone who would sooner or later be stoppable, swerve from the faith, slack down in ministry, or throw in the towel altogether?” The answer again was “No, No, No.” So why would we as Church leaders, marry folks who are not certified or already show signs that they are stoppable. Further, why would parents give their consent if there is no evidence of certification or unstoppableity? Finally, why would young people be desirous to tie the knot in questionable circumstances? The model father, the model daughter and the model suitor are well described in both the Books of Joshua and Judges. Caleb insists that his future son-in-law is unstoppable. He wants him to conquer a Canaanite town. His daughter Achsa cheers him

on for looking after her in that way. Othniel rises to the occasion and captures the town. The double mention of all this, adds to the weight of it (Josh. 15:19; Judg. 1:11-14).

Step III: Grasping the Training Process

In order for the Church to get a handle on proper training,⁹² I recommend the following. The Church leaders should invite all parents with children to meet with the point-man or point-men as a pilot program to show them how to evangelize their children.⁹³ If the Church has the oversight of a parochial Christian School, the leadership can duplicate this in that setting. Other types of Christian Schools, of course, can adopt the same program. In fact, it is highly recommended that every Christian Institute of Learning, whether it is lower or higher, implements an Evangelism program. One such School of Higher Learning with an enrollment of multi-thousands of students evangelizes all incoming students for a whole Semester. They don't want them to fall through the cracks. If they do, it is the School's problem. If they jump off the side, it is theirs. If they already are vitally united to Christ, they thoroughly learn how to evangelize others. The Administration is apparently aware that sending their students into the world under its President's signature as the proud products of the School to advance the Kingdom in Church and Society is futile, if God decides not to sign the Degree.

The heart and core of the present pilot program is a seven-week course of action. Each week has one or more memory verses. These must be explained by the parents as modeled by the point-man. The objective is that the children are asked to verbalize the verses and their explanation until they are etched in their memories. This must be accompanied by the frequent and urgent parental prayers for the Holy Spirit to convince them of the truth of these verses, which hopefully will have them sooner or later call on the name of the Lord for salvation.

This was presented as a pilot program for a specific reason. Most everyone believes that to evangelize "cold turkey" is a scary affair, and therefore has the tendency to shy away from it. Well, "home-evangelism" does not pose any threat at all. So parents have a seven-week period to master the Evangelism material and to become comfortable sharing it with their kids. This should prepare them to interact with their friends and their neighbors. Eventually, under the leadership of Evangelists they can venture out in an ever widening circle of Evangelistic ministry. An Evangelist is by definition fearless because of his giftedness, and therefore can inspire his students. The exact way that can and should come about is detailed below. But even in that context great care is taken to settle on a

⁹² Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, mentions a number of Principles to be taken into account in the "training" process, such as, The Principles of Selection, Association, Instruction, Patterns in the NT, Fellowship, Propagation, Encouragement, Preparation, Modeling, Personal Involvement, Productivity, Dying unto Life. A pivotal principle is the one of "Personal Involvement" or "Modeling." This requires the "Trainer" to be (only) 1/3rd in the Classroom and (definitely) 2/3rd in the field with his "trainees" to monitor, empower, encourage, assist them, etc., etc., *in the footsteps of Jesus*. See also and especially Acts 1:1 where Luke tells Theophilus that his first Treatise (The Gospel of Luke) covered what and how Jesus "began to DO (model) and teach (instruct)," in that order! In short, it was "Show and Tell!" Not only Jesus, but Paul as well observes a "training" procedure and process that enables and empowers the called "disciple" to turn into a sent "apostle." Such "training" covers five basic phases: Teaching, Modeling, Observing, Refining, and Certifying.

See also Appendix I that aims to bolster the present proposal. This is written from a more pastoral angle. It also contains some duplication. But hopefully it will galvanize parents to avail themselves of the suggested pilot program!

procedure that will remove most all the fears that the participants in evangelistic outreach otherwise could experience. In short, the aim is to work on a “no risk” procedure!

At any rate, it is telling how something similar to the seven-week program was followed in a Muslim School in London in the UK. Every day the School children were told never to give Christianity even a thought for three explicit reasons. 1. God is One and not Three. [So, the Trinity is out by definition!] 2. God has no son. [So, Jesus cannot possibly be the Son of God!] 3. Jesus never died on the Cross. [So, the whole notion of someone dying for sinners is ridiculous.] Repeating these statements everyday five days a week was designed to turn them into a settled, if not rocklike threefold conviction. When in London, I sought to talk about the Gospel with some of the students who just came out of this school. One of them was a young lady, 14-years of age. When she heard me talk, she challenged me by reciting the three statements as if they were unshakable truths, kind of smiled and walked on with her books in her arms. How awesome it would be if our own youngsters would have the Gospel imprinted in their memory like that, recite it at every possible opportunity, “Man has three problems and God has three solutions,” and be able to explain it in detail! The seven-week program is designed to have this become a reality as a minimum.

Incidentally, in my Schools of Evangelism in Africa I often ask the national hosts to give me a number of children from six to fifteen years of age for an hour or two. In the presence of all those who attend the Schools I proceed to present in a nutshell what the seven weeks do in much greater detail. The result is always remarkable. The children are invariably able to memorize and recite the components of the Gospel at times in less than an hour. In one instance a fifteen year old was so moved that she desired to call on the name of the Lord. I had told two attending pastors that my task was not done until those who called on the Name of the Lord were able to evangelize others. When the fifteen year old did so, one of the pastors challenged her to evangelize the others. To his surprise she shared the Gospel virtually verbatim in the way she had heard it. Children clearly can pick up a lot more than we may think. If an hour’s presentation can be this successful, we can only imagine what seven weeks can accomplish. These seven weeks will prove to be full of promise.

Not so incidentally, to embark upon such a seven-week program is not really an option. The OT is crystal clear. Parents are mandated to train their children when they rise up and when they go to bed, when they are outside the house and when they are inside. For good measure the Training Manual is tied to their forearms and their forehead and also inscribed on their door posts. For good measure Deuteronomy repeats all this twice to emphasize the dire need of it (Deut. 6:6-9; 11:19-20). Frankly, the question may well be asked how many parents in Israel were both committed and disciplined enough to obey God’s directive. When in the context of my Schools of Evangelism I poll the parents in my audience with the question how many have actually shared the Full New Covenant Gospel with their children, emphasizing the need for the heart of Jesus in regeneration, the righteousness of Jesus in justification and the holiness of Jesus in sanctification against the biblically graphic backdrop of a cobra heart, a dung past and a toxic life, the result is alarming. Many are the times that not even one set of parents could give an affirmative answer. This simply must change! I trust that everybody who reads this Paper is sufficiently convicted to start or help start the seven-week program as a matter of life and death! If parents do not feel up to the task, the pastor-teachers of the Church must stand by to get the program going and so to facilitate and empower them. At any rate, this

program seeks decisively to move beyond the “what” and the “why” and focus on the “how” of hands-on-training. While it is written for use in the home and the school, it can easily be adapted for use in the Church and in the Sunday school. Of course, circumstances may dictate the need for extending the program for some additional weeks. The crucial issue is that the objective of the program is fully realized, a thorough acquaintance and mastery of the biblical data.⁹⁴

Week 1

The Three Solutions for the Three Problems

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To get acquainted with a superior “training model,” I heartily recommend Douglas Hyde, *Dedication and Leadership* (Notre Dame, IND: Notre Dame Press, 2014).

See for a summary, Intermezzo ^I.

New Covenant Salvation: Promised by God the Father

Memory Verses: Ezek. 36:25-27.

To explain further, refer to Jeremiah 31:31ff

In these verses we see God's three solutions to the three problems of sin. "I will take the heart of stone out of you and give you a heart of flesh. I will wash you of all your filth and idolatry. I will put the Holy Spirit within you and make you obedient." God the Father makes this promise. One's heart of stone is like a cobra. He pledges to kill it. One's past is filthy like human dung. He pledges to cleanse it. Once life is like poison. He pledges to eliminate it. As we shall see in future weeks, this threefold salvation which God the Father promises, God the Son produces and God the Holy Spirit transports. Every day for a whole week the children are asked to verbalize this, at the least once in the morning and once in the evening. In a Parochial School the youngsters can be asked by their teachers during each class period: How many problems? How many solutions? At the end of the week they will chorus to their teachers, "Three and Three!" When they do so, they are on their way to Week 2.

Week 2

New Covenant Salvation: Produced by God the Son (1)

Problem 1: The Human Heart Resembles a "Cobra"

Memory Verse: Psalm 58:4

To explain further, refer to Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 58:4; Mark 7:6, 21-23

Solution 1: The Cross kills the "Cobra Heart"

The Resurrection replaces it with the Heart of Jesus

Memory Verses: Romans 6:6 and 11

To explain further, refer to 2 Cor. 5:14

Once again throughout the week, at least twice a day, morning and evening, and during every Class period in a Parochial School, the youngsters should be asked several quick questions. What is Problem 2, and what Scripture tells you this? Do you need a Savior? Who is he? What is Solution 2, and what Scripture tells you this? At the end of the week they will be able to answer the questions without being prompted.

Week 3

New Covenant Salvation: Produced by God the Son (2)

Problem 2: The Human Past Resembles “Human Dung”

Memory Verse: Philippians 3:8

To explain further, refer to Isaiah 64:6

**Solution 2: The Blood of Jesus shed on the Cross washes away the “Dung”
The Resurrection replaces it with the Righteousness of Jesus**

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:21

To explain further, refer to Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Once again throughout the week, at least twice a day, morning and evening, and during every Class period in a Parochial School, the youngsters should be asked several quick questions. What is Problem 3, and what Scripture tells you this? Do you need a Savior? Who is he? What is Solution 3, and what Scripture tells you this? At the end of the week they will be able to answer the questions without being prompted.

Week 4

New Covenant Salvation: Produced by God the Son (3)

Problem 3: Human Life Resembles “Poison”

Memory Verse: James 3:8

To explain further, refer to Romans 3:13

**Solution 3: The Cross of Jesus eliminates the “Poison”
The Resurrection replaces it with the Holiness of Jesus**

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:10

To explain further, refer to John 15:5; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 4:13

Once again throughout the week, at least twice a day, morning and evening, and during every Class period in a Parochial School, the youngsters should be asked several quick questions. What is Problem 3, and what Scripture tells you this? Do you need a Savior? Who is he? What is Solution 3, and what Scripture tells you this? At the end of the week they will be able to answer the questions without even being prompted.

Week 5

New Covenant Salvation: Transported by the Holy Spirit

Memory Verses: John 3:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 15:16

Solution 1: “Unless a man is born of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” To be born of the Spirit is to receive a heart transplant.

Solution 2: “When you heard the word of truth (the Gospel of your salvation), when you believed in Christ, you were marked by the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of his glory!”

Solution 3: “As minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles I serve the Gospel of God like a priest, so that the Gentiles will become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

Once again throughout the week, at least twice a day, morning and evening, and during every Class period in a Parochial School, the youngsters should be asked several quick questions: Who transports the Three Solutions of Salvation? Do you need him? What Scripture tells you the Transportation of Solution 1? Which one the Transportation of Solution 2? Which one the Transportation of Solution 3? At the end of the week they will be able to answer the questions without even being prompted.

Week 6

Grand Rehearsal

- 1. Three Problems and Three Solutions**
- 2. Problem 1 and Solution 1**
- 3. Problem 2 and Solution 2**
- 4. Problem 3 and Solution 3**
- 5. Transportation 1**
- 6. Transportation 2**
- 7. Transportation 3**

Once again throughout the week, at least twice a day, morning and evening, and during every Class period in a Parochial School, the youngsters should be asked several quick questions. How many Problems and how many Solutions? Scripture? Do you need a Savior? Who is he? What is Problem and Solution 1? Which Scripture? What is Problem and Solution 2? Which Scripture? What is Problem and Solution 3? Which Scripture? Who transports the Three Solutions of Salvation? Do you need the Holy Spirit? What Scripture tells you the Transportation of Solution 1? Which one the Transportation of Solution 2? Which one the Transportation of Solution 3? At the end of the week they will be able to answer the questions without even being prompted.

Week 7

“Altar Call”

The use of an “Altar Call” under whatever title is controversial. Too often “coming forward” has been described as “being saved.” This, of course, is unacceptable. However,

Acts 17:30 leaves us no choice. It prompts us to give a Biblical “Altar Call” in the footsteps of Paul. Somehow we must pass on, under whatever title, that every individual is commanded to repent and believe immediately upon hearing the Full Gospel explained. Because repentance and faith as well as salvation in general is not only a command (See also Ezek. 18:31), but also a gift of God’s grace (Acts 11:17; Eph. 2:8), folks should be exhorted “to call on the Name of the Lord (acknowledging grace) in repentance and faith (exercising responsibility)!”

Memory Verses: Acts 2:21

To explain further, refer to Ezekiel 36:37; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:13

When folks call on the Name of the Lord, whether in the home, the Parochial School, or somewhere in the Field, the following Biblical Truths should be shared with them! They are a combination of “teachings” and “exhortations.”

1. Every “convert” starts out as a **HOPEFUL** Disciple. Anyone who genuinely and sincerely calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13). But he cannot be designated as saved until it “shows,” just as a tree cannot be designated as good until it produces fruit (Mt. 7:17-20). The term “hopeful” was introduced during the Great Awakening when “confessors” did not always prove to be “possessors.” It cautions the preacher not to put too quickly a stamp of approval upon a “responder.” It also cautions the “responder” not to be satisfied with an “imaginary heaven.” Throw this twofold caution to the wind and both may end up with an “illusion” that is essentially a self-deceiving and soul-destroying “delusion.” A temporary celebration or joy (Mt. 13:5, 20-21) is too high a price to pay for an eternity of misery and grief.

2. He continues as a **DEVOTED** Disciple, when in the Assemblies of the Body of Christ he embraces from the heart the Teaching of God’s Word, the Fellowship with other believers, the Supper of the Lord and corporate as well as personal Prayer (Acts 2:42). The Word of God calls for holiness (John 8:31), the Fellowship of Believers stirs to holiness (Heb. 10:24), the Lord’s Table conveys holiness (1 Cor. 11:24), and prayer petitions for holiness (Jam. 4:2c).

3. He turns into an **ASSURED** Disciple when he shows fruit, more fruit, much fruit and continuing fruit by abiding in the Vine through the Word and Prayer (John 15:1ff).

4. He seeks to be a **PRODUCTIVE** Disciple by joining his fellow believers in their “hot pursuit” of “making (other) Disciples, and training them” according to Jesus’ Grand Command (Mt. 28:19-20)

5. He does not rest until he is an **UNSTOPPABLE** Disciple by identifying his Giftedness, whether in Evangelism (Mt. 4:19), Speaking or Serving (Rom. 12:3ff; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), and incessantly demonstrating this in relentless ministry.

Logistics inform us that when 3000 people come forward in a Crusade, only 5% of them end up in the Church the next Sunday or so. According to Acts 2:42, however, all 3000 converts thronged the Assembly. The difference is clearly in the Gospel that is preached. Today’s truncated Gospel tells us, “Accept Jesus as your personal Savior, and you are saved (forgiven), assured of going to heaven.” This is not Peter’s Gospel in Acts 2:38, “Repent unto the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” There is no place for repentance in the term “accept” and there is no place for the gift of

the Spirit, when the trajectory is “from forgiveness to heaven.” Repentance spells a hunger for forgiveness *and* holiness. The gift of the Spirit spells the deeply longed for empowerment unto holiness. The combination of repentance and the gift of the Spirit spell a hunger for and a thronging into the workshop of the Holy Spirit, which is the Church. So proclaim the Full Gospel, culminating in the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Assemblies of God’s people will be filled to overflowing. It is no surprise that the history of Revival fires indicate just that. All this leads to a sobering and challenging conclusion. When folks fail, let alone refuse to show up in the Assemblies the question is legitimate and must be asked, whether the gift of the Spirit is present at all. If it is not, there never was forgiveness or repentance in the first place, and the would-be Christian is disqualified as a true Christian.

Once Church members have familiarized themselves with the Full Gospel and are comfortable with its presentation, they can venture to take “the big step” into the field of the world. If and when their family evangelism has produced the fruit of true conversions, they should be well on their way to contribute to the spontaneous expansion of the Church. There is nothing like seeing conversions as “the work of our hands” by the grace of God (Is. 26:12). In fact, any convert as a result of human labors is a personal gift of God to the laborer! This means that we should pray to be the recipients of his gifts, many of them as part of the Greater Works. The more frequent and urgent the prayers, the more frequent and copious our labors, and hopefully the more frequent and numerous the conversions!

What now follows can be measured once again in three steps, this time, big steps. The first one deals with the proper organization of public outreach. Unless and until the Church experiences a spontaneous expansion, there are some hurdles to take. The second one focuses on the various types of outreach. They are flexible and should be person-variable. One size simply does not fit all. The third one takes a look at the outcome of outreach. What do we do with folks who call on the name of the Lord?

C. Three Hands-on Training Steps

Step I: Grasping the Organization of Outreach

When the Church experiences a spontaneous expansion, the leadership as well as the membership, the membership as well as the leadership, of the Church operate in high evangelistic gear. They can testify that through their tireless labors the Church is or turns into a “Greater Works” Church. The zeal to act is in unmistakable evidence. So is a burden for and the gift of souls! The Word “grows” (Acts 6:7) by the empowering and transporting Holy Spirit and the Church multiplies in numbers. But what if the spontaneous expansion is at best a dim memory? Then the following procedure should be followed and implemented step by step.

The first step is to identify Evangelistic Leaders. They are the point-men. They must model evangelistic outreach in the certification process of the membership of the Church. But this poses a problem. For centuries, at least in the Presbyterian and Reformed Communion, the call to fill the Office of Evangelist has been subtly ignored or openly opposed under the guise that this Office, officially instituted by God, was terminated. This must be reversed, and active steps must be undertaken by the Church to *grow* Evangelists as it goes to great length to “grow” Pastor-Teachers. A new Church or a new Church Network has barely started or folks already begin to clamor and strategize to find or erect a Training School for their men who aspire to become Pastor-Teachers, whether in the form of a Theological Seminary, a Bible School or otherwise. May God give the Church the same intolerable burden to fill the Office of the Evangelist with as many qualified candidates as possible! That there is a dearth of Evangelists is an understatement.⁹⁵

In the present scenario the best option is to assemble a team of ten or more Seminarians, Bible School Students, eager Church Members, or similar folks with a zeal for Evangelism, to have them taught an Evangelism Manual by Pastor-Teachers until they are thoroughly acquainted with it, and then take them for a two to three-month period into an English Speaking Field marked by a Revival Culture where spontaneous expansion is in evidence or where the effects of such expansion are still lingering. This will double, if not triple the effectiveness of such undertaking. They cannot but be “fired up” by their daily exposure to Revival “Fires.” In the Field such Team should be headed up by Evangelists. They should hail both from the USA and from the Host Country. If no American Evangelists are available, they should be Pastor-Teachers who have made their ministry complete by obeying Paul’s explicit command to do “The Work of an Evangelist” (1 Tim. 4:5) in addition to their other regular labors (1 Tim. 4:1-4). In short, they must have been exposed regularly to evangelistic outreach in the USA, say one or more afternoons a week, and therefore can function as secondary point-men to model what a burden for souls practically looks like.⁹⁶

This requires a budget and a commitment to fund it. The best estimate is that \$50,000 would go a long way to cover a team of ten or more for a three-month period. In case of need participants can be asked to raise a target amount to assist in defraying the cost. At

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Juran Global is an organization that according to the Internet provides “on-demand team of trainers, coaches, and advisors focused on quality improvement.” Its literature tells us that it is its “experience, gleaned over three decades and thousands of projects, that the N. 1 reason why performance improvement programs fail is directly related to lack of management support.” So, we better “grow” Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers and Deacons who are fully functional as veritable point-men. They do not just support the membership of the Church. They lead and pave the way!

Steven J. Lawson in an edition of *Table Talk* (June 2012, Vol. 36, No 6), 25, makes no bones about the fact that by virtue of 1 Tim. 4:5 every Pastor-Teacher with a burden for souls is (!) and must be involved in “evangelizing the community,” that is, must be regularly in the field.

the end of the three months at least one goal will have been accomplished. All participants will be certified in Evangelism. Even if they prove to have a speaking gift and enter the Office of Pastor-Teacher, they take their certification with them, and so are able to do the Work of an Evangelist, and to help certify the whole membership in Evangelism. This is a dimension of the Pastor-Teacher Office that is never mentioned, and never even explored. But it must lead to the conclusion that no Pastor-Teacher should ever be installed who would fail, let alone refuse comfortably to display this dimension and is unwilling to add this to his repertoire. There will large swaths of Scripture with which he is not experientially acquainted. Hence he cannot teach them effectively. The general public will not put up with a doctor who is only partly equipped. So the Church should not put up with a Pastor-Teacher who is not totally certified.⁹⁷

All this goes also without saying that in a local Church that has no Evangelist, the Pastor-Teacher should step up to the plate until one can be obtained, preferably full time. After all, to train the total membership, taking every one into the field a number of times until the student is comfortable, is more than a full time job. The moment the Pastor-Teacher realizes this, he may well move heaven and earth to grow one or more of them, with all that this entails in terms of putting a three-month program together and getting the funds for it. But the Pastor-Teacher in such situations is not alone. When folks are certified in Evangelism and see their Evangelistic giftedness emerge, they are the hands and feet of the Pastor-Teacher as they would be of the Evangelist.

Once the Evangelism Manual is flesh and blood for all the members of the Church, it is official launch time. All of them should sign up a number of times on a Master Calendar. The ideal number is ten. The first five times the Evangelist (Pastor-Teacher, either partly or in case of need) and the gifted people model the outreach. The members are not expected to say anything. This allays, if not removes all fears! They simply observe and learn. The second five times it is the member's turn. Slowly but surely he moves toward certification, through encouragement, refinement, addition, subtraction or correction. Of course, the number ten is flexible and person-variable. But the objective is not. In the end every member must be competent to evangelize.

The author who wrote *"The Great Evangelical Recession"* also supplied a subtitle, *6 Factors That Will Crash the American Church* (Wow!). The Amazon response was mostly positive. But some comments were telling, especially the ones that focused on the (missing) antidote. "No case studies to speak of. No mention of practical models to follow. No helpful

I am acquainted with a Church that virtually put most, if not all its ministry eggs in the basket of Evangelism under the umbrella of a genuine Evangelist. It became clear that without a *bona fide* Pastor-Teacher the Church suffered. He was eventually replaced by a marquis Pastor-Teacher. This led to a 1/3rd turn-over in the congregation. With the shift in "clientele" from an outreach to a theology mentality the numbers in the pew quickly swelled. But the outreach was reduced by 90%. There are two lessons to be learned. Biblically, Pastor-Teachers are not the kings of the hill. They must intentionally and consciously aim to be part of a Triumvirate, consisting of Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers and Deacons. Each is selectively brilliant and must contribute 1/3rd to the joint vision of the Church as well as to the blueprint, the strategy and the hot pursuit of the Church's threefold ministry. Furthermore, what if and when a marquis Pastor-Teacher who practically functions as the tower of a one tower suspension bridge retires? It is bound to turn into a crisis situation. Frankly, it is the genius of a Mark 9 type of congregation that in due course no one Pastor-Teacher occupies the pulpit much more than 50% of the time. After a few decades there is enough competence in the pulpit that the transition is smooth in coming and passing. If it adds the two dimensions of a thriving Evangelism and Service Culture to the mix that involves the whole congregation it is a virtually unbeatable combination!

pointers how to stave off disaster,” was one verdict.⁹⁸ A second one ran like this, “One can talk glibly about the wish for revival. But then (not without a touch of sarcasm) a revival that is expected to take place without us lifting a finger as we resign ourselves to our busy schedules and market place adapted lives.” Frankly, this is not the only lament that in recent years was received with great appreciation, but at the same time was properly criticized for being short of solutions.⁹⁹

Well, the present Paper went for the jugular and seeks to fill the vacuum to overflowing. But one thing must have become very clear. Centuries of neglect to grasp the Trinitarian and Triadic New Covenant Gospel, centuries of neglect to grasp Christ’s Double Command and centuries of neglect to grasp training unto self-denying and sacrificial action took their toll. And that toll was critical. To be sure, battles have been won. But the war either has been lost (Middle East and Europe), is being lost (the USA), or is in danger of being lost (African countries where Revival fires are dying out). It will take minimally super-human efforts to achieve a turn-around. In a real sense, the Church literally has to start from scratch! This precipitates two sobering questions. “Who is willing to admit the latter?” It is humbling to the core to concede that to have a reputation to be alive can go hand in hand with the reality of being dead (Rev. 3:1)! “And who is willing to pay the price of a turn-around?” Most likely not too many are willing to risk their lives like Stephen to receive the conversion blessings of Peter. But we cannot and may not compromise. Jesus roars, “unless a seed dies and will not bear fruit. But when it does, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24). There will be no turn around until and unless the Church corporately and individually is willing to fall like a dead man at the feet of Jesus like the Apostle John (Rev. 1:17).

A veritable goldmine of case studies can be found in Ichabod Spencer, *A Pastor’s Sketches* (Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013), two priceless volumes of conversations with many individuals of many backgrounds concerning the way of salvation. Both volumes come in one binding.

David Wells wrote a five volume diagnostic lament about the sorry ecclesiastical state of his day, *No Place for Truth* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993); *God in the Wasteland* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994); *Losing our Virtue* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998); *Above All Earthly Powers* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2005); and *The Courage to be Protestant* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008). In general, these volumes contain a continuing, if not unrelenting and ever widening analysis of the prevailing culture. They present a vivid as well as depressing picture of a sad and saddening state of affairs. In the eyes of the critics, however, they do little to show how the Church should respond to its perilous predicament and navigate through the uncertain times. Seeing the merit of this criticism Wells decided to shift away from his preoccupation with culture in a sixth volume, *God in the Whirlwind* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), and focus upon the theme of the “Holy-Love of God.” However, both the explicit and implicit “remedies” still are (admittedly) presented in such general terms and lack so many necessary specifics that they seemingly “must” fail to make any appreciable difference in an utterly alarming situation. In short, while it received lots of well-deserved acclaim, the solution was deemed to mire down too much in generalities. Frankly, the present Paper aims to provide enough specifics to give the Church a running start to stem the societal downgrade and if possible to reverse it. Someone once admonished the Church to put its running shoes on. So far, so good, if not excellent! But it must first take its comfortable slippers off. Basically this comes down to a painful paradigm shift! But no pain, no gain. In fact, NO (suffering and) DEATH, NO (birthing and) LIFE (John 12:24; Phil. 3:10)!

So, what should a body do in the meantime? Well, the answer is simple and profound. All those who are genuinely burdened about the present state of affairs and do not just pay it lip service should pursue Revival Prayer. This has several dimensions.

First of all, they should seek to graduate from Christ's Two Schools of Prayer. They should do so by scheduling to get together in groups of five once a month for a full day of prayer, and at least twice a week for a full hour! What the Church needs is violent men who take the Kingdom of God by force. These are the words of our Master. According to him, it is a rule of thumb that ever since John the Baptist as a powerful second Elijah his Kingdom is advanced by spiritual violence (Mt. 11:12)!

Second, the content of these prayer times should have the right priorities and the right attitude. The priorities are "souls" and "holiness" as the very gifts from the Father of lights to all those who exhaust themselves in laboring to that twofold end.

The priority of souls brings into view a wide array of people, children of the covenant, friends, neighbors, intentional as well as occasional strangers, folks in the mission field. These, all by themselves, are more than sufficient to keep any and all types of Prayer times more than "humming" for hours, days, months, if not years. Anna, you may remember, prayed for up to 50 years, "homeless," while staying in the temple, "foodless," combining prayer with fasting, and "sleepless," seeking the face of God day and night (Lk. 2:36-38). She prayed for the promised Redeemer to come and offset the unfathomable darkness of her people and her day. She prayed until finally the answer came! For all these reasons she really ought to be the challenging, encouraging and empowering "patron saint" and "patron model" of and in all prayer meetings!

For the way to honor the priority of holiness we should listen to the apostle Paul who spells this out in detail. He starts out by calling for "prayer at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication." Then he follows this up with the exhortation "to keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" as well as for himself "that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I would declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20). It is remarkable how he intertwines the prayer for "holiness" with the prayers for "souls." This is clearly the way it is and should be for all those who walk in the footsteps of Paul. At any rate, "all the saints" comprise another large number of folks, family members, Church members, fellow Christians at home and abroad, etc. In both instances, while praying for souls and praying for holiness, the numbers are "dizzying." Soon the allotted times will prove to be insufficient to "cover all the biblical bases." Equally soon it will dawn upon us what motivated Anna as well as Paul whose virtually untold references to his unceasing prayers are just as impressive, to be imbued not long thereafter by the same spirit that was found in them.

The "attitude" of both Anna and Paul is clearly beyond reproach. They stand shoulder to shoulder with the Canaanite woman who was prodded by Jesus to display consecutively an intolerable burden, a sense of despair, a total surrender and an unwavering faith (Mt. 15:21-28). This foursome is and must be present in Revival Prayer, whether measured in hours, days, years or decades. It may require some time before that level of prayer is reached. But persistence will be rewarded. It was my privilege to witness a number of promising start-ups of Revival Prayer. The first one was "soul" oriented. It took a full nine months of heart-breaking prayer before God gave the first convert, soon to be followed by half a dozen more through door-to-door evangelism. The second one was holiness focused.

It met twice a week, lasted four years, and saw some remarkable answers to prayer. The third one interceded early on Sunday for two years pleading for an effective proclamation of the Word, and saw one participant, a prominent leader in the Church, break before God, turning him into a trophy of grace. The fourth one lasted more than three decades, clearly edified those present and spawned several ministries over the years, both at home and abroad. Two other instances, however, were abortive. In one of them a weekly meeting was regarded as too taxing. So it ceased with a very painful, if not heart-rending aftermath. Whether there was a causal connection is difficult to say. Hence I leave it at that. In the second one a weekly three-hour meeting was reduced to a monthly meeting. It was distressing to notice that with usually different folks in attendance it seemed to have lost its Revival fervency and urgency, to put it mildly.

All this calls for a number of conclusions. The first one is that the road to Revival Prayer is far from an easy one, and is not travelled too often. The sparse attendance at the weekly prayer meetings of the Church speaks volumes. Often even the leadership does not show up. But it is a necessary road. For that reason there is a second conclusion to consider. Point-men who are invited to “jump-start” ministries by the leadership of a Church, including an evangelistic ministry, whether on behalf of a Church or in families, should insist that both the leadership and the parents take the Biblical summons to Revival Prayer seriously and commit themselves to set time aside for at least a weekly meeting. In fact, prior to point-men modeling their ministries they should start with a full Day of Prayer. If that meets with objections of whatever sort and for whatever reason, they simply should “excuse” themselves and go elsewhere. This would get the unmistakable biblical message across in an emphatic way that without Revival Prayer one cannot expect to be effective in terms of either “souls” or “holiness” in whatever context. So, “shaking the dust of one’s feet as an unambiguous testimony against them” (Lk. 9:5) may well have such a sobering effect that it leads to a reconsideration of an initial negative response. The point-men certainly should accompany their refusal to come with the Revival Prayer for their repentance.¹⁰⁰ However, when a leadership extends an honest invitation, it can be expected that it will meet any conditions especially when their biblical rationale is carefully spelled out. This would be an extra incentive to be fully open in laying out the biblical blueprint for an effective ministry.

A third and final conclusion is a word of caution. To be sure, Jesus promises and mandates a “Greater Works” evangelistic ministry to the Church Universal in order to arrive at the innumerable multitude that will sing the praises of the Triune God in the consummation. That fact should always be kept in heart and mind and acknowledged with celebratory joy. But this is not a cakewalk. Both the unfolding of history and the arrival of salvation is “of the Lord” (Jonah 1:17; 2:9). After an auspicious beginning Stephen quickly met a cruel death, cutting short his ministry (Acts 7:54-60). Soon thereafter the Apostle James was summarily executed by a violent king before he could put his three years of intensive training to work (Acts 12:1-2). All this may well make us wonder about the Divine rationale behind it. The Book of the Psalms provides the definitive answer.

It has not gone unnoticed that many (most?) of the Psalms make reference to enemies who are after the life of the author. Some of them used to be his friends, and many are his

They should also in advance make copies available of the booklet by Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1995) to stimulate both the leaders and members of the inviting Church to take the necessary action to arrive at an effective ministry!

family members. All this has puzzled commentators. What to make of the autobiographical input that seems to focus again and again upon various kinds of personal weal and woe, warts and all? Frankly, the Psalms are not the individual expressions of men who give vent to their individual emotions. The Psalmists are God's Warriors who cannot be quoted to serve as the balm to soothe the ordinary pains of the believer's everyday life. They invite us to enter the spiritual warfare that rages everywhere, and to fight the battles of God with them. Then and only then is the general tapestry of their lives bound to correspond with ours and are all those repeated references to enemies no longer a strange and jarring component. Frankly, that tapestry is awesome. The enemies are all around them. That has never been any different, ever since God put a fundamental enmity between the godly and the ungodly (Gen. 3:15). At times Psalmists insist on their integrity in the midst of their warfare (Ps. 18:20-24). But more often they have no choice but to confess that they are far from perfect. Their sins and shortcomings are palpable (!), even if they never fail to have their hearts emphasize the love and faithfulness of God by pouring the glad news of his deliverance and salvation into the great congregation (Ps. 40:8-12). In it all they clearly persist in fighting the battles of God by taking on their enemies who are in reality God's enemies. But one telling item sticks out again and again. They are by definition incapable to be victorious on their own and by themselves. They simply lack the "wherewithal." That is why they sound totally overwhelmed, again and again. That is also when and why they call on their Lord for protection, for deliverance and for victory. They expect an answer, and they usually get it! No wonder that they end up by rejoicing in God's unfailing presence, by praising him for his uninterrupted deliverance, by emphasizing his sovereign kingship over all possible enemies, and for that matter over all the nations, by celebrating his fully deserved and ever ongoing worship, and by predicting the uninterrupted proclamation of his truth throughout yet unborn generations to come.

David's Psalm 22 is a textbook case in this regard. He is not able to keep himself alive (Ps. 22:29). He even groans in despair whether God has abandoned him (Ps. 22:1). This is fully understandable. No immediate answer to his prayers! No let-up of the vicious attacks which seem to suck the last drop of blood out of him! Prostrate in the dust of death (Ps. 22:2-18)! And then the renewed heart's cry to his God (Ps. 22:19-21a)! Will God answer this time? Yes he does (Ps. 22:21b)! This leads to a jubilation that is literally awesome, with all the features just mentioned (Ps. 22:22-31). It is no coincidence that the NT puts the same pattern on unequivocal display. Writes Paul, "We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. We were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril and he will deliver us. On him we set our hope that he will deliver us again" (2 Cor. 1: 8-10). Both David and Paul are the unshakable and consummate Warriors of God, and all who follow in their footsteps will be graced with the same experience at one time or another. They can count on that! We may well ask the question what their secret is. Well, it is twofold.

First, as the Psalmist indicates, they are like a "weaned child," fully satisfied with and in every sovereign disposition of Almighty God, ever resisting to penetrate the impenetrable with "a haughtily probing heart and arrogantly examining eyes," ever refusing to "occupy themselves with things that are too great and too marvelous for them," and ever counseling the Church to "place their hope in God" and in him alone (Ps. 131:1-

3). This has everything to do with the present topic. Only a “weaned child” will surrender his heart in all humility and his eyes in all tenderness solely to whatever God has revealed in order to obey this without reservation and interruption (Deut. 29:29b). No ifs, ands or buts, ever! In the New Covenant this comes down to a hot pursuit of souls and holiness as essentially the only thing needful. In the process it will heed the stern warning against the ever-present tendency to pry into the secret things of God with our at times endless “why’s” and “what for’s” (Deut. 29:29a). Job took that route when he informed God that he owed him an explanation. He was promptly slapped down (Job 40:1-2) and in the end he despised himself and repented in godly sorrow. In fact, he came to the sobering (and startling?) conclusion that he, one of the godliest men of his days (Job 1:1) seemed to see God for the first time (Job 42:1-6). Paul showed that he “got” this message, loud and clear, when he told would-be protesters of God’s sovereign grace to “shut up” (Rom. 9:19-20)! Yes, “shut up and so pave the way to the obedience of the faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). It is much more than just a surmised fact of ecclesiastical history, both corporate and individual history, that all those who seek to enter the secret things of God, with their why’s and what-for’s, whether for academic or personal reasons, have never

But there is a second dimension to a Warrior’s secret. He looks at Jesus as the founder and finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the same, and is now seated at the right hand of God” (Hebr. 12:2). He followed the pattern of Psalm 22 in perfection. In a word, he was the Perfect Consummate Warrior. For all practical purposes the Psalm entered into Jesus. When we, then, embrace and so identify ourselves with Jesus as the Perfect Warrior, just as Paul did (2 Cor. 1:20-22), the pattern of the Psalm will be on display in us in all its component elements. To give it a slightly cutting edge, to the extent that we embrace Jesus as the Perfect Consummate Warrior we will be like David in the OT and like Paul in the NT. Clearly, the Church, both in its leadership and its membership, has quite a ways to go. This cries out for a full complement of Revival Prayers, frankly as a matter of life and death, until the answer of God’s grace is received with joy and we like “weaned children” embark upon the only road that leads to the Greater Works of “souls” and “holiness.”

Step II: Grasping the Types of Outreach

This section is flexible and person-variable. Many are the means to pass on the truth of the Gospel and many are the ways to venture out. Both are now spelled out.

First, then, the various means! They are all clustered around the Word of the Gospel of God.

First and foremost the Word of the Gospel is to be *displayed* in the Speaker (1 Thess. 2:7-12; 1 Tim. 4:12-16). The following often repeated statement is quite to the point. “One cannot pass on what one does not possess!” Just like the Law for Israel in the OT is designated as the Life of Israel (Deut. 32:46-47), so the threefold New Covenant Gospel must constitute the very Life of the Speaker in the NT. It is a rule of thumb that “the hope within us,” personified in Jesus, must pulsate in order to be recognized by others as the only hope for them! Such Life and such Hope on display will result in a surging outflow of “rivers of Living water of Hope!” When that is a spontaneous reality, Revival has arrived and spontaneous Revival expansion will not be far away.

Fundamentally the Word of the Gospel must *grow* (Acts 5:7) and be *multiplied* (Acts 12:24) through an all hands-on-deck Church (Acts 4:31; 11:19-20). After all, as we saw repeatedly, to be a disciple of Jesus is to be a laborer for Jesus by definition. If everyone, that is everyone, sows in abundance, Greater Works multiplication, by the grace of God is bound to be or become a reality. This *would be* spontaneous Revival expansion.

Primarily the Word of the Gospel must be *spoken* whether in the pulpit, in crusades, on the radio, via TV, in market outreach, through door-to-door evangelism, etc., etc. The often heard mantra, “Walk the Word, and if needful talk it,” is a total misnomer. However indisputably necessary, solely walking the Word has never converted anybody! How are folks to believe in Jesus whom they have never heard, and how are they to hear without someone proclaiming him” (Rom. 10:14)? Paul could not have been clearer in debunking this mantra.

Interpersonally, the Word of the Gospel should be *shared* in Home Bible Studies, in growth groups, in friendship outreach, in Christian hospitality, etc.!

Expansionally, the Word of the Gospel should go out in *written* form, such as in books, pamphlets, tracts, and other literature.

Entrepreneurially, the Word of the Gospel should in hot pursuit be *marched* into all possible opportunities, in turbulent gatherings, danger areas, calamities, ghettos, shady districts, etc., all of which involves a smaller or greater measure of Biblical risk-taking.

All this fits snugly under the umbrella of the foundational Protestant principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which spawned four additional so-called *Sola*’s, *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*, *Solo Christo*, and *Soli Deo Gloria*. But here a word of (extreme?) caution is in place. All five *Sola*’s are only formal in nature. The moment their substance is defined the impressive Protestant Symphony quickly turns into a near Cacophony. The many Reformation branches differ, at times sharply, when it comes down to the definitions of Scripture, Grace, Faith, Christ and the Glory of God. The present volume is in a sense a heartfelt plea to add five *Tota*’s to the five *Sola*’s, *Tota Scriptura*, *Tota Gratia*, *Tota Fide*, *Toto Christo*, *Toti Deo Gloria*. A truncated Scripture, truncated grace, truncated faith, a truncated Christ (!), and a truncated Glory of God simply will not do. They should not, do not, and cannot receive a passing mark! They fall short of the Glory of God and instead of providing a full and unmistakable view of “The Way of Salvation” may well recommend “debris-filled avenues” that are difficult to navigate or even “roads to nowhere.” In general, it seems to me that representatives of every Reformation branch who are totally committed to their specific “Message of Faith and Practice” will readily see this grave danger and seek to avoid it.

Candidly, this is not the context to spell out each of the five *Tota*’s in great detail. But the substance, contours and objective of the Full Gospel may never and can never be jeopardized. Therefore it will once more pass in review and be sketched in some bold strokes that should never be forgotten. The Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of Grace, the Eternal Gospel, “My” Gospel (Paul) is the Good News of the New Covenant, promised by the Father, produced by the Son, and transported by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it aims at a once and for all heart transplant in regeneration, a once and for all not-guilty declaration in justification and a once and for all gift of holiness in sanctification. Promised by the Father it can only be produced by the Son who on the Cross exterminates once and for all the wicked heart, the wicked past, and the wicked life of the wretched sinner, and through his re-originating Resurrection replaces

them with his heart, his righteousness and his holiness. Thus promised by the Father and produced by the Son, all this can only be transmitted by the Holy Spirit who through the prayerful ecclesiastical proclamation of the Word, both corporately and individually, unites us to Christ and with it once and for implants the heart of Jesus, once and for all seals the righteousness of Jesus by taking up residence through his indwelling presence, and once for all conveys the holiness of Jesus. All this is summarily stated in the following definition of the Gospel. It is the Good News of the New Covenant that the Triune God saves triple wretched sinners in a threefold way.¹⁰¹

But there is a necessary addendum. Scripture is clear. The heart of the problem is invariably the problem of the heart, the problem of mankind's mission control center. All that it can and does come up in whatever way with is always evil all the time (Gen. 6:5). The recommendation has been made that the proclamation of the Gospel must passionately "woo the heart," or affectively "appeal to the heart."¹⁰² That this is more than a cut above the average counsel to proclaimers of the Word must be acknowledged immediately. But it still falls short of the biblical standard, in fact, very much so. In Scripture hearts are not "wooed," but "cut" (Acts 2:37) and that for a very obvious reason. It must be exterminated. That is why the first order of Holy Spirit business is "to convict" so that folks want to get rid of it (John 16:8). If Peter and Stephen are any indication, this can only be done by "convicting," that is "cutting" proclamation. Thankfully Scripture comes to our rescue when it uses utterly graphic terms that cannot but make a convicting impact! It tells wretched sinners that their hearts resemble a cobra, their past human dung and their lives poison. All of a sudden the need for extermination is inescapable. Frankly, one does not "woo" cobras, or "appeal to" cobras. Folks who try that in real life never get a second chance. So to restrict oneself to that is at the same time to recognize why much evangelistic outreach is so fruitless! My own polling of folks who are sent out to evangelize or who are regularly involved in evangelistic outreach, whether at home or abroad, by and large tells the same story. Most of them can only testify to an occasional convert, if that. This can only be remedied by a type of evangelism that literally turns "worlds upside down" in living color, and, note well, is immediately recognized as such (Acts 17:6). That this is a rarity in our Western culture may even be an overstatement. Thankfully by God's mercy folks are saved even by means of a "defective" evangelistic outreach. But this does not excuse it.¹⁰³ In

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This is the definitive dimension of the Gospel. The progressive dimension of the Gospel is that the Triune God saves triple wretched saints in a threefold way. This is to be covered in the next section.

Joel Beeke, *Puritan Evangelism, A Biblical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999), 40.

So also Beeke, 28. Incidentally, his volume seeks to argue that both Calvinism and Puritanism are thoroughly evangelistic movements as he does as well in Joel Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004). 54-72, 143-169. He does so by referencing an impressive number of books and articles to that effect. It seems, however, that he overshoots his goal. I wished I could come up with a different verdict. But, regrettably, this is not possible. The focus of his booklet is clearly to open up about the "evangelistic preaching" he found in the Puritan context. But there is a decisive difference between such preaching on the inside of the Church and intentional organized ecclesiastical evangelism on the outside. It is the difference between "in-reach" and "out-reach." The former takes place under the umbrella of the second part of Christ's double command, the latter in obedience to the first part. All the accolades the author literally "heaps upon" Puritan evangelistic preaching are quite awesome and fully deserved. It is thoroughly biblical, unashamedly doctrinal, experimentally practical, holistically focused, emphatically textual, wholesomely catechetical, all of it presented in plain language and in prayerful and tearful dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Frankly, all this totally stands to reason. In their radical commitment to teach the Church to observe whatever God commands from Genesis to Revelation they encountered by definition all kinds of

fact, it should fill the whole Church with sorrow, realizing what a fully biblical outreach could have accomplished in comparison!

Allow me to conclude this part with two observations which enlarge on what already has been mentioned in passing.

First, all this is not to say that a convicting presentation of the Gospel may ignore the Biblical insistence that the presenter must be winsome in person, respectful in attitude and gentle in communication (1 Thess. 2:7-12; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 1 Pet. 3:16). When a recent blogger declares the *Westminster Confession of Faith* to be a “humanistic document” because of a perceived flaw, one must do more than just raise one’s eyebrows. It is a statement of an arrogant and possibly vindictive loner who is certain to destroy his own ministry. There is every reason to be gentle. After all, it is the prerogative of God only to grant repentance that leads to the acknowledgement of the truth and so make folks escape the snare of the devil (2 Tim. 2:24).

Neither, for that matter, is it to deny the need for people, connecting and clicking with people, building relationships, which can ensure that they “feel at home” and are “in sync” with the presenter. Listening to their “tales of woes” may open up folks, especially if this is

evangelistic sections or passages in Scripture. So they proclaimed them also, in their inimitable and admirable manner. But one thing stands out. Puritanism produced hundreds of thousands pages of “physician of the soul” materials. These are as insightful as they are impressive. But as far as I could detect, it published less than a thousand pages on the topic of evangelism and even these pages, such as Joseph Alleine’s *Alarm to the Unconverted*, Richard Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted*, and John Flavel’s *England’s duty under the present Gospel liberty, from Revel. III vers. 20. Wherein is opened the admirable condescension and patience of Christ, seem to be more of the in-reach than the out-reach variety. In short, its flavor is more like that of “internal medicine” than of the “external” type. They are heavy in “preaching content,” but short in “hands-on evangelism methodology.” The focus is on the “what,” rather than on the “how.” There is hardly a trace of an explicit vision, a careful blueprint, a mapped out strategy, or a hot pursuit of intentional evangelism that is spontaneously undertaken by the Church in its totality. This is not necessarily a criticism. Authors have and should be given the privilege to determine the extent of the treatment of their own topics. But it does and is meant to alert their readers to a vacuum that must be filled. At any rate, the question may well (must?) be asked whether this vacuum has contributed to, or is even the reason for the virtual demise of Puritanism. The first part of Christ’s double command weighs as heavily on God’s heart as the second part. After all, he sent his Son into the *world*, and tells his Church to follow suit! It should be difficult for the author of our booklet to deny all this. He belongs to the wider Reformed and Presbyterian type of communion that is not quite known for its vigorous intentional evangelism. Ironically, neither is it much known any more for its full-orbed evangelistic preaching. Both are more than a pity and really stand in need of repentance rooted in a godly sorrow. To conclude this Footnote, the present assessment of Puritanism applies to the wider phenomenon of Calvinism as well. To be sure, there is enough competent literature to show that John Calvin was imbued with a great missionary zeal. But his missionary forays, such as in France and Brazil, were organized under the aegis of Pastor-Teachers. Their pulpits were able to re-invigorate hundreds of Churches in France as well as in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, although the Brazil undertaking fell on hard times. But even if “occasional” evangelism took place, as is always the case wherever the Church experiences spontaneous expansion, “intentional” evangelism as a distinct dimension of the Church’s ministry in obedience to the first part of Christ’s double command did not receive the place of honor it should have. Frankly, when the Office of Evangelist is expunged it is hardly surprising that it took a nosedive. Once again, the historical track record of the Reformed and Presbyterian Communion is too blatantly deficient in this regard that it becomes impossible to resist this assessment. In terms of its intentional ecclesiastical evangelistic outreach this Communion has been properly earmarked as “a sleeping giant.” We would do well to ask the question, adapted from the conclusion of our author’s booklet, “On our death bed what is and should be uppermost on our mind is this, ‘What kind of an intentional evangelist have I been?’” I added the word “intentional.” This makes a world of difference. It places us squarely under the spotlight of the first part of Christ’s double command. Of course, we should not wait until our death bed to ask this question. We should hang it on our wall in a prominent place, reminding us to ask it to ourselves no less than once a day! That would at the least meet God’s unmistakable requirement for us to “exhort each other daily in order not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebr. 3:13).*

combined by counsel or steps to alleviate these woes. But all this has much to do with the circumstances. When folks are like ships that pass in the night in terms of time or location, an immediate presentation is not the easiest to accomplish. However, a smile or a well-chosen remark may quickly establish a relationship that makes for a smooth and quick interaction. But even when there is no pressure of time or location, and time the approach can be *pianissimo*, care should be taken that the horizontal woes do not crowd out the three vertical problems. In all circumstances presenters should be determined to proceed with a clear and bold as well as respectful and gentle Gospel presentation sooner rather than later. An urgent heartfelt burden for souls and for the glory of God does and should make this inevitable.

It is of the utmost significance that presenters should realize that they go after God's elect in the first place, in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul (Acts 13:48). This should free them from all too human considerations in their outreach. They do not need to walk on eggs. It is equally significant for them to realize that God's elect will only respond to convicting presentations. This should give them the courage cheerfully to "cut" at hearts, indeed, sooner rather than later, as the only way to be truly and fully effective. Failure or refusal to proceed in that fashion may well forfeit the smile of God's approval, even if he in his mercy would grace the presenter with some harvest, in spite of his defective approach.

Second, the following testimonies should be sufficiently encouraging for all would-be presenters to carry on in the way as just described. It was my recent privilege to conduct a number of Schools in Evangelism both in the USA and in Africa. A golden thread appeared to tie them all together. To mention just an episode or two, in the USA a young man was so visibly moved by the Gospel that his whole demeanor was transformed. In Africa a middle-aged lady burst forth from the ranks, not willing to wait a moment longer, in order to call on the name of the Lord on the spot, while at the same time a young man did so silently at his desk. The gentleman in charge stated that he had not seen Revival manifestations like that at any time during his decades-long official tenure. What they had in common was their response to the graphic presentation of the Gospel. The message of the cobra heart cut them to the quick. As a result they wanted to get rid of it. They could not possibly put up with it a moment longer. This should serve as an encouragement not only to be respectfully tender, but also to be totally clear and utterly bold. God himself is putting his graphic words in our mouth (Jer. 1:9), and commands us to speak them (Jer. 1:7) without fear (Jer. 1:8) in the certain knowledge that God always watches over his word to perform it (Jer. 1:12). Failure to comply in full on our part is to fall short of being the watchmen we are appointed to be and with it to risk paying a deadly price (Ezek. 3:21).¹⁰⁴

This leaves us in this section with the various ways to practice evangelistic outreach. There are basically three types. They are, for lack of a better terminology, spontaneously "occasional," providentially "situational," and organizationally "intentional." Trainers should extensively brainstorm all three with their trainees, should cover each of them in the field, and should make sure that they are certified to be comfortable in each type, even if eventually they may gravitate toward only one of them.

"Occasional"

First, when spontaneous expansion reigns, the Church's evangelistic surge is immediately in evidence in *occasional* outreach. Leaders as well as members first of all look at all the folks they encounter in God's providence as "saved" or as "lost," on land, at sea, or in the air, whether in the street, the store, the office, on a cruise, in a first class seat, in economy comfort or back in the plane. They look at them as such in order to start a Gospel conversation. A winsome smile, a courtesy, such as opening the door, a timely inquiry, or a humorous remark could easily pave the way to such conversation. It is very strongly recommended that trainers who have the gift of evangelism model this when they take their trainees into the field so that they become familiar with and comfortable in approaching total strangers. Frankly, gifted folks have a knack to start a relationship of sorts. To them strangers are friends whom they never met as yet. Of course, occasional evangelism does not allow for building a strong bonding relationship. But Scripture does not make this a requirement to share the Gospel. In fact, Jesus tells seventy of his laborers to build a "quick" bridge simply by wishing "peace" upon the house they enter and the folks they meet. When this is received well by so-called "sons of peace," the way is immediately paved to share the Gospel (Lk. 10:5-6). In the evangelistic forays by Paul and his entourage, as described in the Book of Acts, we notice that in every instance there are definite "points and times of contact" that enable him to proceed. There are occasions that he "creates" them (Accts 14:21; 16:13; 17:17; 18:14; 19:8). There are also situations in which they are presented to him (Acts 13:15; 14:1) or forced upon him (Acts 13:45; 14:11; 16:19; 21:27; 22:30; 24:1ff; 25:13ff). Since they are "occasional," they are by definition varied. Some presentations are longer and more elaborate than others. But Paul always appears to come to the point as soon as possible. So should we in "occasional" evangelism. Besides, meetings in this context are often fleeting. So, when we have a burden for souls who are perishing and face a Christ-less eternity, "woe unto us, if we do not seek to share the Gospel clearly, fully, boldly, and immediately" (1 Cor. 9:16). We may never get another "occasion." After all, it is rare for providential lightning to strike twice at the same spot. At any rate, we go after God's elect, and they *will* listen whether to us or to someone else when we speak from heart to heart. So, whether we sow or reap, we must do it God's way.

If we follow in the footsteps of Peter and Paul there is no doubt that our Gospel message must be convicting in addition to all other necessary features (Acts 2:23, 36; 17:29), and so lay the groundwork for a summons to repentance that universally goes out to everyone on God's earth and must be verbalized in order to reach its objective (Acts 2:38; 17:30).

I myself have used a variety of ways to build bridges. When folks smile, I smile in return and frequently follow this up with a statement, such as, "You smile so nicely, you must know Jesus." Or, in a number of appropriate settings when people appear ready for that, I have asked for a "high five," and after that for a "high three." Since this is rather puzzling, I would add, "Friend, you have three problems of sin. But God has three saving solutions," and would quote or summarize Ezekiel 36:25-27, and off we would go. Starting with a personal testimony can also be quite effective. A friend of mine who sells sail boats, pleasure boats and power boats has been known at the appropriate to weave his testimony into his sales talk. "What a 'pleasure' for me to have Jesus as my 'sailboat' who 'empowers' me to enter into the presence of God!" And off *he* goes when this is received well. Once we are able to leave our "fears" behind us and have become comfortable in sharing the Gospel, we all can be innovative in starting a discussion

All this goes to say that to start with we must be “real” (the genuine article) in making “contact” with people. Then, as mentioned already, we should seek to “connect” with them so that we “click” and can talk from heart to heart! When we succeed, there is often (usually?) an “opening” to mention a passage, such as Ezekiel 36:25-27 and take it from there. Frankly, it is often recommended not to say too much the first time around. I humbly as well as strongly disagree. We always must say as much as possible, especially if “a second time” is only a remote possibility. Even if we can only convey the message in a nutshell! My own experience is that once folks speak from heart to heart, they can say whatever they wish without interruption. One cannot underestimate the significance of sharing as much of the full Gospel as possible. I have witnessed instances in which people were drawn to the Lord by such Gospel presentation, at times decades, years, or months after they heard it for the first time. Why and how? *They remembered!* It did not leave them alone! They *could* not forget it! Generalities fade out. But not specifics that are presented in a pithy and graphic fashion! Bottom line, we are duty bound to take this approach wherever and whenever conditions allow this! After all, eternity is at stake!

The following is a “bare bone” sample presentation without possible interactions, such as, questions and clarifying answers.

“I am so grateful that God in his infinite love for a sinful world of which I was a part promised to take the heart of stone out of me and replace it with a heart of flesh that allowed me to enter the Kingdom, to wash away my filthy past and replace it with righteousness that gave me peace with him, and to eliminate my destructive life and replace it with holiness that made fellowship with him real. You know, the Bible is very graphic. It tells us that our heart is like a cobra, our past like dung and our life like poison. If you die and God puts you in his X-Ray Machine, and the screen shows a cobra, dung and poison, he will ask you a simple question, ‘would you like to have those three in your home?’ Of course, you will say, ‘No way!’ Then he will respond, ‘Now you will understand why I do not want you in my home either, as you are, for all Eternity!’ So, flee to Jesus. He is an awesome Savior. He gets rid of your three problems on the Cross, kills the cobra, washes the dung and eliminates the poison, and produces the three solutions through his Resurrection. His heart, his righteousness and his holiness come right out of the grave with him to be transported all through the world by the Holy Spirit. He uses the vehicle of the Word to implant the heart of Jesus in folks. Deeply convicted about their state they will repent before God and believe in Jesus as their only hope to obtain righteousness and holiness. When they through faith receive Jesus’ righteousness, the Holy Spirit seals that for eternity by taking up residence in their new hearts in order to implement Jesus’ holiness in their lives. He does this through the Church, through its teaching, through its fellowship, through the Lord’s Supper and through prayer (Acts 2:42). Well, let me ask you a question. Do you experience the impact of God’s truth? Are you moved by the awfulness of your three problems, the awesomeness of the love of God, of the grace of Christ and the power of the H Spirit? Did the Spirit convict you? If so, what prevents you from calling on the named of the Lord (Acts 2:21)?”

When they say, “Nothing,” I ask them to follow my lead in prayer and have them go through all the truths presented with thanksgiving to conclude with a heartfelt prayer for the three problems to be exterminated on the cross to be replaced by the three solutions and as well as a repentant and believing plea for forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Upon the conclusion of all this I take my cue from “The Great

Awakening.” Faced with the fact that not every “profession” amounted to a “possession,” all those who called on the name of the Lord were told that for the time being they were “hopeful converts” until they showed by their fruit that the tree was good, quoting Jesus (Mt. 7:18-20). Genuine converts would show to be spontaneously *devoted* to the Ministry of the Church (Acts 2:42), to be *assured* by their obedience (John 15:5), to be *productive* in their pursuit of Christ’s Double Command (Mt. 28:19-20), and to be *unstoppable* when their giftedness would emerge. They were also told that failure or refusal to go this route would disqualify them out of a deep concern that no one would face eternal death with an imagined heaven. This, of course, requires the appropriate “follow-up.” But more about the latter below!

Especially in third-world countries I found all this very effective. Children and young people also take to this quickly. Once we have familiarized ourselves with some opening statements, we will soon find out how easy, if not simple it is to start a conversation. In a word, we will be surprised how often we meet “sons and daughters of peace,” who are more than willing to spend some of their valuable time with us. Of course, the least we can do is to give a tract, or to leave one behind, such as in a restaurant. The Church should make sure that we have always several tracts with us. Candidly, it showed a painful lack of interest in souls, to put it mildly, both on a personal level and by implication on the Church level, when someone was chided for leaving a tract behind. This was supposed to be an “offensive” gesture. Hopefully such an astonishing comment is not par for the personal or ecclesiastical course! At any rate, it was helpful for me to read somewhere that leaving a tract still falls short of evangelism. For that to take place the spoken word is mandatory! In short, it is extremely significant that the training process familiarizes the trainees with “opening statements” that break the ice. This is the reason why they must pair up with people gifted in evangelism who build bridges as their second nature so that in the end they also become comfortable when approaching strangers.

“Situational”

Second, and in addition to this type of occasional evangelism, there is the providentially *situational* approach. This eyes God-given situations which lend themselves quickly to evangelistic outreach. For a starter, everyone who walks into a Church service should be visited in return, preferably that very same week. At that time the Gospel ministry of the Church should be laid out in full. Such visits yield ample time to do so. Sketching out the Diagram, as inserted below, has been extremely useful. With the running explanation it addresses both the ear-gate and the eye-gate. I have seen instantaneous conversions and evangelistic Home Bible Studies result from this. Its features mirror the biblical data. First, it presents the full-orbed New Covenant Gospel. It is Trinitarian and Triadic. Second, it is properly discriminating. At the conclusion of the presentation the question should be asked whether the hearers find themselves on hell-bound or heaven-bound side. I found that most of the time their reply, is an honest one. Third, it allows the presenter to trace the convicting grace if the Holy Spirit. In the end the presenter should inquire whether the detailed truths of the Diagram made an impact. If the answer is in the affirmative, “the moment of truth” has arrived. “What prevents you from calling on the Name of the Lord?” Many have been the times that the heartfelt answer was, “Nothing.” This, then, allowed me to lead the person in prayer, as formulated above. I often concluded with a test to

determine whether the indispensable bearing of fruit had already started, such as, “Come and see me on Saturday at 6:00AM for a time of prayer.” In one instance the new convert testified enthusiastically, “I have to confess that my Church attendance prompted by outside pressures than from an inward hunger for God’s Word. But I can testify that I can now read my Bible by the hour.” In another instance a test was not even necessary. When the man rose from his knees, he kind of blurted out, “Should I pay my tithes from my gross or from my net pay.” Enough said for now on this!

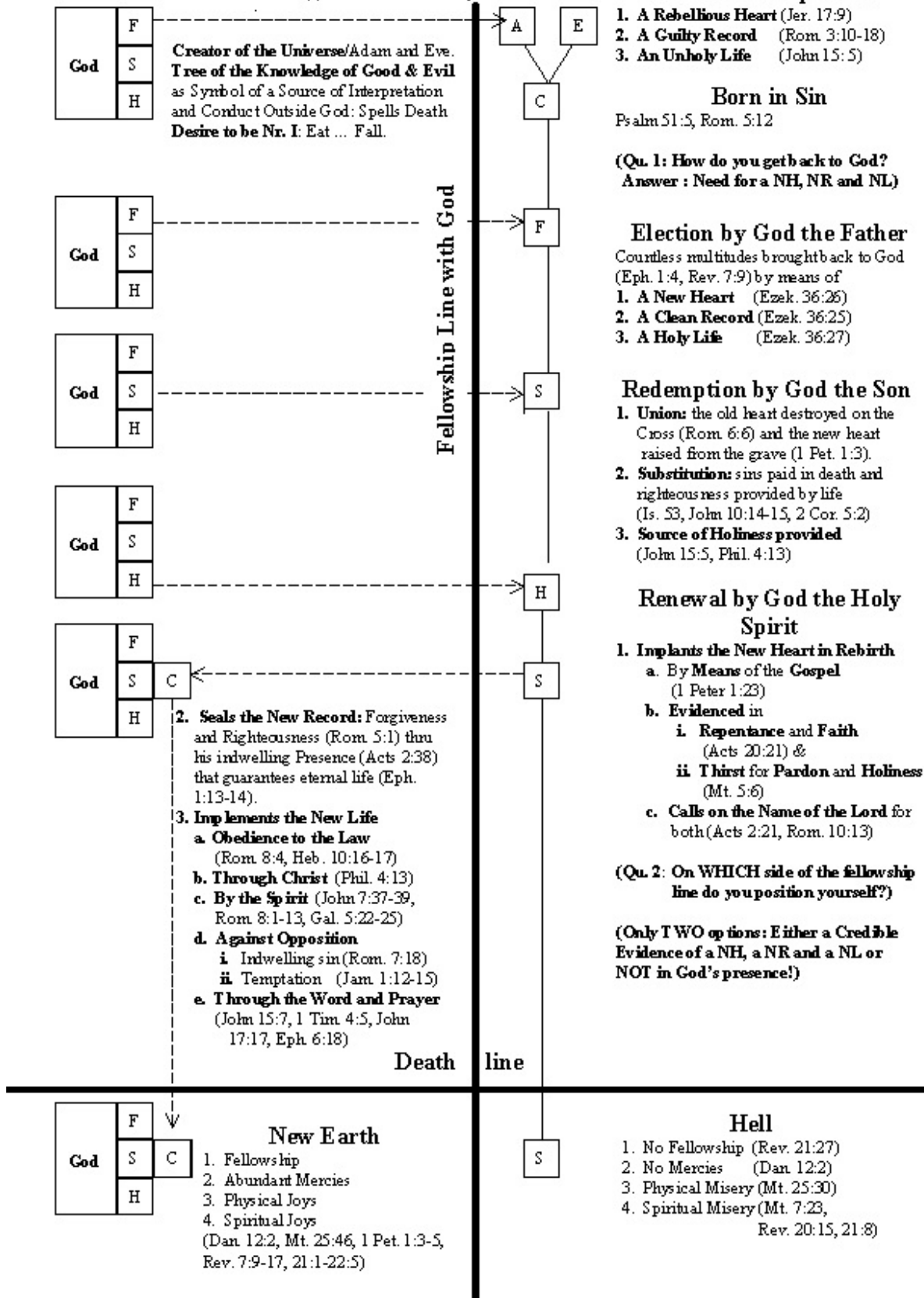
But here are some guidelines that should help in sketching out the Diagram.

1. Lay out the Vertical and Horizontal lines on a piece of Paper.
2. Sketch the Trinitarian Figure. Explain that God is the Creator of the Universe with Adam and Eve as the Crowning piece and gave them the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to find out whether they wanted their Conduct and Knowledge from Him or from a Source outside of Him. To go the latter route is to die. The Enemy convinced them that to eat is to really live in as much as they would determine their own conduct and knowledge. By falling for this temptation Adam, and in him all of mankind, crossed the Life line with God. He became a triple sinner with a rebel heart (cobra), a guilty past (“dung”), and a destructive life (poison”), and as such he died spiritually.
3. Draw a line from Adam and Eve and their children all the way to the bottom of the page, below the physical death line, explain that the threefold sinfulness deserves eternal damnation and mention the fourfold characteristics of a hellish existence.
4. (Facilitating) Question Nr. 1. “What does it take to return to the Fellowship with God?” The only possible answer: Three Solutions!
5. Sketch the Figure again. Share the Father’s Threefold New Covenantal (NC) Promise.
6. Sketch the Figure yet again. Share the Son’s Threefold NC Production.
7. Sketch the Figure once more. Explain the Spirit’s Threefold NC Transportation.
8. Explain that **C**calling on the Name of the Lord allows folks to cross the Life line, back into the presence of God with a threefold title to heaven. Mention its four characteristics.
9. (Discriminating) Question Nr. 2. “On which side do you find yourself?” If the indication is, “On the Left Side of the Paper,” seek to find out whether there is a “hunger for holiness,” according to Acts 2:42. If not, explain that its absence disqualifies from fellowship with God (Hebr. 12:14) and **make give an heartfelt plea invitation for a to-call on the Name of the Lord. If this is not successful, quote Paul to the effect that God “commands” everyone to repent for his glory and for their own eternal well-being!**
10. If the indication is, “On the Right Side,” trace grace. Find out whether the Holy Spirit has done his convicting work, and ask, “What prevents you from calling on the Name of the Lord?” If the answer is, “Nothing,” go ahead and lead in prayer. Conclude with Acts 2: 38, 42, “Lord, I repent, forgive me my sins and grant me the gift of the Holy Spirit so that I may become a godly person through the fourfold Ministry of the Church.”
11. Explain that calling on the Name of the Lord turns folks into Hopeful Converts, until they show fruit. Quote Jesus, “A tree cannot be called good until it yields fruit.” Also explain that true converts are devoted to the fourfold Ministry of the Church (Acts 2:42).
12. Assign a Psalm (Ps. 1, etc.) **which must be read daily** to show “devotion” to **the Word of God** reading, and so to fruit bearing (John 15:5), to assurance, and to a spontaneous evangelistic outreach to others (Mt. 28:19).

13. Connect “hopeful converts” immediately with the Leadership of the Church for oversight.

14. Seek to hook them up with a small group to pray on a weekly basis.

Diagram II: The Blueprint of a Christian The Deathtrap of Sin



Also, Church members should capitalize on *existing* relationships, such as their friends, their acquaintances, and their neighbors. They should be kindly asked whether they are open to a one time visit or a more organized Home Bible Study. In this context the presentation of then Diagram can be extremely helpful as well. I can testify to the effectiveness of this approach as well. It is even possible to “create” situations that are Gospel outreach friendly, such as inviting folks into one’s home for a meal or a party, or to events in which people might be interested. During the training process this should be a point of discussion. We may be surprised by what trainees could bring to the table of suggestions, especially when this process is marked by a spontaneity atmosphere from the outset. It is amazing how stimulating and fruitful such atmosphere is. It lifts everyone up to a higher level of insightful commitment, creative imagination and decisive action. Let me reiterate once again that for all this to occur it is mandatory for Evangelists and their gifted lieutenants to MC this process. They are the God-given catalysts!

“Intentional”

Thirdly, there is the organizationally *intentional* approach. This is programmatic in nature. In order to accommodate and “plug in” everybody, including the total leadership, the Church should send out teams of two or three at least two evenings and two afternoons a week. This can take the form of door-to-door evangelism, street preaching, Campus visits, going to parks, malls, sports events, book tables, etc. In certain cultures one can park a chair in front of one’s home or stand on the side of a street and invite passers-by to stop for a Gospel discussion. They usually are glad to do so. When in third-world countries the majority of the population consists of children, it is possible to start a “School” on each street corner at the drop of a hat. This has been a regular part of my repertoire. Returning regularly to the same street corner where the same children congregate is bound to build relationships that can prove to be very fruitful. At one time all this was possible in virtually every culture. But when the Church failed (refused?) to capitalize on these God-given opportunities, it condemned itself to situations where the sledding became increasingly difficult. But with every delay it is only getting more difficult. So, the Church must learn to bite the bullets of the world today rather than to opt for a tomorrow that may never arrive. Otherwise these very bullets will end up killing it.

Incidentally, it is frequently stated that door-to-door evangelism has had its day. After all, the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses spoiled the broth. Frankly, this is a myth, and often a self-serving myth. The Church goes after the elect, and they are everywhere. All folks are like electric bulbs. There is no telling which ones are scheduled by God to light up until we screw them into the socket of the Full New Covenant Gospel. I personally can testify of the conversions of whole families, if not clans through door-to-door evangelism. Once again, the Diagram was extremely pertinent in getting g the Message across in a focused, pointed and memorable manner.

Street preaching also needs some comments. Usually a group of street preachers converges at the same preaching point. When one preaches, the others often mill around. Instead they should engage passers-by, and at least hand out tracts. As strange as it may sound, most of them are, indeed, preachers, but not evangelists. They have a burden for preaching. But they must also develop a burden for souls. Therefore just as all Church

members they must be trained and certified in evangelism. This is really a rarity in today's Christian culture. But when in the process God graces them with a burden for souls, experienced as a Revival Prayer burden, their ministry does not just add a dimension. It is transformed. It lights up. The preaching point oozes power. It electrifies. I personally have seen the difference between venues where folks drone on without anyone in audience, and venues where Spirit power was unleashed. The first type debilitates. In one instance I saw a brother with an evangelistic gift simply walk away from it. He decided to go door-to-door, and found a seeking soul. In another instance someone did not even show up. Both regarded sub-par venues a waste of time and energy. The second one empowers. Passers-by are engaged which gives a sense of expectation. To be sure, the phenomenon of street preaching puts God's ownership of this earth squarely on the map. But this does not "justify" every occurrence. The same applies to preaching in the Church and the reading of Scripture. Neither of the three should be an ill-prepared and dull undertaking. The use of the Word deserves better!

All this goes to say that any and all evangelistic ministries better be a powerful end-product of thorough Classroom instruction and Field Training, full of the Holy Spirit and bathed in Revival Prayer. "Of God, through God and unto God are all things" (Rom. 11:36)! This applies also to developing a Revival burden for eternal souls, to climbing the hill of lost souls by seeking to pierce their hearts with the New Covenant Gospel, and to reaching the summit of responding souls by electrifying them through the gift of the Holy Spirit into a life of total surrender to the obedience of faith. This, then, is detailed in the next and final section.

Step III: Grasping the Outcome of Outreach

When God in his grace grants us the gift of converts the immediate question is how to proceed with and in what is usually designated as "the follow-up." The Book Acts provides us with a seamless transition. With the gift of the Spirit in place upon repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:37), the one who called on the Name of the Lord is now officially a "disciple of Christ" with all the privileges and responsibilities that accompany this. As such he is an integral part of the family of God, the body of Christ and the workshop of the Holy Spirit. This means for all *practical* purposes that in general he is *devoted* to hear the Word taught, to share the Word heard, and to obey the Word taught, heard and shared through communing with Christ and through prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit, and all that in the context of the assemblies of God's people (Acts 2:42-47). In my experience those who were added to the assembly by God himself never missed a beat in any of these areas. Those who do not show up, show up sparingly, or show up occasionally should be asked point-blank whether they have the gift of the Holy Spirit. Their conduct clearly disqualifies them from being a genuine disciple. After all, as a well-known speaker and author so aptly summarized the characteristics of a disciple, "A disciple is a believer who (1) takes an active part in the spiritual development process of progressively learning to live all of life in submission to Jesus Christ" and (2) makes no bones about the fact that "following Jesus Christ as his slave is his unalterable priority and therefore takes precedence over everything else. But then he moves from the general to the particular. He tops this off by (3) "fully and irreversibly dedicating himself to pursue Christ's Kingdom

blueprint, fleshed out in this double command both as a “disciple-maker” and a “disciple-instructor.”

In short, he surrenders to this double command which is given to the whole Church, and therefore he owns it as a member of the Church by definition. As a disciple-maker he goes after souls by focusing on intentional Kingdom evangelism under the Leadership of the Evangelist. As a disciple-instructor he goes after holiness by concentrating on the total range of Kingdom obedience under the Leadership of the Pastor-Teacher. Eager to pay any price and armed with the authority of Christ (Mt. 28:17), he follows in both instances Christ’s Kingdom program and Christ’s Kingdom agenda to the letter, persuaded that in the pursuit of the double command he can count on the presence of Christ to do so effectively (Mt. 28:20).¹⁰⁵ But since Christ’s blueprint has a third prong, namely that of assisting his fellow Kingdom Laborers under the Leadership of the Deacon he adds this to his repertoire of the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:23).

Based on this Divine Design for the Church, it is incumbent upon its Leadership immediately to provide every new disciple with three Short Manuals on how to share the Gospel of the Kingdom evangelistically, how to convey the Word of the Kingdom edificationally, and, last but not least, how to serve the Laborers of the Kingdom diaconally. Great pains must be taken to ensure that the content of these Manuals is fully understood, fully retained, and fully put into efficient practice. Since the two main phases of every training process, the content instruction in a Classroom setting and the hands-on ministry in the Field, have been covered already extensively, there is no need to return to them here. Kingdom Evangelism has been covered in great detail as well. This leaves us with two final items, “Speaking the Kingdom Word” and “Serving the Kingdom Laborers.” Because the “follow-up” of those whom God in his grace adds to the Church includes these two bases, they will now receive the necessary attention, be it in this context in Summary form only. However, it must remain understood that anyone who turns into a “Kingdom Disciple” as the outcome and fruit of Ecclesiastical *Evangelism* must learn to “embody” both. This is accentuated by the fact that all genuine believers are gifted either in proclaiming the Kingdom Gospel, or in “Speaking the Kingdom Word,” or in “Serving the Kingdom Laborers.” But for that giftedness to emerge in one area they must first be certified in all three areas. In graphic terms, one can only enter the Graduate School of Giftedness after the College of Certification has been completed. Hence the indispensable need for the latter. Incidentally, it must remain understood as well that the process of learning to Speak the Kingdom Word and to Serve the Kingdom Laborers do and must have Kingdom Holiness, Kingdom obedience of faith, also of newly experienced faith, which includes the eventual emergence of Kingdom Giftedness, as their magnificent objective.

The Summaries of the two Manuals are now presented with an important proviso. They are not first of all meant as materials for new converts to digest. They are rather designed as guidelines for both Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers to inform such converts what they can expect to encounter as newly arriving “warriors” in the Army of God. Three boot camps are waiting for them to enter! The sum and substance of the first one is covered in the present Paper. It deals with “the making of disciples” (Evangelism) and aims to

certify them in that area. The two Summaries present a global introduction to the other two boot camps, which the Manuals will flesh out in greater detail. So, let's get started.

D. Speaking the Kingdom Word

Introduction

That new converts sooner or later are called upon to Speak the Word is a given. The following is a Summary of the Manual to instruct them in that area in a Classroom setting. This Summary should let them know in general what they can (must!) expect, in the words of Paul, in learning how "to do their utmost to present themselves to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed in handling the Kingdom Word of Truth correctly (2 Tim. 2:15). It simply covers "the general lay of the land." When (because!) they have the heart of Jesus, the forgiveness of their sins *and* the gift of the Spirit, there is no doubt that they dearly want to receive God's stamp of approval, and would be more than happy (blessed!) to enter the Classroom in order to share the Kingdom Word in the Field, wherever and however God places them in his Providence. There are and will be plenty of opportunities to do so, starting in and with their families and friends. In a recent Conference on Evangelism I posed the following question to an eager young man who was seated in the front row. "If you were to apply for membership in a Church, and its Leaders would ask you where in their threefold certification program you would want to start, studying the Manual of Evangelism, the Manual of Speaking the Word or the Manual of Service, what would you answer?" He replied instantaneously, "All three!" His unquestionable spontaneity showed that he had received the gift of the Holy Spirit! Frankly, I expect this kind of answer, sooner rather than later, from every genuine new convert. My personal experience with new Christians backs this up.

The present Summary which makes a start in certifying them to "Speak the Word" consists of two sections. Incidentally, they may look somewhat imposing. But remember, this is just to give new converts a quick taste. Remember also that in a Classroom setting this is explained at length by a Pastor-Teacher! Incidentally, the full Manual is available for anyone who requests it.

The first section deals with the discipline that covers the source, the content and the aim of any spoken Message. This is known as Hermeneutics. The Greek verb from which this discipline is derived (*hermeneuein*) stood for ferrying a payload across from one river bank to the other. This corresponds with the three Panels of the source, the content and the aim (See Neh. 8:8 and Acts 8:30-31). The focus of Panel I is the "Fact of Scripture" as its Starting point (The Law in Neh. 8, and Is. 53 in Acts 8). The focus of Panel II is the "Interpretation of Scripture" as its Centerpiece (The ministry of Levites in Neh. 8, and of Philip in Acts 8). The focus of Panel III is the "Understanding of Scripture" as its Aim (The Israelites in Neh. 8, and the Eunuch in Acts 8). The interpretation of Scripture functions as the ferry (Panel II) between the one bank, a document of the past (Panel I) and the second bank, the understanding of that document in the present (Panel III). Interpretation resembles a rocket that puts the understanding of the text in orbit. Since all believers ought

to be teachers (So emphatically Hebr. 5:12), the need to become acquainted with these three Panels speaks for itself. Now on to some details!

1. Biblical Hermeneutics

Regarding Panel I, Biblical Hermeneutics insists that the Scripture is unique. It is the only Divine-human book in existence, and thus to be differentiated from any other book that ever was, is, or will be written. It is a *sacred*, Divine-human, inerrant and authoritative *document* that wishes to see its content ferried across fully and responsibly. In the present context there is no need to enlarge on this further

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Regarding Panel II, a properly conducted interpretive process is subdivided into five phases.

The first phase provides the backdrop this process and studies the historical, cultural and geographical background of the text. This can be very illuminating.

The second phase covers the three types of language, literal, figurative or symbolic language, as well as the genre of the text, such as the historical, the legal, the wisdom, the prophetic, and the apocalyptic genre in the OT and the Gospel, the historical, the epistolary, the wisdom and the apocalyptic genre in the NT. The historical, legal, Gospel and epistolary genres are predominantly literal in their signification. The wisdom genre with its poetry is often figurative in its language, while the prophetic and apocalyptic genres frequently display symbolism.

The third one focuses on the words in the text and their inner connection. It seeks to capture the meaning of all the terms that are used, whether in a standard or innovative fashion, and specifically to plumb the depth of the various concepts that are deployed, and to define them both in their context by means of dictionaries, word studies, etc. Nothing should be taken for granted. Failure to accomplish this task properly is to remain on the surface of the text, and often to miss, curtail or twist part, if not all, of its message. It also takes a close look at the *connection* of words in the sentence with the help of grammars. The outcome of this procedure will often present Bible scholars with pleasant surprises.

The fourth one begins to establish the message of a text, in whole and in part. It does so in context, since a text without its context easily becomes a pretext. The best, if not only way to determine what a text or passage is all about, is by drawing up a detailed as well as meticulous outline in its largest necessary context in order to establish its theme (sub-themes, sub-sub-themes, etc.) and its divisions (sub-divisions, sub-sub-divisions, etc.). Such outline mirrors the text in whole and in part. This, in turn, will pinpoint its message. As a prerequisite for this procedure, all the available clues in text as well as context must be taken into careful and prayerful consideration. The theme also constitutes the purpose of the book, section or passage, while the sub-themes form the sub-purposes. The Outline, Theme, Divisions and Sub-divisions should be formulated in universal terminology. Such formulations that are based upon and derived from the factual content of the text pave the way to the final phase of the interpretive process. But it must be understood that *outlining*

ultimately does (and should) spell surrender to Scripture as a Divine-human book, and is rooted in a commitment to the integrity of the inerrant Biblical text.

The fifth phase concludes the interpretive process, and finalizes the message of the text in terms of the various universal principles and patterns that can and must be gleaned or “mined” from the text. They should be based on the general formulations of the theme, sub-themes, divisions, sub-divisions, etc., in the Outline. These universal principles and patterns are the crowning piece of the interpretive process. In them textual meaning and textual application join together. Historical and cultural gaps vanish. The “past” reaches out across the ages, and so proves to be a present, living, pulsating and transforming reality. Only universal principles and patterns will “ferry” the message of the past into the present, bring the interpreter and his audience face to face with the deepest purpose of the Holy Spirit in and with the text, and so furnish not only “food for thought,” but “sustenance for life,” not simply intellectual insight, but spiritual growth. At times these principles and patterns come ready-made, such as the Ten Commandments, and are simply gleaned or “lifted” from the text. At other times they are embedded in the text, and must be extracted, “excavated,” or “mined” from it, specifically from historical, prophetic and apocalyptic passages. This must be done with great care, and requires a good deal of skill. Either way, like any type of crop they must be “harvested” and processed in order to bring out the applicatory relevance and significance of the text for all people, times, conditions and circumstances.

In a nutshell, the following five-fold counsel regarding their hands-on involvement in the hermeneutical process says it all:

1. Research and Analyze (Phase 1)
2. Examine and Categorize (Phase 2)
3. Define and Organize (Phase 3)
4. Outline and Synthesize (Phase 4)
5. Process and Principize (Phase 5)

But it is not taken to heart until God’s people zealously make a concerted effort to put their hand to the plough and start implementing these five steps. This brings us to the end station of the Hermeneutical undertaking.

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Regarding Panel III, the Understanding of Scripture, identifies the summit or crowning piece of the hermeneutical enterprise. This enterprise has not, and cannot come into its own, until the understanding of Scripture has become a reality. In the Bible the term understanding is used in a threefold way.

a. “Understanding of the mind” (Dan. 9:2)! This kind of understanding is *mental*. It can grow and expand (Ps. 73:17). As all else in the process of sanctification this also warrants, and demands, serious prayer (Ps. 119:18).

b. “Understanding of the heart” (Is. 6:9-10)! This type is *experiential* in nature, and comes into (the human) existence solely as a gift of God (1 Ki. 24:44-45; Lk. 24:45; John 6:44-45; 2 Cor. 4:4-6) through the operation of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:14-17; Eph. 1: 17-18; Col. 1:9-10). It is part of “living” in the fullest sense of the word because it touches the deepest part in man, his mission control center. As such it becomes his second nature. This is behind the statement that the understanding of the heart is experiential. Words fall short to capture it, similar to **concepts, such as love, joy, etc. To describe or define them is one thing. To possess them is quite another!**

c. “Understanding of life” (Job 28:28)! This understanding is *practical* in nature. It takes action! **For example, a person who acknowledges that God requires the tithes, but fails or refuses to pay them, is lacking in a full-orbed, biblical understanding of the tithes.** As Augustine states, “Whoever thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them, so that it does not build the (tangible) double love of God and our neighbor, does not understand it at all.” Such understanding “displays” the truth in living colors.

But it never comes about unless it is first known through the mind and after this is experienced and cherished in the heart (1 Ki. 3:9). But once it lodges in the heart, because it is the human mission control center, it will blossom out in action, the action of holiness, the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). This also applies to tithing!

Note well that the understanding of the mind is something that can be obtained by both believers and unbelievers to a greater or lesser degree, even if prayers for illumination do and should make a difference. But genuine understanding of heart and life requires rebirth and sanctification respectively. These are unique to the believer. In order to obtain both of these two types of understanding, and to operate in both areas of understanding, prayer is indispensable. Of course, this bears frequent repetition!

All this lays the groundwork for the study how to speak the Word efficiently and effectively. This study is known as Homiletics which instructs the leadership as well as the membership of the Church how to speak the Word. With this we have arrived at the second part of this section.

2. Biblical Homiletics

Biblical Homiletics comprises the study of the composition and delivery of whatever message from Scripture by whomever. In Scripture a message was either missionary in nature, targeting outsiders (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 2:14; 16:15; Lk. 9:2), or ministerial, focusing on insiders (Acts 20:17-38). In their missionary messages the Apostles were in an informal way assisted by the Church members who explained Christian truths to their friends or acquaintances who in their visits to the Christian assemblies must have heard something that kindled their interest (1 Cor. 14: 23-24).¹⁰⁶ This explains why the training should be church wide and not only deal with pulpit sermons but with all possible types of instruction, including the parental instruction of children.

In the light of all this Biblical Homiletics is designated here as the Study of the Speaking Ministry of the Church. In each instance this focuses on the Proclamation of the Truth of Scripture as a mandate that must be obeyed by the Church corporately as well as individually. Its content can be laid out in four headings or under four spotlights.

The First Spotlight: Scripture Truth and Its Communication.

Regarding the Truth, the Church is under a solemn obligation to preach the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments (2 Tim. 4:2), to preach all of the Scripture (Acts 20:27), and to preach the Scripture exclusively (Gal. 1:8). For only Scripture is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16)! Its every word is needed to produce and sustain life (Deut. 8:3). Further, no other word is on a par with it, or can claim to be without error in whatever it asserts (John 10:35). To that end the Speaker must be fully committed to it, fully trust it, fully cherish it, fully savor it, and fully surrender to it. The Church is under the equally solemn obligation to handle the Scriptures accurately (2 Tim. 2:15), and to handle all of Scripture accurately (2 Pet. 3:16). The careful interpretation of Scripture and the presentation of its proper meaning are necessary for the truth to come to grips with the hearer (Acts 8:31). The Church has a final solemn obligation to bring out the significance of the Scriptures (Heb. 4:12) and to bring out the significance of all of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16). For the proclamation of the Word of God can hardly be complete, unless and until its truth is shown to have applicatory force, and at times even a cutting edge (2 Tim. 4:2). The aim ought to be that the truth of Scripture, and indeed all of its truth, is genuinely understood intellectually, experientially and practically (Neh. 8:8).

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Regarding the Communication, to understand the fundamental significance and indispensable character of Speaking the Word is to understand the importance of proper preparation. For a message to be biblical in content and purpose it must reflect the content and purpose of the Speaking unit. To arrive at such a message it is necessary to follow the guidelines laid out in the previous Hermeneutics section.

For all this, see *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Homiletics."

The Second Spotlight: The Agents and their Aim

Regarding the Agents, in a very fundamental sense God's message as well as God's method is God's man. The messenger must be the embodiment of the message. He must be truth personified. It is not just that the preacher must be God's mouthpiece, his Master's voice, however much that should be the case. This is what the previous section was all about. But there is more. As the Father is truth, Christ is truth and the Spirit is truth, so the preacher as the Father's representative, Christ's ambassador and the Spirit's instrument must in a real sense be truth himself. How else could Paul have spoken with approval of the Thessalonians as "imitators of him" (1 Thess. 1:6)?

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Regarding the Aim, those who speak the Word invariably face a great diversity of listeners in their audience. They can expect to encounter saints and sinners, men and women, old and young who come from a variety of backgrounds, live in a variety of circumstances, find themselves in a variety of situations, cope with a variety of problems, look forward to a variety of futures, etc., etc. It is the genius of speaking the Word that the Speaker can touch any and all audiences, however diverse, simultaneously with the Word of God. In order to succeed he must reach out to their hearts as the primary aim be it through their minds as the necessary means and with a view to their holiness of life as the ultimate objective. This is fully in line with the Scripture's distinction of a three-fold understanding: of the mind (Ps. 73:16-17; Dan. 9:2), the heart (1 Ki. 3:9; Is. 6:10), and the life (Job 28:8; Prov. 15:21).

This, of course, shows that the mind matters. The truth of the Word of God will not reach the heart except through the mind as the conduit, to be distinguished, but not separated from the will and the emotions. This is why Scripture is replete with references to the significance, indeed necessity, of the teaching activity. All Christians should be able to teach (Heb. 5:12). Many Christians have received a special teaching gift (Rom. 12:7b; 1 Pet. 4:11a). Some, the elders of overseers of the Church are called pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11d). All this adds up to a fully trained Church, competent to convey the truth of God's Word. It also shows that the end product is godliness. Every exposure to God's Word should show an increase in holiness, the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). But in order to arrive there the heart must be touched, man's deepest being. The heart in Scripture stands for man's inner core, in contrast to his outer appearance (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Pet. 3:3, 4). It represents man's personhood, his deepest self, as mentioned before, his mission control center!

The Third Spotlight: The Instrument and its Objective

Regarding the Instrument, Speaking the Word is the first and foremost means of grace. Of the several parables that disclose features of the Kingdom which were unknown in the OT era (Mt. 13:1-52), the one that heads the list brings this out with great force. In order to implement the Kingdom there is no other alternative than to sow the seed of the Word. This is further on display on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17ff. and specifically 42) and set forth by Paul as a universal principle (2 Tim. 4:1-2). People will not believe unless they hear the proclaimed Word (Rom. 10:14).

The power of the spoken Word is clearly enormous. It guarantees that the Church of Christ has a great future. After all, this Word is specifically designated by Christ himself as the keys to the Kingdom. This ensures that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. Armed with the weapon of the proclamation of the Word it is invincibly on the march. The picture is bright, indeed. But does it seem realistic? The facts look rather grim. They hardly seem to bear out a triumphant impact of the Church. Worldwide it does not keep up with the birthrate. Nationwide it barely appears to hold its own. And locally the

Church is often in retreat! How does one square the promise of the Savior with the facts, the ideal with the real?

The reason for this should not be sought in the promise, as if that is too grand and too idealistic. The Church is always ill advised to tinker with God's promises, to question them or scale them down. It would seal its doom, for they are its lifeline and its power. If the problem, then, is not to be sought in the promise of our Lord, it must be in the proclamation of his Word. This, indeed, appears to be the case. Customarily Speakers readily acknowledge that the keys to the Kingdom are to be identified as the multifaceted Word of God. But they rarely recognize that this multifaceted Word should be proclaimed as the Keys to the Kingdom. Too often they solely address the mind and are satisfied with agreement, a mental nod, on the part of the audience. Of course, the mind matters. But proper proclamation goes deeper. Reaching out to the heart it insists on repentance and/or submission. Here the contours of the kind of proclamation comes into view that opens and closes the Kingdom (Mt. 16:19), that forgives and retains sin (John 20:23), the kind that is both prescribed and modeled in the Bible itself, and conquers the very gates of hell. This kind of proclamation is either discriminatory or applicatory, and so proves to have healing power. By virtue of this power it is the only kind that truly satisfies.

Discriminating proclamation is evangelistic in nature. It eyes wretched sinners. In addressing them or in expositing an evangelistic proclamation unit, the preacher may not leave the hearers in the dark as to their standing before God. In confronting Nicodemus with his need for a new heart in John 3:5, the Samaritan woman with her need for a new record in John 4:18 and professing Jews with their need for a new life in John 8:31, Jesus makes it crystal clear that as they are they cannot lay claim to the Kingdom of God. For all practical purposes he calls Nicodemus a blind rebel (John 3:3, 5), the Woman at the Well, a hell-bound adulteress (John 4:16-18), and “professing” Jews children of the devil (John 8:30-31, 44). When Peter on the day of Pentecost expositis the truth of Joel 2:28-32, his audience has no doubt as to where they stand either. They are called murderers. The proclamation of both Jesus and Peter has a cutting edge that is unmistakable. This is Revival proclamation at its awesome best. The hearers are not the jury that must give a mental and oral verdict. They are the accused who need to bow before God in repentance, and cast themselves upon mercy alone. Such proclamation invariably results either in broken hearts and awesome conversions, as in Acts 2 (Specifically Acts 2:41), or in hardened hearts and mortal combat, as in Acts 6-7 (Specifically Acts 7:54ff). In a word, in discriminating proclamation the Speaker goes after the rebel heart of man and under discriminatory proclamation wretched and lost sinners know that they are hell-bound, preferably even before the preacher has completed his message (Acts 2:37), whatever their ultimate response may be in the short or in the long run.

Applicatory proclamation is always sanctifying in nature. It eyes wretched saints. In expositing sanctifying proclamation units or in addressing believers, the Speaker will not leave his audience in the dark as to their status before God. When Jesus had finished his exposition of the law in the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples knew what kind of lifestyle would disqualify a man from membership (Mt. 7:24-27). When James addressed his hearers in the area of practical godliness, he left no doubt that it was neither optional nor negotiable. Professing believers who saw their disobedient lifestyle or ungodly conduct exposed had little choice. They would either have to clean up their act, or conclude that

they were not genuine believers. Again, the cutting edge is noticeable. Hearers are never the judge or the jury that make the final determination, but always the accused whenever and wherever they are found wanting. In a word, in applicatory proclamation the Speaker sensitizes the hearts of the audience as to their lifestyles and under applicatory proclamation wretched and deficient saints recognize, when and where they are deficient and must deal with it if they truly love God and if they wish their profession to remain credible to others and to themselves.

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Regarding the Objective, this kind of proclamation, like no other, has truly healing power. It sets the stage for the application of the three benefits of the gospel in the areas of regeneration, justification, and sanctification, both in the life of the believer and the unbeliever. In discriminating preaching the unbeliever is ultimately confronted with his rebel heart (Nicodemus; John 3:3, 5), his guilty record (The Samaritan woman; John 4:16-18), and his unholy life ("Professing" Jews; John 8:31-32). This sets the stage for the Speaker to call the sinner to repentance unto the forgiveness of sins and an obedient life through the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38), and for the sinner to call on the Lord for a new heart, a new righteousness and a new holiness, based upon God's threefold promise to that effect (Ezek. 36:37, 25-27; Acts 2:39). The upshot will be the liberating reality of a heart that is freely devoted to God, the refreshing reality of a record that is fully cleansed before God, and the enriching reality of a life that blossoms up before God. Similarly in applicatory preaching the believer is faced with shortcomings in his conduct. This paves the way for the proclaimer to call saints to repentance unto the forgiveness of sins and practical godliness and for the saints to call in repentance to the Father for forgiveness and practical holiness. This will produce a renewed freedom, refreshment, and enrichment, in short, a Revival culture!

All this is to say that discriminating proclamation under God effects the once and for all realities of regeneration (John 3:5), justification (Rom.5:1), and sanctification (Heb. 10:10, 14), while applicatory preaching effects the continuing realities of daily repentance (2 Cor. 7:8-10), daily forgiveness (1 John 1:8, 9), and daily renewal (2 Cor. 7:11). Clearly, the healing waters that flow forth from discriminating proclamation continue to flow forth through applicatory proclamation. Both types of proclamation are woven of the same cloth. As we shall see further below, they both arise from the heart, the mission control center, of the Speaker and address the heart, the mission control center, of the listener. The first type issues a summons to surrender to wretched sinners. The second type issues a summons to continuing surrender to wretched saints.

The Fourth Spotlight: God-centeredness and the Trinitarian Framework

Regarding God-centeredness., when a Speaker is truly God-centered, he displays this in at least three ways. He will execute his pastoral and teaching ministry in full dependence upon God, for the sake of God and to the glory of God.

First, while it is unmistakable in Scripture that the person of the Speaker is the indispensable agent and the activity of preaching the indispensable channel through which the grace of God reaches into the life of the hearers, it is equally unmistakable that the hearer owes his salvation fully to the sovereign grace of God (Acts 13:48b), the efficacious

work of Christ (Is. 53:10) and the operation of the Spirit (John 3:5). If the dependent clause spells 100% man and the main clause 100% God, the combination of both clauses spells 100% (God) + 100% (Man) = 100% (salvation). This is to say, in the implementation of salvation the human 100% rests squarely upon the divine 100% for its effectiveness.

On the one hand, God works *through* man (Rom. 10:14) and the Spirit works *through* the Word (Jam. 1:18). This is so by divine appointment. It is the way in which the threefold New Covenant salvation that is promised by the Father and personified in the Son is personalized by the Spirit. There is no other avenue of salvation. Human instrumentality in person and word is, indeed, indispensable. Concretely, the 100% man requires that man “gives it one hundred percent” in his person, in his preparation and in his proclamation.

On the other hand, however, God works *alongside* man (2 Tim. 2:25) and the Spirit *alongside* the Word (Acts 16:14). While God works through human instrumentality to effect salvation, there is no guarantee that salvation ensues just because man exerts himself in the preaching or teaching ministry. Apparently, one can be man taught without being God-taught and Word-taught without being Spirit-taught. Unless God is the architect and the contractor, human laborers build in vain (Ps. 127:1). They are the God-ordained means to a God-ordained end, but never the (human) cause to a (Divine) effect. This calls for the deep humility of total dependence. In the face of impotence pride vanishes quickly. Man can only regard it a privilege and be grateful, if and when God decides to use him. At the same time, when a passion for fruitfulness is kindled within him, he will turn to fervent and unceasing prayer. After all, God must make the difference if there is going to be any difference at all! In a word, presumption and pride must be replaced by humility and prayer!

Second, but there is more. The deepest motivation for the speaking ministry must also be God-centered. The Speaker in the execution of his ministry should not be driven by a desire for a sense of fulfillment, a sense of accomplishment, or any such motivation that centers upon himself. Neither should his deepest motivation simply be to see sinners to escape the gruesome reality of hell. No, the driving force should be the desire for God's electing purposes to come to reality (Rom. 9:11, 23), for the Lord Jesus to enjoy the fruit of his labor (Is. 53:10, 11), and for the Holy Spirit to see his love crowned in finished products (Rom. 15:30). This, of course, in no way denies that an effective ministry will leave a sense of thanksgiving in its wake and will result in joy over the salvation of sinners. Quite the contrary, tangibly to be used by God in a successful ministry is an indication of God's approval that every “minister” better strive for with all his heart and all his energy!

Third, and finally, there is a goal. If that is to be God-centered as well, the preacher may not seek to build his ministry around himself or his church, so as to cherish the acclaim he gets and the reputation his church enjoys. Neither may he make evangelism, or the dominion mandate, or any other worthy and necessary goal ultimate, consciously or unconsciously. No, God must fill the horizon of his life, his endeavors, and his accomplishments. The total range of his ministry, the spiritual growth of the church, the evangelistic outreach, the progress of the Kingdom, all must be purposefully pursued and manifestly serve the glory of the Triune God.

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Regarding the Trinitarian framework, all speakers of the Word must recognize that the OT is the Book of God the Father, the Gospels are the Book of God the Son and Acts and onward the Book of the Holy Spirit!

The OT, with only occasional, be it crucial references to Christ and the Holy Spirit, mainly testifies of *the Father*, as he extends his covenant of love to humans in order to fellowship with them in the splendor of holiness, which is reflected in his Law. The Fall interrupted this undertaking big time. It bankrupted mankind, which ended up with rebel hearts (Gen. 6:5), guilty records (Is. 64:6), and polluted lives (John 15:5). Still, in the continuation of his love he determined to restore mankind, and did so in two phases.

In the first phase he focused on Israel, be it as the eventual gateway to the world. He did so in terms of the covenants with Abraham, Moses and David. He promised to be their God. But at the same time he made it crystal clear that he would not compromise on holiness. He would neither lower the bar nor be satisfied with anything less than the benchmark of perfection (Gen. 17:1). The fellowship would be on his terms and on his terms only. In fact, he (methodologically) insisted that Israel, and in Israel mankind, was 100% responsible for the spiritual mess it hauled upon itself, and therefore was equally responsible for cleaning it up! It may not, and should not, go unnoticed that for this very reason he summoned Israel to justify, regenerate, as well as sanctify itself (sic!) (Ezek. 18:31a, b, c). Why would it opt for death (Ezek. 18:31d-32)? Of course, in the process its utter bankruptcy became, and was meant to become equally crystal clear. Israel ran into the brick wall of its radical impotence and total helplessness. It came face to face with a spiritual desert situation that proved to be deadly (Is. 32:14ff), a spiritual cemetery that accommodated the dead (Ezek. 37:1ff), and a spiritual Dead Sea that caused the death of everyone and everything else (Ezek. 47:1ff). The bottom line is simple as well as profound. Israel's unquestionable responsibility (sic!) to remedy itself met more than its match in its utter inability (sic!) to do so.¹⁰⁷

Once this bankruptcy was established as an incontrovertible fact, God inaugurated the second phase, the phase of the New Covenant. It prompted God in his covenantal love and mercy to move "into the gap" (Is. 59:15b-19; Ezek. 22:30). He himself would clean up the mess. Not (even) for the sake of Israel, but rather for the sake of his own reputation and holiness, he made the solemn promise that he would return them to their homesteads, and give them a thorough cleansing (justification) as the legal framework, a heart transplant (regeneration) as the launching pad, and a brand-new life (sanctification) through the Holy Spirit as the crowning piece of his saving activity (Ezek. 36:22-27). It ought to be noted that the order of instruction in both Ezekiel 18:31 and 36:25-27, in which justification is mentioned before regeneration and sanctification, is not identical to the order of salvation, in which regeneration precedes justification and sanctification. Incidentally, in Romans 3:21-8:17 Paul follows the same order of instruction as Ezekiel 18 and 36, justification (Rom. 3:21-5:21), regeneration (Rom. 6:1-11), and sanctification (Rom. 6:12-8:17), while in 2 Corinthians 5:14-7:1 he presents the order of salvation, regeneration (2 Cor. 5:14-17), justification (2 Cor. 5:18-21), and sanctification (2 Cor. 6:1-7:1). Philippians 3:1-10 follows

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It is significant to notice that even the best human "specimens" in the OT, such as, David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah, to limit myself to Kings, were deeply flawed. David committed adultery and murder. Solomon open bed the flood gates to idolatry.

the latter pattern, regeneration (Phil. 3:3), justification (Phil. 3:9), and sanctification (Phil. 3:10). At any rate, in his saving process God would turn the spiritual desert into a fertile field (Is. 32:14f), the cemetery into a virtual maternity ward (Ezek. 37:1ff), and the Dead Sea into a fresh water lake, filled with fish (Ezek. 47:1ff). In a word, in Ezekiel God assures us of the awesome New Covenant that would encompass Israel as well as the Gentile world.

But how would this come about? The answer is embodied in the Person and Work of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The very New Covenant which the Father promised was to be personified in the Son. As has been observed already, but bears repetition at this time, the Son would produce the new heart, required for regeneration (Rom. 6:6, 11), the new righteousness, required for justification (2 Cor. 5:21), and the new holiness, required for sanctification (Heb. 10:10, 14). Without Jesus nothing but bankruptcy: no new heart, no new righteousness, and no new holiness. With Jesus everything: Jesus' heart, Jesus' righteousness, Jesus' holiness! We can add to all this the OT tapestry, presented in Moses, the Writings and the Prophets, of the various fore-shadowings (1) of the Person of Christ in his function of (a) Prophet, (b) High priest and (c) King, and (2) of the Work of Christ in the symbolical legislation, covering (a) regeneration (circumcision), (b) justification (the sacrificial system in general, and the Passover in particular), and (c) sanctification (separation laws as well as death and life laws)! When we do so, we will all agree that Jesus had plenty to talk about on the Road to Emmaus. In fact, he most likely ran out of time, as he "interpreted in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Lk. 24:27)!

In all this the place and function of the Holy Spirit, fully operational in the Book of Acts and onward may never be overlooked, neglected, ignored, or downplayed. To do so is to attempt, if not commit, spiritual suicide. The reason is simple. The fullness of the Father, in terms of his perfections, promises, words and actions, makes up the fullness of the Son. However, the fullness of the Son, in these same areas, makes up, produces, the fullness of the Spirit. Just as the Father promises the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31ff; Ezek. 36:35-27), which is the concentration point, if not pinnacle, of his perfections, words and actions, and the Son personifies the New Covenant (Is. 42:6; 49:8), so the Holy Spirit personalizes the New Covenant (Is. 59:21). Without the Father there is no prospect of salvation. Without the Son there is no provision for salvation. Without the Spirit there is no presence of salvation. The latter is in line with Paul's words to the effect that "anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ" (Rom. 8:9). After all, without the Spirit there is no implanting of Christ's heart in regeneration (John 3:5). Without the Spirit there is no sealing of Christ's righteousness in justification (Eph. 1:13-14). Without the Spirit there is no implementation of Christ's holiness in sanctification (Rom. 15:16). In short, without the fullness of the Holy Spirit the fullness of the Father terminates in the fullness of the Son, and will never reach or arrive in the fullness of the believer, and consequently forever prevent anyone from reflecting the fullness of the Father in the splendor of holiness as the crowning piece of his saving activity. The golden chain of salvation is unmistakably Trinitarian and circular. From the Fullness of the Father, by means of the Fullness of the Son, through the Fullness of the Holy Spirit, via the Fullness of the believer, to the Fullness of God the Father. Take one of the links out of the chain and it is all over!

At any rate, in this context to focus on universal truths, *as the text calls for them*, is to proclaim the Triune God in his Trinitarian-specific glory, as well as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in their Person-specific glory. Once again this has three aspects.

a. Proclamation from the OT will focus mostly upon the Father, who defines the Covenantal nature and holds out the New-Covenantal prospect of salvation. The Son and the Spirit are (sparingly) mentioned, mostly to indicate the provision (the Son) and the transportation or implementation (Spirit) of salvation.

b. Proclamation from the Gospels focuses mostly upon the Son, who provides the content of this salvation in his Person and Work, and paves the way to its realization. The Father and the Spirit are (by way of comparison rather sparingly) mentioned, mostly to indicate the origin, benchmark, nature, and purpose (Father), and the implementation (Spirit) of salvation.

c. Proclamation from Acts and onward focuses for the greater part upon the Holy Spirit, who secures the implementation of this salvation and ensures its completion. The Father and the Son are (rather frequently) mentioned to indicate the nature (Father) and the provision (the Son) of salvation.

These three theses reflect the fact that the OT is the Book of God the Father, the Gospels the Book of God the Son, and Acts and onwards the Book of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸ However, I must hasten to add that a text (1) never highlights the Trinitarian-specific glory of the Triune God in isolation from, at the neglect of, or at the expense of, the Person-specific glory of each of the three Persons, (2) never focuses upon the Person-specific glory of one of the Persons in the Godhead in isolation from, at the neglect of, or at expense of, the two other Persons. Scripture is always Trinitarian, even if every section or passage does not carry the same emphasis. This implies that the proclaimer may not be victimized by a one-sided emphasis upon either the Father, or the Son or the Spirit, and hope to be truly and fully biblical.

Further, the Biblical Covenantal and New-Covenantal interaction of the Triune God with his people runs from Perfection (Paradise) through Bankruptcy (Fall), and Restoration (Redemption) to Perfection (New Earth). Scripture never focuses upon the glory of the Three Persons, whether Trinitarian-specific or Person-specific, in isolation of, at the neglect of, or at the expense of the human predicament. It is and remains a biblical fact that the *historia salutis* (history of salvation) means nothing apart from the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) (See Amos 9:7-8). The latter is not only the (intermediate) objective of the former, but also the (ultimate) concentration point in which the glory of God in the sum total of his perfections reaches its apex.

In short, through bonding with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, their fullness turns into the fullness of the believer, reflecting and aiming at the glory of God! To bond with the Father is to surrender to the content of the biblical text expressive (1) of the sum total of his perfections, culminating in his Law, which aims at the holiness of his people, (2) of the rich tapestry of his promises, culminating in the New Covenant, which seeks to restore bankrupt sinners, and to purify wretched saints, and (3) of all his words and actions, presenting the universal principles and patterns, which give direction to sinners as well as saints. To bond with the Son is to embrace the content of the biblical text as it is embodied by him and in him, in all its specificity. All that is earmarked as displeasing to the Father is

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This, not so incidentally, is also the considered view of Herman Bavinck, II, 287; Eng. Tr., II, 320, "Just as in the ontological Trinity the Father is the first in the order of subsistence, the Son the second, the Holy Spirit the third, so also in the history of revelation the Father preceded the Son, and the Son in turn preceded the Holy Spirit. The "economy" of the Father was especially that of the Old Testament (Heb. 1:1); the "economy" of the Son started with the incarnation; and the "economy" of the Holy Spirit began on the Day of Pentecost (John 7:39; 14:16-17). The Father came without having been sent, the Son came after being sent by the Father (Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48; John 3:16; 5:23, 30, 37; 6:28ff; etc.), and the Holy Spirit only came because he was sent both by the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 16:7)."

exterminated on the Cross, and all that is said to please and mirror him is re-originated in the Resurrection. To bond with the Spirit is to appropriate the content of the biblical text personalized by him, once again in all its specificity. All that is earmarked as displeasing to the Father is eradicated in the believer, and all that is said to please the Father is instilled in the believer!

In sum, the Father deposits his Fullness in his Son. When God's people study the OT meticulously they will increasingly grasp all the details of what the Father places in the Son. The Son deposits all that the Father has placed in him in the Holy Spirit. When God's people study the Gospels meticulously they will increasingly grasp all the details of what the Son has placed in the Spirit. The Spirit deposits all that the Father and the Son have placed in him in the believer. When God's people meticulously study the rest of the NT from Acts and onward they will increasingly grasp what the Spirit places in them. When they subsequently embrace the Son, all the minuses that are recorded in the OT, the Gospels and the rest of the NT will increasingly be purged from their lives through the Spirit and all the pluses increasingly displayed through that same Spirit. Anyone who fails to tremble when facing the Word of the Father and ignores, sidesteps or rejects any portion of his OT does not only disparage his Fullness and his Glory but as a result is also bound to end up with either a truncated or an anemic Christ. To embrace such a Christ will undoubtedly result in either a truncated or anemic Holy Spirit, and to embrace such a Spirit will undoubtedly lead to either a truncated or an anemic Christian, at best! All this demands an unconditional surrender, a painstaking interpretation,¹⁰⁹ and a radical identification with every part of God's Word. Any "faux pas" of whatever kind will by definition tone down or diminish the Fullness and Glory of the Father and by implication of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! Perish the thought of this ever happening, as well as any text-interpretive missteps that would pave the way or open the door for that.

This leaves us with one more item to cover. New converts must also learn how to be of service to their fellow Kingdom Laborers.

The only way to interpret the text properly is to use the so-called grammatical-historical method. It takes the text at face value and refuses to add anything to it or remove anything from it in whatever way and for whatever reason. The claim that the NT is known to have superimposed meaning upon the OT text that is essentially alien to it, such as Mt. 2:15 in its referential quotation of Hos. 11:1, and therefore would allow us to do the same, has no basis in fact. In the just-mentioned instance, Matthew simply provides a further application of Hosea's statement. What happened to Israel, according to Hosea, also happened to Jesus, according to Matthew! "To fulfill" does not always refer to a prediction. It could also point to an implication, such as, in Jam. 2:23, or to a further application as in Matthew. All other so-called proof-texts can be easily explained in the same or in a similar fashion.

E. Serving the Kingdom Laborers

Introduction

To start with, the historical origin and practice of the Official NT Diaconal Ministry is emphatically to be found in the full operational context of the Church of Christ in which the Evangelist, the Pastor-Teacher and the Deacon, stand shoulder to shoulder, proceed arm in arm, function hand in hand, and so produce the proverbial threefold cord that is unbreakable and unstoppable. Furthermore, biblically this Ministry always took place, always takes place, and always should take place in that same operational context, if it seeks to pursue its full biblical potential and to reach its full biblical objective. Anything short of it always resulted, always results, and always will result in a Ministry that is curtailed in its starting point, its aim, its operation, its effect and its impact. In a word, it

should never be severed from the Evangelistic and Edifying Ministry of the Church. Also here the motto is applicable, “If you want to go fast, go it alone; but if you want to go far, proceed together!” Lone rangers may win skirmishes or even battles. But never have and never will win wars. I trust that this precious multifaceted truth will not only be crystal clear, but also so compelling that it produces a heartfelt and prayerful yearning to implement it eagerly and fully. Now on to some details, again in four headings or under four spotlights!

The First Spotlight: “Birthplace” and Job Description

Regarding the Birthplace of the Diaconal Ministry, there appears to be general agreement that the Diaconal Office to which the NT Scripture attests in several places (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8ff) must be traced back to the beginnings of the NT Church in Acts 6. Discrimination against expatriate widows, although Jewish by ethnicity, caused an uproar, to which the Apostles quickly responded. But that response can only be understood, if we take all the “circumstances of the day” into account. The Apostles literally had their hands full with both their evangelistic soul winning and their edificational teaching ministry, which in less than a day (Pentecost!) saw 3000 converts flood the Church (Acts 2:41), quickly swelling to 5000 (males only) thereafter (Acts 4:4), and soon to be multiplied further (Acts 6:7). Imagine the time and energy it took to “teach all of them to observe what God commanded them” (Mt. 28:20)! Therefore it was not a “fitting” or “appropriate” proposition for them to step in themselves to sanitize the troubled and troubling situation that was marked by an unbecoming discrimination. They simply could not spare even a moment of their time or an ounce of their energy to help the unhappy ladies who were in obvious distress. That is why they asked the congregation to give them seven men, “full of the Holy Spirit” and “full of faith” (Acts 6:3-5) to assist them in solving the problem and to make sure that all the widows would be properly fed and taken care of. The NT never designates these “seven” as “deacons.” In fact, they are a kind of “stop-gap” measure as a necessary on-the-spot response to a sudden, unexpected, but clearly upsetting occurrence that easily could have caused a serious upheaval along semi-ethnic lines for the total community and affect its ministry negatively.

At any rate, it appears that here the foundations were laid for what later turned into an official Diaconate. After all, issues of whatever sort, not essentially or immediately related to the very substance of the evangelistic or edificational ministry of the Church, were bound to crop up. In fact, they routinely did, and continue to do so, in a wide variety of areas! So this recurrence required something more permanent than just “An Occasional Seven,” “An *Ad Hoc* Group of Individuals.” The Evangelistic and Edificational Leadership should not have to go back to the congregation again and again, let alone incessantly, for new “stop-gap” measures in suddenly arising circumstances or situations. It would be a waste of time and energy. The wheel does not need to be invented more than once! So why not institutionalize a special and permanent Office that would look after any and all much-needed or simply facilitating logistics? This clearly occurred, if Scripture is any indication (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8ff)!¹¹⁰

110 In order “to spoon the food out of the pot and transfer it to the plate of widows” folks had to be “full of the Spirit and of faith.” This does not only tell us a lot about the Revival Culture of the earliest Church. Apparently there were enough folks around who would meet these two qualifications which are admittedly rare in today’s Church. It also implies the principal as well as practical recognition that without “the Holy Spirit and faith” there is no possibility of even a nano-inch of holiness. Without these qualifications even the simple exercise of “food distribution” could not possibly be acceptable to God, if Jesus is to be believed (John 15:5). In fact, such exercise would be “sterile like a rock, sensual like a beast, and destructive like a demon,” if James is to be taken at face value (Jam. 3:15)! **For the qualifications as well as the origin of, the reason for, and**

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Regarding the Job-description of the Deacon, it has raised many an eyebrow that there is no trace of such in the NT. But that is precisely the point. It would curtail the focus and labors of the deacon. At all times, he is supposed to do “anything, anywhere, and at any time” to facilitate the “Evangelists” and the “Pastor-Teachers/Exhorters” in their labors who always will and should have too much to do in a fully functioning and therefore thriving Church. In short, the deacon is the “logistics” man, the perennial facilitator. This means that it truncates the office greatly when it is merely designated as an anti-*poverty* instrument. It must shoulder each and every *need* that do or may come up in the Church’s ministry so that the Evangelist and the Pastor-Teacher are able to dedicate themselves fully and without interruption to their mandated duties. In concrete terms, if the Evangelistic and Teaching Officers in God’s Church do not have time to brush their teeth, the deacons should stand ready to pitch in and do it for them. By all means, let the Diaconal Ministry be visionary and take initiative wherever needful. But it must always be subservient to the two prongs of the Grand Command, the evangelistic and the edifying prong. These two are its parameters and form its framework. In a word, it should never strike out on its own. Of course, the evangelistic and edifying ministries of the Church may not operate independently either. The vision of each of the three ministries must turn into a joint vision for the Church to advance the Kingdom smoothly and effectively! Remember the concept of *perichoresis*! Historically it has essentially been used through the centuries to convey that the Three Divine Persons are indivisibly bound together into One God. But it can also be applied to the Church, emphasizing that the three ecclesiastical Ministries always are and always should be united into one powerful thrust, and always should act in unison, to advance the Kingdom. In either case it spells unity in diversity, whether of Persons (Theology) or Ministries (Ecclesiology).

The Second Spotlight: Range of Service and Service Providers

Regarding the range of the Service Ministry, it is customary to designate it Ministry as a “Ministry of Mercy.” Frankly, this is a confusing designation from the biblical perspective. Taking my cue from Romans 12:6-8, the Tree of Service has three branches, “sharing,”

the function of the Diaconal Office, see also Nathan Trice, “If You are a Deacon.” in *O^{Jesus}rdained Servant* (Vol. 23, 2014), 72-78. He argues that in Acts 6 “The office (of Deacon) was now in place.” I would say, “not quite yet.” But the launching pad was certainly in evidence. He also argues that the Deed Ministry of the Deacons as a ministry of mercy to the poor and the afflicted “complements the ministry of the Word” and “adorns the Gospel.” I would say, “give it a wider and more substantial horizon.” But I am in wholehearted agreement that “just as the ministry of the Word is not intended by Jesus to be exclusively for the benefit of the Church, so the ministry of deed is not restricted by Scripture for the sole benefit of the Church.” “To disciple the nations”: its a matter of Word ^{and} deed (See also Gal. 6:10)!

“caring” and “showing mercy.” Recognizing all three of them for what they are and should be, gives a diagnostic breadth and depth perspective that will allow as well as enable folks to take swift, fitting and effective action. The numerous items that can be practically identified as belonging to the Diaconal area simply do not all fit under the umbrella of “mercy,” in fact, given its definition very few do.

“Sharing” is simply donating or supplying one’s time, energy, skills, funds, etc., in more or less *impoverished or taxing* situations and circumstances. The diagnosis is usually quick and the cure obvious. Holes in shoes require either new soles, or in case of need a new pair of shoes! A threatening electric power cut off due to non-payment calls either a gracious temporary extension of service on the part of the provider or for an immediate payment of the bill. It is simple and straightforward. No rocket science required! Or, if it is, College rocket science 101 or 201 will do.

“Caring” goes a little or a lot deeper! It stands for looking after or attending to folks in more or less *distressing or traumatic* times or places. The source of the accompanying hurt is not always quickly identifiable, while the cure usually is more intricate and may take longer to be effective. Abdominal pain may have a variety of causes. It usually takes time not only to figure out the right type of medication but also for it to take a helpful hold. Generational poverty that is indicative of a condition that appears to lack any light whatsoever at the end of the tunnel or a chronic problem of student attrition in a Christian College that threatens its viability is not always easy to explain or quickly to remedy. It takes College rocket science 301 or 401 to come up with a response or solution.

“Showing mercy” dwarfs both “sharing” and “caring,” and ups the ante markedly. It is nothing less than a “godsend” in *ruinous and basically terminal* conditions or settings. The need for literally an immediate heart-transplant is one such condition. It calls for drastic, if not dramatic action, inclusive of volunteering oneself as a potential donor. Proceedings in a bankruptcy court that threatens to push folks over the edge are another such setting. It could require one to empty one’s bank account and more to come to the rescue. In short, it takes “Graduate School” rocket science to make the difference.

There is clearly a hierarchy in the call for “help.” Recognition of this fact gives depth perspective to the Diaconal Ministry. At the highest rung someone may be so bloodied literally or figuratively, physically or mentally, that it seems a dead-end street and all hope is lost. It takes more, much more than “some doing” to respond to such situations. A 911-call for an Immediate Ambulance! Emergency Surgery for accident victims! Chemotherapy in the case of ravaging cancer! Disaster Relief in hurricane conditions! Rescue Missions for the starving! Bail-out in financial collapse! 24/7 Supervision for the gravely sick! Hospice for the dying! Etc., etc.! It goes without saying that deacons must always be on alert, on more alert, or on high alert to “peg” the issue, and react accordingly in order to be effective. The various “needs” must be specified by them before the right medicine can be applied!

All this, of course, requires expertise. The deacons are first trained in the three branches of service as believers, as Church members. Then their gifted emerges in one of the three branches. This produces their expertise. When they tangibly display this, and only at that point, may they be put in the Diaconal Office. After all, who would want a leadership, also in the ecclesiastical Service area, that is neither certified nor gifted, and therefore lacks the “wherewithal” required to handle the Church’s logistics?

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Regarding the Service Providers, then, all Church members are the first “line of defense.” Every believer has the mandate to share (Eph. 4:28), is called upon to care (Rom. 16:1; Phil. 2:30), and has no choice but to extend mercy when and where needed (Mt. 5:7; Jam. 2:13). All three of these are a matter of plain obedience. So they must be instructed in the Class room and learn in the Field how to be active in all three areas. When the threefold gift of service emerges, the recipients may serve as the second line of defense, advising members how to assess needy situations and to serve folks who face them properly and effectively. But when it is “ground zero” time, the going gets really rough, and individual believers as well as gifted believers are unable to handle an emerged or emerging situation, the three types of “Deacon-experts,” each in his own gift area, should enter the picture. Once again, the failure accurately to categorize the needs and properly to assign them may well be the reason why so many so-called “Mercy Ministries” look very good on paper and in theory but are often conspicuous in their absence where they should make a mighty hands-on impact.¹¹¹

In short, “trials” are not the believer’s “optional electives,” but God’s “prescribed courses” (Jam. 1:2). Since they come at times quite fast and quite furious, it takes “all-hands-on-deck,” in fact, “on-all-decks” to respond to them (Jam. 2:14-17). It is regrettable that no handbook on Diaconal Ministries requires biblical training in service on the part of all of its members, 33 1/3% in the “Classroom” to acquaint them with the biblical principles, 66 2/3% in the “Field” to acquaint them with every day realities by means of modeling (33 1/3%) and observing (33 1/3%), until the trainees can be certified and the stage is set for their giftedness to pop out. They do not even develop or come up with a well-thought and well-ordered program to implement all this. There is no vocation, occupation, or profession on earth that grants or allows for “a license to practice” before or without the completion of a thorough training program. Why is this principle violated in the Church of Christ over and over again?

The Third Spotlight: Uniqueness and Teamwork

Regarding the Uniqueness of the Diaconal Office, from the biblical data regarding the nature of this Office, as well as the giftedness and the qualifications for it (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8ff), it should be rather clear that it is a unique as well as an essential Office in the Church of Christ. In its uniqueness it is not and cannot be a steppingstone for the Office of either the Evangelist or the Pastor-Teacher/Exhorter. As an essential Office it is and must be fully a part of the Leadership of the Church. Both “principles” are routinely violated. All too often deacons are appointed as potential Elders, and Elder meetings are exclusively conducted without the presence of Deacons. They may not need to attend the whole meeting, but must show up in every elders meeting in a blossoming Church that “makes disciples,” “trains disciples” and in the process “cries out” out for the ever-needed diaconal logistics to have an ongoing and unfailing, and often a prominent presence!

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A pastor-teacher once complained that some of his deacons just did not show the mercy needed in cases that were assigned to them. This clearly bothered him. My observation was crisp and clear. You assigned the wrong type of deacons to these cases! Do not a “mercy case” to a “sharing” or “caring” expert. Nor a “sharing case” to a “mercy” or caring” expert, or a “caring case” to a “sharing” or “mercy” expert!

In short, by virtue of their uniqueness all three Offices should by all means feel free to meet separately to discuss issues pertaining to their mandate. But by virtue of their essential nature, when decisions are made that affect the Ministry of the Church in whole or in part, they must meet together to hammer out their joint vision, their joint plans, their joint policies, and their joint administration. In their necessary cooperation they all serve each other and are accountable to each other. But none is subordinate to the other. After all, each Office contributes its *unique* giftedness, its *unique* service and its *unique* hands-on activity (1 Cor. 14:4-6) to the Church's *common* good and *common* Ministry (1 Cor. 14:7-8), which must be *fully* integrated, and operate shoulder to shoulder to make *biblical* headway. If and when in a Church one of the Offices serves as a One Tower Suspension bridge that holds up the road deck and directs traffic, the other two will languish. If and when one of them decides to go it alone, the Church will suffer. But it will also set itself up for eventual failure. All three Offices in the Body of the Church stand in need of the "nutrients" that only the others can provide.

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Regarding Teamwork, then, the Diaconate clearly does not only originate in the Church, but also must perform its function and pursue its labors in the context of the Church with its Threefold Ministry. Frankly, many pages have been spent on the question how "Word" and "Deed" Ministry relate to each other. Do they function independently, as in a recent "two-kingdom" theory? Does "Deed" Ministry precede "Word" Ministry, possibly as an occasion for the latter? This is how "Sports Ministries" function. Or does "Word" Ministry have the primacy, with "Deed" Ministry only a secondary concern, or not the business of the Church at all?

It is by and large and biblically (!) argued, however, that they must go hand in hand, in a "symbiotic" type of relationship.¹¹² While in Jesus' Ministry the "time sequence" is not always the same (John 9:17 and 9:35-41: "deed" before "word;" Mat. 15:2-27 and Mt. 15:28: "word" before "deed"), the grand objective is the same. It is to advance the Kingdom and thereby magnify the glory of God. They are "inseparable imperatives," to be embraced with "equal joy" and to be obeyed in tandem. Faith cannot walk away from deeds, whether individually or corporately (Jam. 3:15-16). Otherwise both the OT and the NT are unintelligible (Is. 1:14-16; 58:6-12; Acts 2:42-44; Jam. 2:14-17, to mention only a few Scripture passages). But neither can "deeds" walk away from faith (Jam. 2:22a). After all, if the Kingdom can only be advanced through rebirth (John 3:3, 5) and in the context of holiness (Heb. 12:14), it stands to reason that Deed Ministry cannot take off, let alone flourish, unless it is totally intertwined with its twofold counterpart of Evangelistic Outreach and Pastor-Teacher care. This reasoning must be endorsed as biblical truth. *Orthodoxy* and *orthopraxis* go arm in arm in and through Holy Spirit *orthopathos*! The next Spotlight enlarges on this some more.

The Fourth Spotlight: Pitfall and Purpose

Regarding the pitfall, all too often Church plants have started and are started by pastor-teachers as point-men. There may be times that this works out. But by and large they do not produce thriving churches. Evangelists are ordained by God to function as the point-men in Gospel outreach. Pastor-Teachers follow in their wake, if the order of Ephesians 4:11 means anything. Even the most gifted pastor-teachers who start churches and appear to be successful would have been doubly so, if they had served in tandem with evangelists, and would have been eager “on the outside” to minister with them in a subservient support role in the “making of disciples” as their Nr. 2 men, naturally with a role reversal “on the inside” in the “training of disciples.” All this said, it should not come as a surprise that the failure to use Evangelists with their thrust as the motivating Engine of the Church is bound to truncate and thereby hamper the ministry of Pastor-Teachers. After all, together with the certified and gifted membership of the Church they are ordained to “supply” the disciples to be taught! But it also cannot but trim and misdirect the ministry of deacons. As has been argued from Acts 6 as the cradle of the Diaconate, the task of the Deacon is to provide the logistics for both the Evangelist and the Pastor-Teacher. The failure to honor the Evangelist to the full, will by definition curtail their logistics. No converts? A cutback in their field of labor! Furthermore, the vacuum that this creates will misdirect them to carve out a ministry that is not and cannot be fully intertwined with the Ministry of the Evangelists and the Pastor-Teachers, and may be tempted to turn independent, if not openly para-ecclesiastical. This is not to minimize the intended impact of their ministry, whether it is ecclesiastical, semi-ecclesiastical or para-ecclesiastical. By no means! But it is to say emphatically that it can never reach its full potential unless and until it is fully part of the proverbial threefold cord that cannot be broken, an integral part of God’s Tri-Jet with all three ecclesiastical Engines operating jointly, fully integrated and at full throttle.

“Service” certification, as we saw, covers three prongs, “sharing,” “caring” and “showing mercy.” So, it is not enough merely to claim that all believers are walking down “the Jericho Road” which requires “a display of mercy for the perishing in and for terminal situations.” To be sure, this is fully part of a Diaconal Ministry. After all, sooner or later we certainly meet folks who seem to have reached the end of the line (Lk. 10:25-37). But there are two more Roads to be distinguished that believers do and will traverse with greater regularity, a Stake holder’s Boulevard that calls for a Sharing Ministry, where folks face temporary “barriers” and need a rare, an occasional or even a frequent “shot in the arm,” and a further Treatment “Avenue” that requires a Caring Ministry to deal with special, intermittent, or chronic debilitating issues that seem to hamper, if not to obstruct life.

However, towering above these three “Thoroughfares” is “Death Row!” Frankly, what good is it to invest in folks, to patch them up, or to salvage them “diaconally” when the wrath of God hovers over them? This is why it is not sufficient to insist on a mere “federative” relationship of Word and Deed, that is to say, to proclaim the Gospel of God in the evangelistic setting of making disciples and all of the Word of God in the edificational setting of training disciples on the one hand, and diaconal service in sharing, caring and showing mercy, on the other hand. The complementarity of truth demands what has been called a “synergetic symbiosis,” in which their collective life is that of an inseparable Siamese twin (Read: Triplet!) and their combined action is greater than the sum of their effects individually! Nevertheless, in this synergetic and symbiotic simultaneity, the “Gospel” (evangelistically) and the “Word” (edificationally) in the two-

pronged Grand Command have the primacy as the more radical imperative. Just as bodily exercise profits a little, is of some value for the present life, while godliness profit much, is of value in every way as it holds a promise for this life as well as for the life to come (1 Tim. 4:8), so Diaconal Service, however much an uncompromising imperative from God, profits little, is only of some value, compared to the Evangelistic and Edificational Ministry of the Church. Poverty is no barrier to the entrance in eternal life (Lk. 16:22a). Lack of rebirth and holiness certainly are (John 3:3; Heb. 12:14). Even the godly poor will “amen” this when they call themselves “rich” (in and toward God), and therefore, miracle of miracles (of grace), persistently refuse to be designated as “poor” (Jam. 1:9). This is why certification in evangelism and edification is mandatory for all those who serve “diaconally,” whether in a Leadership capacity, as a result of giftedness, or on the membership level. Regrettably, this certification is virtually absent on all levels.

To up the ante some (Read: considerably) more, “Deed Ministry” must be fully aware, invariably take into account and always remember that any and all (diaconal) service-accomplishments apart from Jesus, whether by or for folks with Jesus on Heaven’s Highway or by and for folks without Jesus on Death Row are fraught with extreme danger. They either are or will sooner or later turn into *extra barriers to the Gospel* with all that this may entail for time or eternity.

Such accomplishments outside “the Church,” and here is the pitfall, are “killers.” The “pride” that invariably accompanies such accomplishments, in whatever form, did, do or will precede a fall. Scripture tells us this. History proves it. God does not give his glory to anyone else (Is. 42:8). As a result he either moves away from the proud (Ps. 138:6) or opposes them (Prov. 3:34; Jam. 4:6), and usually both! This is spine-chilling to recognize in the light (Read: darkness) of the fact that all of mankind is always and everywhere on a perpetual “accomplishment crusade, if not rampage,” whether politically, economically, agriculturally, technologically, educationally, physically, medically, militarily, criminally, etc., etc., etc. Frankly, mankind is both wired that way as the image of God and must proceed that way by virtue of the dominion mandate of God (Gen. 1:26b; Ps. 8:6). But we better pity “the successful.” By definition they “price themselves out of the market” of the need for God, the fellowship with God and the smile of God. Once again, Scripture tells us this and history is there to prove it.

But, and here is the pitfall for the second time, accomplishments apart from Jesus “on the inside” of the Church are no less harmful. Frankly, it is not too farfetched to believe that Diaconal Services within the Church may end up being killers as well (Rev. 3:1b). They will be if they are not explicitly provided or received from Jesus through Jesus and unto Jesus. He informs us that “without him we can do nothing” (John 15:5). Well, independent actions or accomplishments, regardless the number of seemingly luscious leaves (common grace), produce by definition fruitless branches which are headed for an inferno (John 15:6).¹¹³

In short, all this shows how large the danger is that looms for any independent, semi-independent, para-ecclesiastical, or semi-ecclesiastical “Diaconal” Service organization or provider! To put it bluntly once more, any “improvement” apart from the Gospel, of

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Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Excellency of a Gracious Spirit* (Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995), 59, provides us with a graphic and telling analogy, “If men’s bodies were deformed, and ran with loathsome issues and putrefied sores, how dejected would they be in their own thought. But certainly spirit defilement is infinitely worse ... If they had such a distemper of the body that their excrements came from them when they know not of it, this would be accounted a grievous evil. But their spirits are so corrupt that much filth comes from them, and they know not of it.” The author’s message is crystal clear: the condition and needs of the body are dwarfed by the condition and needs of the soul.

whatever sort, in whatever setting and for whomever, is by definition a barrier against the Gospel. History proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that any general “material” advance goes hand in hand with a general “spiritual” decline. In fact, any such “improvement” without Jesus is by definition “wicked” and therefore an offense to Jesus. Once again, history demonstrates that any “worldly” progress of that sort spells Kingdom regress. Therefore a Diaconal Service must at the least instruct its “providers” to verbalize the call to repentance, if on occasion their good “deed” must precede “the Word.” Then, it should not even send them into the field unless they are certified in Evangelism and seek to make disciples before they proceed with their “deed” ministry. Preferably, however, they must follow the Evangelist or the folks with evangelistic gifts to show the world that the Church’s “money” is prepared to follow the Church’s “mouth.”

The following two items, a positive telling incident, and an equally positive model that ended up as a failure due to ecclesiastical short falls, are now introduced to show how to prevent or cure the ever lurking pitfall!

First, then, a positive telling incident! A local Church in an urban setting offered a service program that provided job-training for poor and unemployed folks and sought to secure jobs for its “graduates.” When an African-American applicant sought to enter the program, the Matron-in-Charge started the personal interview as follows. “I know you want a job. I know you want to be trained for it. And we are glad to have you on board. But first things first! You need to know Jesus. Without him everything else is inconsequential.” In other words, “Get off ‘Death Row!’ This is the first order of business,” in fact, “the only thing needful” (Lk. 10:42). Frankly, we should add, “Now we are talking!” Suffice it to say that the “applicant” is now a fiery follower of Christ and insists that every type of service must be embedded in the Gospel, and whenever, wherever or however possible, should always start with a Gospel presentation to whatever extent! As such she could be a veritable “poster-child” for a Church’s Diaconal ministry. This approach to and manner of ministry, of course, should not really come as a surprise, because, once again, it was the very message of Jesus, when a paralytic was lowered by his friends for physical healing through the roof of a residence, of all things, “My son, your sins are forgiven” (Mk. 2:1-12). First things first! “He forgives all our iniquity and heals all our diseases,” in that order (See also Mt. 4:23 for the same order)!

Second, a positive model is in evidence in the ministry of Thomas Chalmers. It reflects, if not underscores the Jesus’ pattern. In fact, in his ministry he shines twice, and brilliantly so. To start with, his evangelistic concerns outstripped his social interests by a country mile. He wrote on January 30, 1819 that “he counted the salvation of a single soul of more value than the deliverance of a whole empire from pauperism.”

To be sure, his involvement with the poor was awesome. His practical dealings with the poor was equally awesome, if not more so. To be sure, the guidelines he went by, and which he promoted tirelessly tell a story. “Don’t make it a custom to give the poor fish to eat. This is bound to produce rice-Christians, invariably weaken them, and undermine their resolve to take responsibility for their circumstances. Rather give them a fishing pole in order to catch the needed fish to eat. Then they can take on the responsibility for their own food. By all means, supply them with all the bootstraps they need, and even with the necessary boots for that matter. Capitalize them with knowledge, skills, funds, etc., but insist that they take the initiative to pull their own weight and become self-governing, self-reliant and self-sufficient.” But this is only a part of the story. He invariably undergirded this with the

Gospel as starting point and with the Word as guide. In his heart of hearts evangelism (“making disciples”) and teaching them to observe God’s commandments (“training disciples”) did come in first and second.

Admittedly the question has been raised whether his practice always matched his basic commitment. This is not too surprising. He lived in a time period where the continuance of the Office of Evangelist was queried, if not denied and opposed by the very icons of the Reformation. This broke off the official evangelistic spear point of the Church, which had a negative impact upon John and Jane Q. Christian and eventually relegated evangelistic fervor to the back burner. No Live-models to Imitate? No Imitation! A Dying Evangelistic Culture? Death in the Pot (1 Cor. 10:32-11:1; 1 Thess. 1:5-7)! All this must undoubtedly have hampered Chalmers severely in instituting an Evangelistic Program in which to “embed” his social outreach. Elders were fully involved. So were Deacons. But no ordained Evangelists! More about this below!

Nevertheless, whatever the answer to the present question may be, there is no reason to believe that he ever deviated from his fully biblical “theory.”¹¹⁴ This has implications for all who wish to follow in his footsteps. They must “embed” their diaconal services in the Evangelistic and Edifying Enterprise of the Church, by working hand in hand with Evangelists as well as Pastor-Teachers/Exhorters as their point-men, by certifying their “personnel” in evangelism under the marching order of “first things first,” and by insisting that each display of God’s goodness on their part be accompanied by the verbalization of the summons to repentance for the sake of the recipients as well as for the glory of God.

It is no wonder that Chalmers as well as the Missionary Societies of his day (1) red-flagged the notion that “education was the grand engine for ameliorating the condition of mankind,” (2) spoke out against a drift toward “a secular intelligence,” and (3) were convinced that “unless a blessing, to be evoked only by prayer, shall descend ‘from the sanctuary above’ upon the (educational) enterprise, all the labor bestowed upon it will prove to be a vain and empty parade.” The best possible purpose of “education” is to serve as an “apologetic for the Gospel” that produces a setting, creates an atmosphere, prepares the mind, softens the attitude and opens the heart toward its presentation, especially when it is packaged, as it should, in a steady barrage of verbalizations of the silent, but eloquent, divine summons to repentance embodied in every instance of his “goodness.” If the educational enterprise is the vehicle that opens the heart, it is naturally an awesome plus. If it is not successful in doing so, it is basically a failure, if not a menace, and doubly so if it produces accomplishments that turn out to be extra barriers to the Gospel.

Chalmers’ emphasis upon the Christianization of society rather than its “civilization,” and his radical distinction between a general and all too human type of morality and Gospel holiness speak a similar, if not identical language. Whatever is not sanitized by the Gospel is basically worldly, poisonous and demonic, the product of a pipeline that originates in hell itself, if James is any indication (Jam. 3:6, 8, 15). Of course, this equally

See Timothy Keller, *Ministries of Mercy*, 88, who records that in Chalmers’ outreach ministry diaconal services always went hand-in-hand with pastor-teacher ministries, which were joined by lay-evangelists wherever possible. In fact, “a ministry team consisted (in that order) of an elder, deacon, a Sunday school teacher, and often a lay ‘evangelist.’” “The Gospel was shared and children enrolled in a church school as diaconal aid was offered.” This was described by Chalmers as his “moral machinery.” He mandated the deacons to keep the elders informed about the economic conditions in their specific field of labor, including specifications about unemployment figures, lack of educational opportunities, and widely prevailing needs. But he clearly refused to confront “poverty,” without tackling “the moral and spiritual roots of poverty.”

applies to the educator, the enterprise of education, the educated as well as the end result of the education process!

Today Chalmers would undoubtedly express the same sentiment regarding both the notion and the practice of putting the eggs in the basket of social involvement to sanitize or even to improve the condition of mankind. “The social salvation of the nation” and “the religious salvation of its citizens” do and must go hand in hand, with the latter foundational for the former. But both are a matter of “salvation” as the sanitizing answer to both the “personal depravity” of men and the “structural depravity” of mankind. In that context Christian Education would be the instrument, first “to make disciples” and subsequently “to teach them to observe whatever God commands,” a. o., by instilling in them (personal) godly Christian principles, such as self-reliance, etc., etc. But this is not all. When such Christian Education is successful the sponsoring Christian Schools would indirectly serve to remove the (structural) “distance” between the social and economic “haves” and “have-nots,” between the management class and the working class, etc., etc. In short, the leveling influence of the Gospel with its message of “The death of the Just for the unjust,” which vitiates both class and caste, would “renovate the world.” No other instrument could even hope to accomplish “the spiritual, moral, social and economic transformation of the human species.”¹¹⁵

Furthermore, Chalmers’ vision, blueprint as well as strategy were ecclesiastical to the core. In order for society to be sanitized the Church must live up to its “juxta-position between the Gospel and every human creature.” As society’s focal point it must proliferate programmatically, and have a tangible presence among all its strata, inclusive of the working class poor. It must live up to its mandate as “the school of immortality.” Its teachings must function as “the preparatives for death.” It must aim at conversions. Its ministry must encompass all of the population of its parish territory regardless of rank or status. And its upper class membership must cooperate in taking steps to erase the social and economic barriers and so to establish a joint participation in fellowship and worship. In order to accomplish this, the Church moved into society in an organized fashion by having teams take charge of “well-defined and manageable units of territory” (“the locality principle”), teams that are spearheaded by elders, consist of Sunday school teachers, deacons as well as parishioners, intent to make personal contact to foster “The Common Christian Good” that covers the waterfront of life. Furthermore, to Christianize these “units” lay-evangelists joined the teams “aggressively” to reach out to folks individually, pastor-teachers participated “attractively” through inviting impromptu evangelistic addresses, and Day Schools were started wherever possible in order to inculcate evangelical doctrines. In short, the Church was called upon to be constantly on the march in its totality, to permeate the totality of life with the Gospel, and to remove any and all obstacles to its universal prevalence and success.

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See for this John Roxborough, *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Missions* (Edinburgh: Paternoster Press, 1999), 34, 61, 124-126, 182-183, 223-225; see also from the same author, “The Legacy of Thomas Chalmers,” in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (October 1999), Vol. 23, Issue 4, 173-176. It has been argued with a good deal of cogency that Chalmers was not really successful in the implementation of his vision in the Edinburgh parish that he served in his day, even if the principles he promulgated and sought to go by were of lasting historical influence around the world. I venture to say that any scenario in which “The Office of Evangelist” is conspicuous in its absence is certain to suffer the same kind of fate! When the Office of Evangelist is not cultivated, the handwriting of inevitable failure is on the wall, and a fiasco of any all ministerial undertakings is predictable with 100% certainty! *When will the Church wake up to this frightening reality?*

History informs us that the execution of Chalmers' "Game Plan" was far from impeccable, and was ultimately "derailed." This was partly due to the recognized and admitted fact that the Church is frequently a "ponderous machine, slow to move," hoping and praying that once on its way it "would gather the necessary momentum." However, this precisely points at the core of the problem. The most glorious principle, the most excellent administrative program, and the most judicious tactics are bound to be unproductive unless everyone is fully on board and fully trained. In this case, the total Culture had to be in the total Church to make a self-sustaining and self-replicating go of it. When all three Church Offices are not fully integrated in the hot pursuit of a joint-objective, which calls for peak performance of each of its three Ministries, and has not trained all of the Church Membership by biblical mandate (Eph. 4:12, 15-16) to be fully dedicated and hands-on involved in these Ministries, any campaign will eventually peter out. Too many vacancies in the leadership and too much reluctance or too many AWOL folks in the ranks seal the doom of any undertaking before it leaves the drawing board!

Chalmers faced a partly organized Church. Without the authoritative Office of Evangelist, a second-tier, and by definition truncated lay-evangelism, however valuable, is simply not going to do it in the long run. He also faced a partly non-functioning Church. We can be certain that it was not marked by Revival spontaneity and an ongoing Revival program to teach, train and certify all church members in evangelism, speaking and serving. In his ministry the culture was clearly embodied in the man, but not in the Church as a whole. This was his undoing! Better yet, this was the Church's undoing! So what could not be beat in biblical principle fell eventually on its face in its practical implementation.¹¹⁶

In sum, the visionary thrust of Chalmers' "Game Plan" can only receive our wholehearted admiration and our unqualified endorsement. His Ministry resembled a necessary and promising "Bridgehead." But without a properly organized and functioning Church pouring into and through this "Bridgehead" into Enemy territory like an Army committed and trained to win wars, it was bound to be abortive. In more explicit military terms, D-days will never usher in V-days unless Air Force, Navy and Army display a unified preparation, a unified front, a unified attack, and a unified advance, fed and led by a unified command. Frankly, there may be two other reasons for Chalmers' "Game Plan" to fizzle out.

First, D-days demand from any Army that enters into a battle of life and death to be eager to pay the price of sacrifice. Only a Revival Church is eager to put all its money where its mouth is. From that perspective the Church of Chalmers' days most likely had to start from scratch. To be sure, part of it entered into battle. But the bulk of it failed to enter the field on its way to win the war regardless the cost. Today's Church can hardly boast to be in a better shape.

¹¹⁶ Chalmers' commitment to biblical principles is also reflected in the area of World Missions. In the beginning of his Ministry Chalmers either started or supported Missionary Societies that did the bulk of Foreign Missions. But eventually he was convinced that in Missions the *Church itself* does and should enter into the world. When the Church flexed its missionary muscle, as it was supposed to do, the Missionary Societies began to take the back seat. In short, to whatever extent he developed and implemented this, Chalmers essentially fought for a fully "encultured" Church in its threefold Ministry to take on the world and to Christianize it from top to bottom. Diaconal services, whenever necessary, simply provide all the necessary logistics to accomplish this Grand Divine Design laid down in Christ's Double Command.

The second reason may have something to do with the lack of the biblical purpose for diaconal ministries. This, then, is covered in the conclusion of this section.

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Regarding the purpose of Diaconal Services, it is the virtual consensus of all Handbooks on this subject is that the grand objective is for the recipients to end up self-governing and self-sustaining. This, however, has been questioned. Especially when the needy are members of the Body of Christ, Diaconal Ministry may never view or treat them as second-rate citizens. No, they are equal participants in that Body and therefore “entitled” to be full participants of its physical as well as spiritual wellbeing. In short, as members of the Church they must be enabled to enjoy the Shalom of the Church. This is undoubtedly a biblical step up. But it is not the biblical summit. Let’s see what this summit looks like.

Handbooks also insist that the caring, sharing and mercy ministry of the Church has its boundaries. Legitimate needs are eligible for service. But illegitimate wants or demands are not. Well, since Deacons are the quartermasters of the Church, and their services provide the logistics for its Leadership as well as its Membership to climb the Mt. Everest of souls and the Mt. Everest of holiness, they must make this crystal clear to the recipients of their Ministry. Needy Church members ought to be told that they receive assistance not only to get them on their self-sustaining feet and to enjoy the Shalom of the Church, but also to join the Church Leaders in their pursuit of Kingdom Evangelism, Kingdom Holiness and Kingdom Service. When they are members of a fully organized and functioning Church, this should pose no problems. Believing Outsiders should be told the same, whether they already have their Church membership elsewhere or are searching for a Church fellowship. Failure or refusal to comply should eventually terminate the Diaconal Ministry. The Service of unbelieving Outsiders is more complicated. While flexibility is called for, depending upon the circumstances, they should receive a joint Ministry, by one individual who is certified in both Evangelism and Service, by two gifted individuals, one in Evangelism and one in Service, or by an Evangelist and a Deacon. At times it may be mandatory that Deed Ministry precedes Gospel Ministry. But sooner or later the Gospel Ministry must take precedence. Eventually the threefold objective of Diaconal Service should be conveyed as well. To get folks on their feet, to have them bask in the *Shalom* of the Church, and to have them join it in its threefold Kingdom Ministry. Once again, failure or refusal to embrace it should lead to the termination of Diaconal Ministry.

All this was, is and should be the basic hallmark of a Ministry that follows in the footsteps of Thomas Chalmers. This also should make it crystal clear that any organization which makes service projects its specialty, but fail (or refuse) to be part of a jointly pursued threefold Biblical Ministry, and to top it off, also decide to go the independent non-ecclesiastical route can hardly claim Chalmers as their Patron-saint! Such organization is deeply flawed. They may have felt compelled to go that route due to an utterly regrettable ecclesiastical anemia. They may have an admirable reputation. But there is an ever present danger. Independent service projects have a tendency to be non-evangelistic, regardless the possible claim of a wider evangelistic setting, all protestations to the contrary. This means that *de facto* they aim at accomplishments apart from Jesus. This turns them into barriers to the Gospel. There is deadly irony in all this. Every non-evangelistic projects is essentially and functionally an anti-evangelistic project. All in all, independent agencies fail to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Church in the training of

its total Membership, seeking to certify all of them in spreading the Kingdom Gospel, speaking the Kingdom Word and rendering Kingdom Service so that the whole Church marches into the world as an organized army in order to win the war! They function as elitists who may win skirmishes and even occasional battles, but they let the Church at large languish. Unless all hands are on the ecclesial deck as trainers or trainees in boot camps in order to enter into the trench warfare that is required for victory, the Church's doom is essentially sealed. Church History proves this. This turns their well-documented proliferation a spine-chilling fact. It kept pace, or even went hand in hand with the increasing marginalization of the Church.

Let me conclude this Summary with the following. Earlier on I mentioned how a godly Matron in a Christian Community Development organization would invariably start sharing the Gospel with anyone who would darken her door, requesting assistance of whatever kind. I have come to the conclusion that this is a rarity. In one instance I ran into a young person in a Third-World country who was trained in a similar organization. He - had clearly accumulated a number of very useful skills. But when I asked him whether he (and his fellow trainees) had ever been certified in Evangelism and put this to work, he answered in the negative. In a second instance I inquired from a person who was in charge of such organization in the US whether he had ever shared the Gospel with the clients who knocked on his door for help. His answer was in the negative as well. In both instances I got the strong impression that the physical well-being trumped the spiritual one. At any rate, it was quite clear that neither individual heard the cries of hell-bound sinners before they arrived there and did not take all humanly possible steps to prevent this.

Frankly, this seems par for the course in today's Church. The latter is undoubtedly comprised of some good, if not great people. So any kind of judgmental attitude is alien to me. But we should all agree that the Church as a whole is too far removed from intentional Kingdom Evangelism, and even farther from a Culture that pursues such Evangelism spontaneously. So we simply must plead with God to return us to the height of Scripture where we should have been in the first place (Rev. 2:5). It is striking to read that our Lord Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to rescue him from death (that is, to give him victory over death on our behalf), and he was heard because he feared God ... and (so) became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Hebr. 5:7, 9). Would it be too much to conclude that we should follow in the footsteps of our Savior, equally praying and making supplications with loud cries and tears, for God to grace us with an Ecclesiastical Culture of Spontaneous Kingdom Evangelism and so pave the way for the Salvation of others? Would it be too bold to conclude that the level and quality of the fear of God determines the level and quality of the prayers, the supplications, the cries and the tears? To match our Savior in all this would be to send our "knee-mail" to God from the very Holy Spirit Revival heights.

To arrive there as a Church calls for a renewal of my recommendation to divide it up in small accountability groups of five to meet at least once a week for a set time, such as, an hour, an hour and a half, or two hours to storm the gates of heaven exclusively focusing on the substance of Christ's Double Command until a Holy Spirit Revival Culture is in evidence, which all three Ecclesiastical Ministries direly need in order to flourish. This would be a Spontaneity Culture that will spawn mighty conversions through a Church-wide Gospel Ministry, spear-headed by Evangelists, in obedience to Christ's Command "to make disciples of all nations," generate mighty holiness through a Church-wide Word

Ministry, fronted by Pastor-Teachers, in obedience to Christ's Command "to teach them to observe whatever God enjoins," and create mighty logistics through a Church-wide Service Ministry, led by Deacons, that would facilitate the obedience to Christ's Double Command to the max. This would also be a *Perichoresis* Culture which would be marked by a unity in diversity in which the Selective Brilliances of Each of the Three Ministries would form one powerful Beam of Light in order to function jointly as the three facets of the indivisible Light of the World that shines to the Glory of God (Mt. 5:14-16).

Intermezzo II

Some Comments on a Small but Rich Booklet, Entitled, “Parents’ Groans over their Ungodly Children,” Published Well Over Three Centuries Ago.

As the title of a 48-page booklet by Edward Lawrence (1623-1695) indicates, “Parents’ Groans over their Ungodly Children,” there is “nothing new under the sun!” Parents have been burdened about the unregenerate state of their children or grandchildren since “times immemorial.” In the Old Covenant, Eli, Samuel, and David come immediately to mind. In the New Covenant time period history simply repeats itself. There does not seem to be any Church where there is no grief and where there are no tears over lost children of believing parents! Hence my decision to write this small essay, piggybacking on the above mentioned booklet.

My Comments have a twofold goal. To help explain what may have been responsible to produce “parental groans,” and subsequently to suggest ways and means to prevent or cure them. These “Comments” are rooted in a pastoral heart with deep sympathy for those who suffer groans in the present. I was and am quite acquainted with them as well. But they are prompted by an even deeper concern for ungodly children who face worse groans in eternity.¹¹⁷ May the Lord have mercy on them! But there is also another side to these comments. As a rule thumb radical problems require radical solutions. My comments reflect this. So, it is my heartfelt prayer that they will be received by open, if not grateful hearts and minds. After all, eternity is at stake!

For a starter, all parents everywhere are encouraged to get a hold of Lawrence’s booklet, hopefully to help prevent spiritual calamity in their families or to seek and find ways to cure it by the grace of God. In my comments on this excellent booklet I will not repeat the various headings under which the author addresses parents. Neither do I summarize the content of each section. All parents can (and should) request or purchase the booklet from *Chapel Library* (See chapel@mountzion.org, www.mountzion.org, or phone 850.438.6666). To postpone this may well be to court disaster, even if in God’s providence it never strikes. In short, this booklet is a “must” for everybody, even for future parents!

However, there are two sections under *IV. Preventing This Calamity*, namely *A. Means to Prevent This Calamity* and *B. Directions to Prevent This Calamity*, which could stand some scrutiny and *should* receive some extra attention! Under *A. Means to Prevent this Calamity* the writer warns parents to “take in your children’s corrupt nature.” This nature stamps them as “young atheists, infidels, blasphemers, haters of God, liars, thieves,” which as such places them “under the wrath of the infinite God,” liable as they are to put all these vices on open display. But it also emphasizes that by virtue of all this parents “have much, much more than their work cut out for them,” and therefore better be fully dedicated diligently, a. o, “to instruct their children in the Word of God and especially in the Gospel” and in the process to be “mighty in prayer.” Of course, opposing, questioning, minimizing or ignoring the stark darkness and utter seriousness of their children’s condition, which is done

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This is also emphasized by Gilbert, *What is the Gospel*, 55-56. In the light of the crystal clear teaching of Jesus it fills him and must fill us with the utmost of “incredulous” sorrow that the notion of “the eternal, conscious torment of unquenchable fire” (Mk. 9:43, 48; see also Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10) for “unrepentant, unbelieving sinners” is intentionally toned down, simply ignored or openly rejected.

routinely, under whatever mistaken guise, will negatively impact the need, the extent, the earnestness and the fervor of the much needed instruction and prayer, with all that this entails!

Incidentally, any negative response to the biblical truth about the status of children as sketched above can be due to aberrant doctrinal considerations. One may hold to the notions of baptismal regeneration, presumptive regeneration or even judgment-of-charity regeneration. I grew up under the latter. In each case children of believers are already thought *and told* to be out of the danger zone! The need for regeneration is by definition out of the picture, if not rejected, always in principle and usually in practice. As a result even the very idea of calling them “young atheists,” etc. would be repulsive. But such negative response also may be due to indifference. The values of the world have taken over. What really counts is to prepare children for a stable, if not prosperous future through education, marketability, jobs, etc., etc. The majority of the eggs, if not all of them, enter in this basket. This lifestyle is described by the Psalmist. Rather than lauding it, he calls it, believe it or not, “wicked.” In fact, he wishes to be “saved” (!) from it (Ps. 17:13-14)!

But be all this as it may, or even in the light of all this, both sections, *IV, A* and *IV, B*, do not go deep (radical) enough or far (total) enough. Hence my Comments! The Gospel (*IV, A*) is “restricted” to the justification of sinners “through the sacrifice and obedience of Christ,” and parents (*IV, B*) are “merely” encouraged to “win the heart of their children” and to “identify their besetting sins.” Regrettably, both are “radically” as well as “totally” insufficient. This is not a judgmental statement. It simply wishes to convey that it presents a “cure” that does not drastically and fully match the “crime.” Let me explain this by making some general observations and then return to our otherwise excellent booklet.

Scripture makes no bones about it that everyone is born in sin and as such under the wrath of God. Noah’s Flood demonstrated this. It justly drowned all of mankind, including children, whether born or still in the womb, for a very good (read: bad) reason. In fact, it did so for *three* bad reasons of sin. Mankind had a heart-problem. It was incurably wicked. It also had a past-problem. It was incurably violent. It, finally, had a life-problem. All its imaginations were incurably evil all the time (Gen. 6:5, 11-13). It is this *triad* to which Scripture testifies again and again from beginning to end. The human race is corrupt from top to bottom. The heart of man is rebellious. In the graphic terminology of Scripture, it resembles a “cobra” (Ps. 58:4). The past of man is wicked. It graphically resembles “sewage” (Phil. 3:8). The life of man is destructive. It graphically resembles “poison” (Rom. 3:13; Jam. 3:8). This, then, according to the explicit Word of God, is what both the Church and its parents face in their children, grim as this may seem. To be sure parents and their children possess God’s promises. But these are not given to deny the existence of these three problems, but rather to remove and remedy them! To misconstrue this is not only to miss the miserable condition of all children, but also the amazing nature of the grace of God!

Let me hasten to add that common graces may temper all three problems. But these graces cannot hide them, let alone, cure them, and should never be quoted as such to veil them from sight, recognition and acknowledgment. This is all too often, if not near-universally done, totally overlooking or ignoring that all such graces are designed to lead to repentance. In fact, they are eloquent, be it silent summonses to that end (Rom. 2:4). Since these graces are literally innumerable, the summonses are equally innumerable. It is the prerogative as well as duty of the Church to “verbalize” them as such in their pursuit of

the Grand Command of making and training disciples of all nations” (Mt. 29:19-20), and so to use them as the much needed powerful tools that they are both in the ministry of evangelism (Mt. 28:19) and in the ministry of edification (Mt. 28:20). This also applies to parents (!) in the case of their children. Surely common graces may be “enjoyed” to the full. After all, they are gifts of God’s kindness. But if this all, they easily turn into “sleeping pills.” The explicit need for (daily) repentance takes the back seat. And sooner or later they will strangle the Church and all its members. What God means to be “spurs” that exhort us to return to him in repentance, end up as “pillows” that give us enough comfort and pleasure to stay away from him.

At any rate, my research may not be sufficiently extensive. But from my own experience and upon my many inquiries I have never found any Church that teaches parents to convey to their children from their earliest infancy that there is a Savior who can and must rescue them from their (still) little cobra hearts, their (still) small sewage pasts, and their (still) tiny poisonous lives, which cannot but become larger, bigger and more enormous day by day (Rom. 6:19a). Neither have I either met or known any parents who made all this crystal clear to their children *in the graphic terminology of Scripture* in order to impress their dangerous condition as well as the grace of God upon them! To repeat, my frequent questioning of parents to this effect invariably netted a negative response, whether their children were believers or not.

The bottom line is this. From the moment of their birth children should be *graphically* told, until they first memorize it, then grasp it, and eventually by the grace of God respond to it, that they have three problems and stand in need of three solutions. But this “message” must be presented properly. It must be conveyed in the form of “*Gospel!*” In a recent instance we were told by a 40-year old woman that she turned her back to the faith. For 18 years she was told how bad she was until she could not take it any longer. Her parents were undoubtedly well-meaning. But what can one expect from cobra hearts that are told of their predicament and its “outflow” of sewage and poison? Of course, they will fight back! That the “bad news” is real is not the issue. But the often repeated mantra, “always the bad news first, and then the good news” is unacceptable. What is the reason for this approach? Well, we are told that “The good simply cannot be grasped apart from the “bad. So the latter must have the priority.” Of course, by itself and on its own this reason is well-taken. But the mantra is in grave error. The pivotal truth should always be in the forefront of parents as well as of the Church that the bad news is never sufficient properly and fully to break hearts. This is the prerogative of the Gospel, that is, of the good news only. So this must have the primacy, even if the bad news is radically and totally intertwined with it, comes to full expression in it, and always must be conveyed fully with a view to conviction. As everyone will agree, the “good news” is promised by the Father, produced by the Son, and transported (delivered) by the Spirit. Well, here then is our instruction model!

(1) We inform our children that God the Father holds out the following “good-news” promise (I summarize), “I will take the heart of stone out of you and give you a heart of flesh; I will wash you of all your filth and your idolatry; and I will put the Holy Spirit within you and make you godly” (Ezek. 36:25-27). When this is properly conveyed as such in graphic terms (cobra, sewage, poison) in its two dimensions, the (explicit) threefold good and the (implicit) threefold bad, children do and should come face to face with a loving Heavenly Father. If the bad news of sin and its inevitable hellish, eternal, punishment is the main focus, they likely will always (?) remember overbearing and possibly threatening

human parents. Of course, when confronted with this, such parents are likely to deny any shortfall and may object that they *did* preach the Gospel. In my experience this reluctance to concede an error is all too common. But for one, a child's perception is just as damaging as the reality. Further, parents should have the proper humility to acknowledge this, and then ask themselves, not just whether, but what they (may have) contributed to this perception. After all, there is no perfect parenting. There never has been and there never will be!

However, there is more. The love of the Triune God can be underscored further by conveying the "production" of God the Son and the "delivery" of God the Holy Spirit.

(2) We inform our children that the Son kills the cobra heart (Rom. 6:6), washes the sewage (Rom. 3:25), and eliminates the poison (Heb. 10:10) in and through his crucifixion. And, further, that he replaces all three with his own heart (1 Pet. 1:3), his own righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) and his own holiness (1 Cor. 1:30) in and through his resurrection.

(3) We subsequently inform our children that the Spirit implants Jesus' heart (John 3:5), seals Jesus' righteousness (Eph. 1:13-14), and implements Jesus' holiness (Rom. 15:16).

(4) Then we conclude by informing them that only by calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21) in repentance unto the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:39) can they escape drowning in their threefold sinfulness.

Of course, other elements may, and should in due time, be mentioned as well. But here is the bone structure of the full Gospel. It is promised by the Father (See also Jer. 31:31ff). It is personified in and by Christ (See also Is. 49:8). And it is personalized in and by the Holy Spirit (See also Is. 59:21). But it is not only Trinitarian in its origination and its implementation. It is also Triadic in its scope and objective. It aims at regeneration, justification and sanctification. [Upon request I am happy to send anyone a ten-page booklet that spells all this out in greater detail (krabbendam@covenant.edu)].

At this time two words of caution are in place. The second one may a word of extreme caution.

First, one cannot pass on what one does not possess. This means that this threefold message must be flesh and blood, that is, an authentic, living and lived reality for the Church in general and in this setting especially for the parents. Otherwise they can hardly expect for it to turn into a reality in their children! So the lack of reality both in the Church and in parents is extremely serious! It may require their repentance.

Second, it requires boldness for both Church and parents to use the graphic biblical terms of "cobra," "sewage," and "poison," and not to tone these down in the face of possible skepticism, criticism or hostility. It is easy to use a general terminology that does not ruffle any feathers and allows folks to rock on to their destruction. A message that does not aim to convict sinners is not the Gospel, let alone the full Gospel. It lulls to sleep. It may produce an "ideology," but no "reality!" Further, it requires equal boldness explicitly and without hesitation to move beyond what is regrettably a truncated tradition (See below), and to proclaim the total Christ as the donor of new hearts, the dispenser of a new righteousness and a provider of a new holiness.

At any rate, it must now be acknowledged that Lawrence's otherwise admirable booklet has a double vacuum. The glorious gift of a heart transplant in regeneration to offset the cobra heart is not mentioned. This means that "the full Gospel" is not presented.

Further, the origination of the new heart in Christ (See also 1 Pet. 1:3) is not mentioned either. This compromises the “total Christ.” In short, all this goes to say that it is not sufficient merely to win the heart of the children. This is not deep (“radical”) enough. It must be replaced, and it takes the full Gospel to do so! Neither is it sufficient merely to warn against besetting sins. This does not go far enough. What is needed is a new heart, a new righteousness and a new holiness, and it takes the total Christ to accomplish this.

Regrettably, Lawrence double vacuum is not incidental. He is a child of his time. It appears that both “The Full Gospel” and “The Total Christ” are rarities in Church History. Let me seek to explain this further in all humility, not only for the sake of the many present-day “parental groans about their ungodly children,” but also for the possible prevention or cure of any such future “groans!”

When Luther calls justification by faith alone through Christ alone the heart of the Gospel (*simplex gratia*), he truncates the Gospel, whether consciously or not, by relativizing the equally burning necessity of regeneration and sanctification. However understandable in the heat of battle with Roman Catholicism Luther’s designation is not acceptable. If we must talk about the heart of the Gospel, it should be clear that it has three chambers, and not just one. He also fails to show how regeneration and sanctification are produced by and flow forth from Christ. Calvin partly improves on all this by bringing sanctification into the picture as a partner of justification (*duplex gratia*). But he does not seem to make it a full partner. Justification remains the main hinge! Also, in his *Institutes* biblical regeneration does not enter into this picture at all. He identifies it as progressive sanctification.

Of course, no one today is able even to touch the shoelaces of these two Kingdom “giants,” let alone to tie them. But the best of man is always and only man at best,” as both Moses and Peter can testify. Moses failed to sanctify God in the desert, and paid a steep price. He was not allowed to enter Canaan (Num. 20:10-13; Deut. 3:26-27). Peter was called a “Satan” by Jesus (Mt. 16:21-23), and a deviator from the truth of the Gospel by Paul (Gal. 2:11-14). From both examples we can expect that sooner or later we must move beyond every human being, and not become upset if we are told that there is a vacuum in our words or actions. As Paul indicates, no human ever has “arrived” this side of glory (Phil. 3:12-13). It is a known fact that Lutheranism is virtually marginalized in its country of origin. So is Calvinism. The question may well be asked whether this was not predictable since both compromise the full Gospel and the total Christ. This is not an ethereal or presumptive question.

To make this clear, allow me to provide one sample of an ongoing tragedy in the Reformed tradition. When in the context of the Great Awakening Frelinghuysen in the Dutch Reformed Church and Whitefield in the Presbyterian Setting emphasized the utter need for regeneration as the watershed for a radical and total new life, in fact, as the starting point of any and all life, including justification and sanctification, they faced stiff opposition. The dire need for the cobra heart to be replaced by the heart of Jesus so as to produce repentance and faith, forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:39) was a near alien concept, and the emphasis upon it was met with more than suspicion. It was not an integral part of “The Tradition.” At times even its venerable creeds give it deficient attention, scant attention or less than necessary attention.¹¹⁸ In my own long experience as

The Belgic Confession of Faith (Article 24) equates “regeneration” with “progressive sanctification,” in the footsteps of Calvin’s *Institutes*. The Heidelberg Catechism (Lord’s Day 3, Q&A 8) opts for one unexplained reference, and The Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 10) tucks it away under

an octogenarian in both a Dutch Reformed and an American Presbyterian setting I encountered the same tragic suspicion, if not hostility. The bottom line is simple. Without a radical transformation, that is, without the heart of Jesus, a general Reformed systematic ideology may linger for a time. But if it is not a living reality, an eventual demise is inevitable. After all, just like there is no life without the first birth, the physical birth, there is no “life” whatsoever, whensoever and howsoever without the second birth, the spiritual birth, all seeming evidence or protestations for that matter, to the contrary!

Of course, all this is mentioned for a definite purpose. Parents who *exclusively* walk in the footsteps of Luther and Calvin will by definition fall short in conveying the Full Gospel and the Total Christ to their children. As I stated earlier, I have never met a Church or a parent who did not fail in both regards. This may well be a major reason, if not *the* major reason why children leave the biblical orbit.

Frankly, this is hardly a coincidence since the full Gospel and the total Christ are missing in most, if not all Systematic Theologies that determine the teaching of the Church and its members. They gratefully and at length cover the substitutionary atonement as the glorious antidote of the second problem, the sewage past. But they routinely fail to lay the connection between the work of Christ on the one hand and both regeneration and sanctification on the other, as outlined above. In these regards they leave the Church as well as parents at least in a partial fog. Of course, God may and often, if not usually (always?), does bless in spite of fog-conditions in one way or another. But this does not excuse them. In fact, quite the contrary!

All this brings me to the conclusion of my Comments. It stands to reason that the departure of children from the faith is and must be a cause for great grief to the Church as well as to the parents. But this naturally raises the question whether something can be done about it and what it should be. Candidly, to me there is only one twofold answer possible. Let the Church and the parents in all humility confess their failure before God in terms of presenting the full Gospel and the total Christ. This is a tall order, and it may meet with resistance. But it is a necessary one! Then let them request a one-time audience with their children and in that same humility ask their forgiveness for their failure both verbally and in writing. The humility may make them sit up and listen, and soften their heart. The writing should supply what was missing in their earlier upbringing. This, once again, may soften, if not break their hearts. Finally, let them determine “from now on” fearlessly to live and proclaim the radical and total Trinitarian and Triadic Gospel. Perchance God may prevent future groans of parents in time as well as the future groans of their children in eternity.

Postscript

“effectual calling.” Typical of the Reformation age is Casper Olevian. The title of a recent volume is revealing, if not telling telling, R. Scott Clark, *Casper Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant: The Double Benefit of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2005). The focus is solely upon the *duplex beneficium* (twofold benefit) of justification and sanctification. Regeneration is mentioned only six times, all virtually in passing. Three times it is equated with renovation in the image of God or moral renewal, and three times in connection with Baptism as “the sacrament “of adoption and regeneration” or as the “washing of regeneration.” But at no time is it identified as “a heart transplant,” which according to Ezekiel 36:26-27 is an essential component of the *triplex beneficium* (threefold benefit) of the New Covenant. Frankly, there is no indication or hint that the author of the present study on Olevian’s Covenant Theology is “bothered” by this omission.

In this he is no different from numerous other scholars who seem perfectly at ease with a biblically curtailed *duplex gratia* or *duplex beneficium* theology.

While I do not wish to belabor my main point that the proclamation of the Full Gospel and the Total Christ is an apparent rarity, I add the following comments in order to be as persuasive as possible. During the last year I have perused many volumes that deal with Evangelism in general and with the Gospel in particular. But none of them spell out the Trinitarian and Triadic nature of the Good News that needs to be proclaimed.

The first sample is a compilation of authors, such as R.C. Sproul, Thabiti Anyabwile, John Piper, etc., in Mark Dever, J. Ligon Duncan III, R. Albert Mohler, Jr, C. J. Mahaney, eds., *The (Unadjusted) Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014).

Dever enumerates the following truths as the earmarks of the unadjusted gospel, the holiness and love of God, the depravity of man, the propitiating atonement of Christ and the response of repentance and faith. He mentions the forgiveness of rebellion, and is even willing to admit that the world as well as the Church is “a pit of vipers” (23). But he stops short of the need for the viper heart to be killed on the cross and the necessity of a heart transplant via the resurrection (17-33, esp. 27; see also Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 40-43, for the same approach). R. C. Sproul, argues that “imputation” (of an alien, that is, Christ’s righteousness) and its correlative, “sola fide,” constitute the gospel. Many folks who think they preach it “don’t even know what it is” (35-47, esp. 43, 46). Mohler warns against eight theological “trajectories,” “all resulting in an adjusted gospel—a false gospel that cannot save” (49-71, esp. 71). Anyabwile holds that the proper engagement with culture is to focus on Christ “from beginning to end” as “our philosophy,” “our practice,” “our perspective,” as basically our “everything” (73-92, esp. 75, 92). Piper states that “the gospel of Christ’s righteousness imputed to us as the basis of our acceptance by God through faith alone,” as taught by both Jesus and Paul, “is universally needed and universally valid in every culture and should be spoken to every person and every people group on the planet” (113-125, esp. 122, 124-125). Duncan shows that the early Church fathers were thoroughly familiar with the propitiating nature of Christ’s ransom in his crucifixion (127-142, esp. 141-142).

There is no doubt that all the contributions to this volume are illuminating and edifying. In fact, some of the fresh light they shed on issues is superb. But there is one twofold problem. When they talk about the unadjusted gospel, they either do not define it (Mohler) or not fully (Dever). Or they restrict it to the doctrine of justification (Sproul, Piper, Duncan). Further, when they extol Christ, they do not present Christ in his fullness (Anyabwile).

My second sample is Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (n.p.: Ichthus Publications, 2014). This is a remarkably convicting volume that needs to be read annually by everyone. It pulsates to action. With regard to the Gospel, he makes mention of “atonement by sacrifice” (9), and the need for “regeneration” (13) as “a change in the whole nature of man” (14). He also mentions “conviction of sin” (15), “conversion,” “faith,” “repentance” (17), and “a change of life in sanctification” (19). With regard to Christ, he preaches “Christ crucified” (60) to “unregenerate hearts” (65). But, while we cannot even touch his shoelaces, it must be said in all humility that he does not present us with a “concise definition” of the Full Gospel either, neither for that matter with a portrayal of the Total Christ. Furthermore, in his Sermon delivered July 18, 1886 on 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21, entitled “The Heart of the Gospel,” he equates this with “Justification.” The Sermon is glorious. But according to the New Covenant the heart of

the gospel has three chambers. So it is more than questionable to be restrictive and bestow this honor on one chamber only.

The bottom line is that the Church is in a crisis condition regarding both. This is openly acknowledged by Gregg Gilbert *What is the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), and by J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014). Gilbert, 17-18, indicates that there is a reigning disorder in the definition of the Gospel, and Stiles, 18, 31ff, argues that there is a dire need for filling the word with the right content. But neither one of the two moves much beyond what we heard from Dever about the Gospel as a message about God, about man, about Christ, and about repentance and faith as the biblical response (Gilbert, 27-35; Stiles, 33-34). The admitted crisis will never go away, unless and until the Trinitarian and Triadic nature of the Gospel is fully embraced, and clearly, graphically, compellingly, and, possibly above all, prayerfully proclaimed! After all, –“salvation belongs to the Lord” (Jonah 2:9)!

Frankly, I never tire of stressing that this is not presented as a “critical, let alone condemning judgment.” Many, if not all of us, owe the men mentioned a veritable debt of gratitude for their unceasing labors. But the fact remains that the best of man is man at best. Therefore the *Ecclesia Reformata* in biblical principle always is and always must be an *Ecclesia Reformanda* in biblical practice. It is not sufficient to pay this and empty “mantra” type of lip service only. Otherwise it will first stumble and then be dismissed by Jesus himself, if his Letters to the Seven Churches as recorded in Revelation 2 and 3 is any indication!

CONCLUSION

The Conclusion can be short. The main thrust of this Paper is to advocate and effect by the grace of God and the empowering fullness of the Spirit an Ecclesiastical Paradigm Shift that leads to a Spontaneous Kingdom-Evangelism Culture, which encompasses the Church's Leadership as well as its Membership, and blossoms under the guidance of the Office of Evangelists as a gift of Christ as the Lord of the Church. The further Hope is that such Culture is fully integrated with similar Cultures in the areas of Kingdom-Speaking under the Leadership of Pastor-Teachers and Kingdom-Service under the Leadership of Deacons. The final Prayer is that the Church will display this unified threefold Culture as the Army of the Triune God in obedient and hot pursuit of the effective implementation of Christ's Double Command, that is, "to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe whatever God commands" as the *only* thing needful (Mt. 28:19-20)! After all, in the Judgment everything will burn up (2 Pet. 3:10, 12), except souls (2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Rev. 7:15-17) and holiness (Rev. 14:13; 19:8).