



THE RESPONSE

TEXAS GOVERNOR RICK PERRY CALLS FOR REVIVAL

Thousands of Christians from diverse denominational backgrounds gathered in Houston's Reliant Stadium on August 6 in a show of solidarity with Governor Rick Perry of Texas, calling for the nation to repent of its sins and turn back to Jesus Christ. The event, called "The Response: A Call to Prayer for a Nation in Crisis," was attended by over 30,000 Christians from some 1,000 churches and Christian ministries, with over 80,000 others joining via live Web broadcast streaming into their homes and churches.

Sponsored by American Family Association (AFA) at the behest of Governor Perry, The Response blended music, prayer, inspirational preaching and calls for renewed faith that would redeem America from the evils that threaten her existence as a free nation under God.

Perry had invited people of all faiths to come to The Response, but it was obvious that only in the name of Jesus was anything going to be presented from the stage. There is no report of anyone from other religions attending.

Although the rally was convened by Governor Perry, he kept mainly in the background, appearing only a few times to deliver short messages of encouragement to the attendees. In his first appearance, punctuated by several moments of loud applause, Perry said:

Our hearts do break for those who suffer—those afflicted by the loss of loved ones, the pain of addiction, the strife that they may find at home, those who have lost jobs, who have lost their homes, people who have lost hope, those who cannot see the light in the midst of all the darkness.

But because we know a loving God, we know the greatest darkness comes just before the morning. We know a loving God, and we know the darkness that He takes care of, and wipes away. We know there is hope for those who trust in Him who fills our hearts with joy and gives us life. This God who knows our imperfections. He didn't leave us to live a life in our sins, but paid the price

for them. He who knew no sin, He gave His life for ransom for me.

This loving and perfect God is also a personal God. He desires not a show of religion, but a deep connection with our innermost being. His agenda is not a political agenda. His agenda is a salvation agenda.

Perry read from Joel 2:12-17, Isaiah, 40:28-31, and Ephesians 3:14-21. He then prayed for America, its government leaders, including the president, and for the military and their families.

Perry invited the governors from all the states to participate, but only Rick Scott of Florida (via video) and Sam Brownback of Kansas made appearances. Both were unabashedly affirmative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Rick Scott appealed to the people to "pray that the leaders of our nation and our states have wisdom in all their decisions. Join me in praying for job opportunities for those who need work, for the economic wellbeing of our nation, and for the safety and security of our communities, and our men and women in uniform."

After one of the many, many musical interludes, Sam Brownback took the stage and quoted from 2 Chronicles 7:12-15 (the recurring theme of the rally), then iterated the Beatitudes from Matthew. Brownback closed with a prayer:

Loving God, forgive us our many sins—for being judgmental, unloving, focused on ourselves, lacking in mercy, hypocritical. By Your grace let us be the salt and light of a loving God amongst our fellow citizens. Let us be a fragrance that is pleasing to You. Help us to be humble of spirit, a good testament of Your nature, a people at peace in a turbulent world. Heal our land by Your mercy and grace. We are sinful and flawed, yet use us anyway for Your glory and purposes that we might all live quiet and peaceful lives.

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TEXAS GOVERNOR RICK PERRY

Media Spotlight is a ministry to the Body of Christ, bringing understanding of the ways in which the world shapes our thinking and lifestyles through the influence of the mass communications media.

God's Word exhorts, "buy the truth and do not sell it" (Prov. 23:23). Therefore we do not sell *Media Spotlight*. Begun in 1977, *Media Spotlight* was the first ministry on a national scale to address the ungodly nature of the secular media—motion pictures, television, toys, games and myriad other things that contribute to Christians living no differently than the rest of the world.

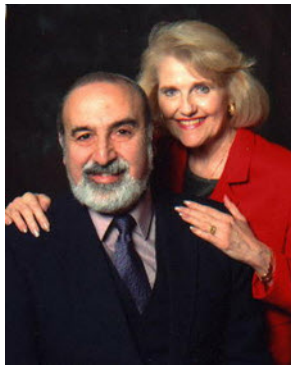
The mass media have impacted the Body of Christ as much as they have society. Many Christians are so dependent upon the media that they aren't aware of how lukewarm they have become. We have many testimonials from readers who tell us that, because of *Media Spotlight*, they have become aware of the effect the media have on their thinking, and are now more selective in their choices.

But the problem of ungodliness is not exclusive to the secular media. Of major concern are the religious media that present messages contrary to God's Word. *Media Spotlight* addresses the impact that religious teachers have upon believers in Christ, whether for good or for evil.

It has escaped the understanding of many Christians that what they believe is more often shaped by the teachings and traditions of religious men and institutions than by Scripture. Most teachers in the institutional churches rely more upon their theological disciplines than on the pure Word of God. Yet the wisdom of the world is no substitute for God's Word, even if offered from the pulpit or in the Christian media.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:24 that in the last days false Christs and false prophets would arise and would show great signs and wonders, "so that, if possible, they will deceive the very elect." He also states in Matthew 24:12 that in the last days the love of many toward Him would grow cold because evil would increase in the world. If we believe Him, then we would be foolish not to guard ourselves against deception. There is little time to waste in the short span of life granted us by God. We must choose today whom we will serve. **MS**

Scripture quotations by *Media Spotlight* writers are from the King James Version of the Bible, rephrased in modern U.S. English unless otherwise stated.



A Personal Note

Dear Friends,

Media Spotlight began in 1977, the same year James Dobson founded Focus on the Family, and Donald Wildmon founded the National Federation for Decency, the predecessor to the current American Family Association. It's really amazing how both of those organizations have garnered followers that number in the millions. Admittedly, our influence pales in comparison. Yet we all began in much the same way, addressing evils in the world that affect Christians.

At first, we were growing pretty rapidly. We had a number of churches all over the United States who requested bundles of *Media Spotlight* for their congregations. Numerous pastors lauded us for our work, and we were receiving requests for radio and television interviews as well as public speaking engagements. But then, something happened. It wasn't long before the pastors told us to stop sending the bundles, and readers started telling us to take them off our mailing list. Each year our outreach dwindled further.

What was it that happened? Well, we started addressing not only how the secular media are deceiving Christians, but how the Christian media and churches are deceiving them. The decline probably started around 1981 when we critiqued the writings of C.S. Lewis, and it continued for a number of years as we further addressed various "untouchables" within Christianity.

Yet the Lord has sustained us for 34 years now, and we are ever grateful for those who continue to read *Media Spotlight* and support us through their prayers and gifts. Sadly, however, we don't have many young readers. Judging by the letters and e-mails we receive, our readership is aging. A number have gone to be with the Lord.

Yet at the same time, our readership is growing among inmates in various prisons. We are blessed to be able to minister to them.

We can't help thinking that had we never addressed the deceptions within the churches and Christian media, but merely criticized the world and promoted political and social action, we might have had a pretty extensive outreach. But then we wouldn't have been faithful to what the Lord put on our hearts. If this sounds like sour grapes, it isn't. We'd rather have one reader whose discernment has been enhanced by our writings than millions who are trying to fight the world while virtually ignoring the spiritual deceptions that come in the name of Christ.

Understand, however, that by researching the issues on which we write, we have had to grow in discernment right along with our readers. And as from the beginning, we believe that there would be no need for a ministry such as this were Christian leaders guarding the Lord's flock by warning them of the deceptions in their midst.

Now we want to make an appeal. No, not for money, but that you might consider sharing *Media Spotlight* with other believers in Jesus. Our ministry, after all, has been, and continues to be, to the Body of Christ. It would bless us greatly if we could reach more of our brethren, but because we don't have the resources to promote the ministry, we rely on our readers to tell others about us.

We know the time is short; more to the point, we know *our* time is short. We'd like to reach as many of our brethren as possible before that time runs out.

In any case, we want to thank those of you who have helped the Lord sustain us all these years. To Him be the glory!

In Jesus' love,


Al and Jean



THE RESPONSE

(Continued from page 1)

We love You, God. Thank You for loving us so much, and forgive us for looking so much for Your blessing instead of just looking for You.

We need You. America needs You.

And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

The primary leader on the platform was the director for the event, Luis Cataldo, a former area director for Young Life and now a leader at International House of Prayer (IHOP). After events got underway with song, Richard Land, one of the co-chairs of The Response introduced the other co-chairs: Dr. James and Shirley Dobson, Dr. Tony Evans, Bishop Harry Jackson, Tom Minnery, Penny Nance, Dr. Tony Perkins, Dr. and Mrs. Donald Wildmon, Father Frank Pavone, and Dr. Sammy Rodriguez. Pavone (who is not listed on the website for The Response) and Rodriguez were not present. Then Luis Cataldo laid out the itinerary for the event, which included much music and song by various musicians and vocalists on stage, short speeches, and prayer, both corporate and individual in small groups.

Sponsored by American Family Association, which has support from many evangelical, Catholic, and other churches, The Response was able to draw from myriad and diverse religious backgrounds.

American Family Association is a Christian activist organization headed by Donald Wildmon. It has been in the forefront in the struggle against abortion, homosexual rights, pornography, and other evils. It has faced opposition from leftist groups including the ACLU and numerous homosexual-rights organizations.

The rally had its share of detractors who accused Perry of mixing politics and religion, and overstepping his bounds by calling for such a prayer rally. Numerous protestors gathered outside the stadium to voice their concerns. Among them were representatives of liberal churches who accused participants in The Response of “hatred” and of engendering fear. “The brand of Christianity being offered today is one of fear,” said Dan DeLeon, a United Church of Christ pastor, “and we want to let people know that God loves everyone—not to be afraid.”

The week prior to the event more than 50 religious and community leaders in Houston signed a statement drafted by the Anti-Defamation League criticizing Perry. Their complaint was that The Response is “exclusively Christian, thus blurring the line of separation between church and state.” They also took issue with the speakers known for their positions against homosexual marriage and abortion.

Also represented in the protest were members of the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, an atheist/agnostic organization dedicated to removing any semblance of religious thought from government.

Nine days before The Response took place a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed against Governor Perry by Freedom From Religion, whose attorneys argued that his participation in his official capacity as governor of Texas would violate the First Amendment’s so-called “Separation Clause” which has been interpreted by leftists to mean that no government official or entity may take a public stance on, or be publicly associated with, anything even remotely considered religious, particularly Christian.

The secular media have almost universally criticized Perry for his role in The Response. MSNBC TV’s Rachel Maddow’s website suggested Perry might be a “conduit to radical Christian overthrow of the U.S. government.” On her August 10 telecast Maddow revealed her fears that largely rest on the list of endorsers for The Response. Saying that the political risk for Perry was not about attendance at his event or even seemingly mixing the roles of church and state, Maddow said that the particular stadium event that he held was with Christians who hold radical views. Her list included C. Peter Wagner, apostle of the New Apostolic Reformation, Bryan Fischer of American Family Association, Mike Bickle, formerly of the Kansas City Prophets Movement, John Hagee, John Benefiel, and Cindy Jacobs. Maddow played video clips of these endorsers of The Response which made them appear radical if not teetering on the verge of insanity.

The leftist *Texas Observer* featured a report by Forrest Wilder, who was alarmed that evangelist Don Finto, a board member of Toward Jerusalem Council II, took the stage at The Response to pray for “revival around the world and for Israel to come to their own Messiah.” Finto then introduced Marty Waldman, a messianic Jewish rabbi from Dallas, and stated, “As believers, we have a responsibility to unashamedly take the Gospel to the Jewish people as well as the Gentiles of every nation. As we do, we cooperate with God in fulfilling His great end-time plan for world evangelization before Jesus’ soon return.”

Wilder voiced concern that the mainstream media let such a thing pass without criticism. Said Wilder:

None of the D.C.-based political reporters for top-shelf publications (*Politico*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*) seemed to notice or care about a number of peculiar moments throughout the event—as if anything short of snake-handling and holy rolling wouldn’t merit mention.

There was probably a time when an evangelist calling for the mass conversion of Jewish people to Christianity at an event “initiated” by a mainstream presidential contender would ruffle some feathers. Apparently not anymore.

The Austin, Texas, *Statesman* reported that several homosexual-rights groups protested outside Reliant Stadium:

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British PM urges EU to accept Turkey

In a speech in Ankara, Turkey, British Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to “pave the road from Ankara to Brussels,” stressing that by accepting Turkey into its ranks the European Union can improve relations with the entire Muslim world. Cameron criticized opponents to Turkey’s membership of playing on fears of Islam and willfully misunderstanding Islam. “They see no difference between real Islam and the distorted version of the extremists,” said Cameron. “They think the values of Islam can never be compatible with the values of other religions, societies or cultures.”



The head of the British state is at odds with Germany and France, as well as Tory conservatives in his own country, who see Islam as incompatible with the Western culture of the EU. There is much fear that Turkey’s membership would open the floodgates for Muslim immigration into EU nations.

Additionally, opponents cite the difficulty for the EU to absorb a nation of 72 million, two-thirds of whom are under the age of 35, and whose GDP per person is less than half the European average. Yet Cameron has stated that he wants to be at the forefront of an international effort to defeat the opponents of Turkey’s admission.

Turkey formally applied for membership to the EU in 1987 after decades of positioning itself for acceptance. Germany and France have been stalling admission, offering instead the position of “privileged partnership.”

COMMENTARY

Turkey is already a member of organizations such as NATO, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the G-20 partnership of major economies. It’s only a matter of time before Turkey

becomes a partner in the EU. At the very least, as a “privileged partner,” Turkey will be a strong bridge between the primarily Roman Catholic Christianity of the West and Islam of the East. It has been our position for several years that the Anti-Christ will be a Muslim who will come to power with the blessing of a major religious leader within Christianity (the false prophet), most likely the pope.

Most teachers of eschatology insist that the last-days anti-Christ will be Jewish (some say he will be a Christian). He is variously said to be coming from Russia, Syria, Iraq, or some other nation. Closer to the mark, I believe, are those who merely call him “the Assyrian.” The Assyrians were a Semitic people who lived in the northern reaches of Mesopotamia. The Assyrian Empire mainly encompassed portions of present-day Iraq and Turkey.

Time will tell, of course, but I believe he will come from Turkey for a number of reasons, one of which involves the city of Pergamos on the island of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus, which joined the EU in 2004, is a Eurasian country in the Eastern Mediterranean. But Pergamos is actually controlled by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which was established as a separate state after years of dispute between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Pergamos is said in Revelation 2:13 to be where the “seat of Satan” is located. Revelation 13:2 says that Satan will give his seat to the Anti-Christ. The Greek word for “seat” is *thronos*, from which we get the word “throne.” By implication, it means also “power.”

I would not be dogmatic about this issue, but it seems to me that the anti-Christ’s base of power could well be Pergamos which could be reunited with Turkey as part of the EU.

As with most things eschatological, “time will tell.” ❖

Europe moving toward ‘one country.’

In a story somewhat related to the one above, Express.co.uk, home of the *Daily Express*, has reported that the EU is “paving the way for full Eurozone financial integration.” The *Daily Express* is working to move the House of Commons into a debate on Britain pulling out of the EU for fear that “Britain will come under intense pressure to adapt its tax and regulatory policies to conform more closely with the Eurozone once fiscal union is under way, even if the UK remains outside the single currency.” Steve Baker, Tory MP for Wycombe, is reported to have said, “It is very clear that the EU is heading at full speed towards being one country.”

COMMENTARY

There is a concern among some Christians that the push for European unity is part of a globalist strategy to place all nations into one of ten economic zones that will form the anti-Christ’s kingdom. In the US the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is said to be part of that strategy. I’ve seen a lot of comments about this, but there doesn’t seem to be any empirical evidence to support it, at least not as far as the entire world is

concerned. Yet we cannot dismiss the idea. There is no doubt that the governments of major nations, particularly in the West, are influenced by powerful private economic interests, as well as globalist organizations such as the Club of Rome, to unite in a globalist strategy for economic and environmental sustainability. Part of their strategy is the redistribution of wealth among the nations. However, the idea that this will involve ten global districts or super nations seems to be more prevalent among some teachers who focus on end-times scenarios than among existing governments and/or globalist institutions. It is believed that such a global division would be necessary to fulfill prophecy, particularly Daniel 7:7-8:

After this I saw in the night visions, and look! A fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong, and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet. And it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

I considered the horns, and, look! There came up among them another little horn, before whom three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And, look! In this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

These verses coincide with Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3-16. They do speak of “a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads.” The dragon represents Satan (verse 7-9), not the anti-Christ. The seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns represent his kingdom under the anti-Christ. The fourth beast, or animal, in Daniel’s vision is the Roman Empire, not at the time of Christ, but at the time of the end. The ten horns are ten kingdoms or nations that comprise the last-days restoration of the Roman Empire according to its former territories, perhaps expanded to some degree. The full understanding of Daniel’s vision is sealed until the very last days. We can surmise, however, that the Roman Empire has never been destroyed, but merely assimilated into the ten kingdoms that were given to the ten generals when the Empire fell. There is nothing to indicate that the anti-Christ’s kingdom will be global, but rather regional, encompassing much of Western Europe, parts of the Middle East, and North Africa.

That’s not to say that anti-Christ’s kingdom will not be one of ten global zones; it is to say that not all such zones will be under the anti-Christ’s rule.

In spite of teachings that try to fit the United States into the last-days scenario, there is no definitive mention of the United States in Scripture. All nations addressed in Scripture relate directly to the nation of Israel which is central to all prophecy. We don’t know to what degree the United States will be involved, if at all.

But regardless of the course the nations take, there should be no consternation on the part of believers in Jesus, because all of history is being guided by the hand of the Father toward culmination in the Millennial Kingdom with Jesus ruling the nations with a rod of iron.

The worse it gets, the better the prospect of His return. ❖

Gov. Rick Perry Signs Marriage Pledge

Governor Rick Perry of Texas has joined GOP presidential aspirants Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum and Michele Bachmann in signing the Marriage Pledge of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM). The Marriage Pledge states:

I [signer] pledge to the American people that if elected President, I will:

One, support sending a federal constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the states for ratification.

Two, nominate to the U.S. Supreme Court and federal bench judges who are committed to restraint and to applying the original meaning of the Constitution, appoint an attorney general similarly committed, and thus reject the idea our Founding Fathers inserted a right to gay marriage into our Constitution.

Three, defend the federal Defense of Marriage Act vigorously in court.

Four, establish a presidential commission on religious liberty to investigate and document reports of Americans who have been harassed or threatened for exercising key civil rights to organize, to speak, to donate or to vote for marriage and to propose new protections, if needed.

Five, advance legislation to return to the people of the District of Columbia their right to vote on marriage.

One detractor named Anselmo posted a comment on the NOM website which adequately summarized the position of those in favor of homosexuals being granted the right to marry:

Marriage equality will be reality. No matter how much NOM and other anti-equality, anti-constitutional groups shout, it will happen. NOM is on the wrong side of history and those who oppose equality will be judged in the same light as we now judge the segregationists of the Civil Rights era. You will be called to answer why just like Governor Wallace of Alabama was asked why. Your grandchildren will be ashamed of the stand you are taking now.

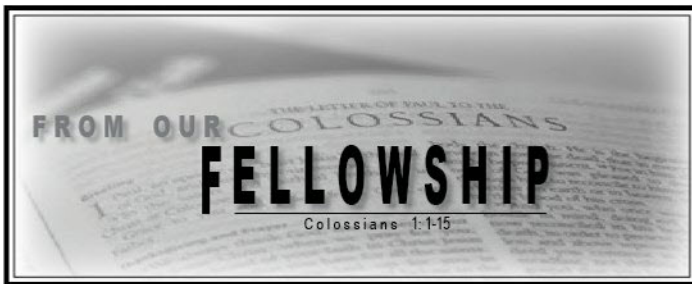
As expected, the majority of respondents on NOM’s website, and certainly a large segment of Evangelical Christianity, strongly support NOM’s Marriage Pledge.

COMMENTARY

I’m loathe to say that Anselmo is right. Homosexual “marriage” is as inevitable as the overall increase in wickedness on earth prior to the Lord’s return.

But it’s lamentable that government should be involved in marriage in the first place. Marriage is a union instituted by God, and therefore can be legitimately defined only by God. At the same time, we understand why the government wants to be

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Freedom in Christ

In this column we share a lesson we enjoyed within one of our house assembly meetings. It has been written as a narrative, but contains the thoughts of those who shared together. There is no single teacher in our assembly. Therefore, there will be portions that seem out of context, but they are the result of thoughts that came to someone during the discourse. This writing is a compilation of the thoughts expressed at one particular meeting, as well as some additional thoughts I have added in producing it. **AD**

Sometimes we don't really appreciate how free we are in Christ. We especially fail to appreciate how free our brethren are in Christ. Jesus said, "He whom the Son sets free is free indeed"—free from coercion; free from the consequences of sin; free from religion; free from the Law. This doesn't mean we're free to sin, because we're still beholden to the Lord. But we are free from the dictates and the coercion of men, and from what other people want us to be, and how they want us to act in the religious sense.

There are plenty of religious people who want to control you any way they can. You'll find it everywhere. You'll even find it within the true Body of Christ where people expect you to do certain things, act certain ways, and be a certain kind of person in order to meet their approval. A lot of this stems from their personal understanding of what God expects of them, and thus, what they assume God wants of all other believers.

In the Book of Galatians Paul goes to great lengths to explain to the brethren their freedom in Christ and how wrong it was of them to want to put themselves back under the Law, even to the point of demanding circumcision and keeping the whole Law as a means of righteousness. And it wasn't particularly in all their minds to keep the Law for salvation's sake, but for the sake of righteousness itself. In other words, yes, we're saved by Christ—by His death on the cross and His resurrection—but in order to be righteous we must keep the Law.

Sadly, this thinking has crept into many of the so-called Messianic congregations today. They feel they must keep the Law in order to be righteous. They don't deny that Christ died for their sins; they don't deny that salvation is by grace. But in order to live righteously they must keep the Law.

That's what the Galatians were going through. So Paul went to great lengths to explain to them what it means to be free in Christ. He compares it to the position enjoyed by an heir of an estate. As heirs to the Kingdom of God we have special rights, privileges, and power that transcend the need for us to be slaves to the Law.

He had just told the Galatians that there's no difference between a Jew and a Greek, a slave or a freeman, or a man or a woman, in our standing before our heavenly Father. We are all one in Christ, and we are all Abraham's seed by faith. Then he says:

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ from a servant, though he is lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:1-5)

We were redeemed from being under the Law. Particularly at that time, it was the Jews who were under the Law. They were bound to the Law of Moses for a time, until the fullness of time came for God to send His Son to redeem them from under the Law. The Galatians didn't understand this; it had to be explained to them lest they continue trying to keep the Law for righteousness' sake.

Today, are not many in the churches under bondage to laws in one form or another? There are religious rules that people are expected to follow, and if they don't follow those rules, at the very least they are looked upon as less spiritual. In some cases they are excommunicated or threatened with eternal damnation.

When I was a Catholic I really believed that if I missed going to mass on Sunday and died before confessing that "sin" to a priest, I'd go to "Hell." I'd be eternally lost. If I committed certain "mortal sins" and didn't confess them to a priest, I was lost.

Now, we don't see that so much in Protestant and other non-Catholic churches—certainly not in Evangelical churches. But in most religious circles there are certain rules by which people are expected to live. If you don't go to church regularly you will certainly be accused of "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." In some churches, if you don't attend on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening, or just about every time there is a service, you have forsaken the assembling together of the brethren; there's something wrong in your spiritual life.

That puts people under bondage to man-made laws. Such authoritarianism causes people to feel spiritually inferior to the core group of faithful attendees.

Jesus set us free from such bondage to men. He says through Paul, "because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:6-7).

Can anyone legitimately lay any charge against someone who is a joint heir with Christ to the Kingdom of God? Can anyone judge us in matters outside the purview of God's Word?

Who are you that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Yes, he shall be held up, for God is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:4)

These words were written in regard to observing certain days above another, and to what one eats or doesn't eat. They address how believers are not to be judged beyond what the New Covenant requires of us as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not under the Law of Moses or any law of man except as it pertains to fulfilling all righteousness in the eyes of those outside the Body of Christ, and that, only if the laws of man don't require us to break the Law of Love under which we live in Christ.

Yet there is one Law under which we live in Christ:

For, brethren, you have been called to liberty—only not liberty for the flesh's opportunity, but serve one another in love. For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you do not be consumed by one another.

This I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you cannot do the things that you would.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (Galatians 5:13-18)

The one Law for believers in Jesus is the Law of Love. Our freedom in Christ transcends not only the Law of Moses, but any laws of man—especially religious laws—that are not embodied within the Law of Love: "You shall love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and you shall love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).

Most churches are not as oppressive in their laws as some, but they still require certain things of their members that are outside the purview of the New Covenant. And that is the crux of the issue: the Old Covenant vs. the New Covenant.

Many believers cannot separate in their minds the demands placed upon Israel in order to keep them faithful to the Old Covenant of separation as opposed to the New Covenant of adoption into the family of God.

This is what Jesus was alluding to in His parable of old wine skins not being able to hold new wine. The old was done away; the new has nothing to do with it.

And although separation from the laws of most churches may not be as radical as separation from the Law of Moses, that separation must occur if one is to fully experience their freedom in Christ. Every time we place ourselves under the laws of men we remove ourselves from God's grace to some degree.

Now, our heavenly Father knows our hearts, and He is very merciful toward us. We do not lose our salvation or our standing as His sons. But we hinder the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives in those areas we have allowed the laws of men to rule over us. That's what is meant by removing ourselves from God's grace to some degree. How can we experience God's grace, say, in the area of worship, if we confine our worship to the dictates of men? Or how can we experience God's grace in the areas of what we eat or how we dress, or in any other behavior, if we confine our behavior to the dictates of men?

In many, if not most, cases, we fail in these areas out of ignorance or naïveté. It's not done with purposeful intent to remove ourselves from our freedom in Christ. It is the deception of Satan who works through religious institutions to bring God's people under bondage so they are not fully productive for the Kingdom of God. It's important that we realize our own freedom in Christ so that we may help other brethren realize their freedom in Christ. That is what is meant by living in the Spirit.

Our purpose is not to flaunt our freedom in Christ or to lord it over others. We are not to condemn those living under religious bondage, but we should openly rejoice in our freedom in Christ so they can understand it and recognize that they can have that freedom as well.

Remember that Paul was speaking to the Gentiles in Galatia:

Notwithstanding then, when you did not know God you served those who by nature are no gods. But now, after you have known God (or rather are known by God), how do you return to the impotent and impoverished elements to which you again desire to be in bondage? You observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid for you lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. (Galatians 4:8-11)

On one side, many Christians look at this and say, "Paul is talking about the Jewish feasts." On the other side are those who say, "Those are the pagan holidays that Christians adopted; those are the ones you're to stay away from, but you are still obligated to keep the Jewish feasts."

So believers get torn one way or another. Someone is going to put them under bondage to the Jewish feasts (which cannot be kept without the temple), or someone is going to put them under bondage to the Christian-pagan feasts. There is no end to the people who want to put others under bondage to something they think makes them more holy.

But it doesn't really matter what Paul had in mind—whether the Jewish feasts or the Christian-pagan feasts; he was trying to make them see that they are not to be in bondage to any of these things.

And who better could God use to convey this message than one with Paul's credentials in Judaism:

For we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks he may trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, from the stock of Israel, from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Called Out; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. (Philippians 3:3-6)

If one such as Paul (whose zeal for the Law compelled him to persecute the saints) would stand against bondage to the Law, who are we to compel others to submit again to that bondage, or to any other religious bondage?

Yet there are plenty of religious leaders who desire to see others brought into bondage to those religious leaders' dictates—to their holidays, to their religious festivals, to their "holy days," to their dietary laws. And the Messianic Jews are not the only ones. There are plenty of Christian denominations and even independent, autonomous gatherings that wish to bring their people under bondage to the Jewish feasts, or who tell them what they may or may not eat or drink.

This latter has less to do with health and nutrition than it does with perceived righteousness. No one with any knowledge of nutrition would deny that the Seventh-day Adventists' diet is among the healthiest, and from a pragmatic standpoint it is probably wise for many to follow such a diet. But there are those within that denomination that would attach validation of righteousness to it. And that is where they intrude upon one's freedom in Christ.

Paul was afraid for those in Galatia who had put themselves under bondage to the Law. He realized the precarious position in which they were putting themselves, surrendering their freedom in Christ. Paul was afraid for them because he was beginning to doubt that they were hanging onto their freedom in Christ, and that they were putting themselves back under the Law, trusting in the Law to save them.

In Galatians 4, Paul makes a distinction between the present Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children, and the heavenly Jerusalem which is free, and which is the mother of all who believe in Christ Jesus.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul says that Christ has raised us up together and has made us to sit together in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). That's the New Jerusalem—our mother country. As citizens of New Jerusalem which is presently situated in Heaven, we are free in Christ by His grace which saves us. As such we are heirs with Christ to the Kingdom of God. That inheritance is not available to those who are not in Christ.

This New Jerusalem, which will one day descend to rest upon the New Earth (Revelation 21:2), is our home. If we will think of ourselves as citizens of the New Jerusalem rather than citizens of the United States of America, or of any earthly nation (all of which are part of Satan's domain for the present), we might better grasp the spiritual reality of our freedom in Christ.

Romans 14:4 asks, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? We all stand or fall according to our Master who is able to hold us up."

We don't judge the Lord's servants, and neither should anyone judge us for how we live our lives, other than in those areas where our lives do not conform to the Word of God in relation to the New Covenant.

We should exult in the realization of our freedom in Christ. It is a cause for rejoicing, not for self-doubt. No man has a yoke on us unless we allow him to place it there. We are joint-heirs with Christ. We inherit the Kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ. We have been given that honor through God's mercy and grace. He opened the way for us by providing His Son as atonement for our sins. And if we put ourselves under any law we are saying His grace is not sufficient; Christ's sacrifice wasn't

enough to set us free; we need to be under law. Any law. It may be only one law. Because if we place ourselves under one law we are obliged to keep all the Law (Galatians 5:3).

Christ has become ineffectual for you, whoever of you are justified by the Law; you have fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

That's serious stuff. To put ourselves under any law means that we've fallen from God's grace. Thus Paul encourages the Galatians to come back to Christ.

You ran well. Who hindered you so that you would not obey the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. (Galatians 5:7).

So we must be careful that not even we put ourselves on guilt trips. If we sin, we are to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). We must not think we can do anything to pay for the sin we just committed. We don't have to do penance; Christ has already paid the penalty.

It's not only Roman Catholicism that puts the onus of penance on people. Every religion puts this on people, some to a greater degree than others. And by religion I don't necessarily mean an institution, but as well, a religious mind-set. We can have our own religious mind-set and put ourselves under bondage to that mind-set. It makes us feel good. It makes us feel as if we've purged ourselves. It makes us feel pious.

This doesn't mean we take a cavalier attitude about our sin. It's recognizing that there's nothing we can do to make atonement for that sin. It's recognizing that it's already been done for us by Christ Jesus.

Now, if we injure somebody in some way, the Law of Love requires that we make restitution. But restitution is to man, not to God. Thus, restitution is not penance.

Paul says to us, "Therefore stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

In other words, we are to be resolute in our freedom. Being resolute means not letting anyone or anything—including ourselves—rob us of our freedom.

So Paul acknowledges that there is a right way to live even though we are under grace. That right way to live is by walking by the Spirit of God. We have instructions under the New Covenant in what it means to live by the Spirit of God as opposed to living by our carnal nature.

It isn't so much doing certain correct things, as it is being led by the Holy Spirit in every aspect of our lives. The Holy Spirit will not lead us into sin, but into righteousness.

Paul goes on to describe the works of the flesh as opposed to the works of the Spirit. But why was it necessary for him to delineate between the two? After all, if we are led by the Holy Spirit we don't have to be concerned about which works are those of the flesh and which are those of the Spirit.

Well, because the Holy Spirit guides us through our knowledge of God's Word. Ignorance of God's Word may easily result

in our being deceived by others, and even by ourselves. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is death” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

The Law of Love is directly tied to walking in the Spirit of God. The two cannot be separated. And being led by the Spirit is freedom in Christ.

Yet do we not sometimes stray from being led by the Holy Spirit? Yes. But walking in the Spirit of God is not so much a matter of perfection as it is a way of life. We may stray at times, but the Holy Spirit will convict us and prompt us to repent and return to walking in faith. And if our hearts remain fixed on Christ Jesus we will respond positively to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

We must hold on to this truth: we were transferred from one kingdom into another. We were transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of God’s love. So yes, we have freedom, but our freedom is in Christ. Those of us who have come out of a sectarian group know what it means to be in bondage. But we also know what it means to serve a Master, and to have a living Lord to regulate our lives.

So although we say we are free, we also like the rod and the staff that comfort us. We’re very fond of our Master, and when we receive correction we know He is there.

In the Book of Isaiah there is a portion where the prophet is speaking wonderful things for having been given visions by God. In chapter eight there is a short section where God stops to give personal instruction to Isaiah:

For YHWH said this to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, “Do not say, ‘A conspiracy’ in regard to all those to whom this people shall say, ‘A conspiracy.’ Do not fear what they fear, nor be afraid of it. Sanctify YHWH of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and He shall be a refuge. (Isaiah 8:11-14)

What we have in Christ is a living Lord who will exercise His authority over us—who will communicate His will to us as to how we are to behave as His servants.

The Lord’s yoke is easy, and His burden is light. But there is a yoke and a burden for us to bear. Colossians 3:23-25 says:

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men, knowing that you shall receive the reward of the inheritance from the Lord, for you serve the Lord Christ.

But he who does wrong shall receive for the wrong that he has done, and there is no respect of persons.

Inheritance is not a given; it is the reward for our service in obedience to Christ. And there are differences in the rewards. Not all in a kingdom are rulers in that kingdom. This is why we are warned that, although one may be saved by grace, one’s works built of wood, hay and stubble, yet built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, may be burned up, while only those who have built on that same foundation of Christ with gold, silver and precious stones will receive reward (1 Corinthians. 3:12).

Every day, by the impression He places on our hearts, He instructs us on how we are to conduct ourselves. As we learn from His Word, and are led by His Spirit, the Lord shows us right from wrong in our walk with Him. We have the choice whether or not to obey His instructions. And herein lies the rub:

Likewise, account yourselves also to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you would obey it in its desires, nor yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. But yield yourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have power over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under grace? It cannot be! Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, you are his servants whom you obey—whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

But God be thanked that you *were* the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of instruction that was delivered to you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness. (Romans 6:11-17)

This is the seeming dichotomy: we are free *in* Christ, but we are slaves *to* Christ. He is now our Master; sin is no longer our master. Freedom in Christ requires that we recognize Him as our Master, because that’s what makes us free.

Life in Christ is not anarchy. Anarchists think they are free because they refuse to obey any laws (actually only certain laws). But in truth they are enslaved to their own laws, and their self-mastery is destructive of themselves and others. It is better to be enslaved to a righteous master than to be enslaved to ourselves. All creatures need boundaries in order to live safely and productively. Christ’s mastery over us frees us from the dictates of men, religion, government, and even ourselves.

Now, in order to fulfill righteousness we obey governments, but we are free to disobey when the government requires us to act contrary to the Word of God. We may suffer the consequences at the hands of the government, but we will receive reward at the hand of God. And there are other ways in which we conform our behavior before others in order to maintain a pure testimony, just as Paul was a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

It will be argued by those who wish to keep us under the Law that it was not the law of man but of God. And this is true. Yet in a sense, after Christ fulfilled the Law and opened the way for freedom in Him, the Law of God became the law of man.

The truth is that God never expected man to be able to completely obey the Law. But the Jews didn’t fully realize that. They thought they could force themselves to keep the Law by creating other laws as hedges against the Law. This merely resulted in greater bondage. Ultimately the Law condemned us and proved that we were slaves to sin.

Now we must agree that the Law of God is righteous; it illuminated man and some men embraced it. The righteous of Israel said, "I love the Law."

We can say today, "I love the Law; it's beautiful." But we would hate to be under it. Because no matter how much we want to do right by the Law of God, we will inevitably break the Law. And if we offend in one law we are guilty of all the Law.

The Law was given by God out of His mercy and love. Embodied within the Law of Moses was love for God and love for man. This is why Jesus said that the Law is summed up in these two: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

If the flesh were perfect enough to have kept the Law then there would have been no need for Christ to die for us. We would have been like Adam before he sinned. But the reality is that no man is sinless. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Man cannot keep the Law, but man doesn't believe that. Man thinks he is inherently good; that the evil that man commits is the result of outside forces causing him to act badly.

And that's why even most Christians hold onto some form of law. They won't believe the verdict God has given against the carnal nature of man. They don't want to acknowledge that there is nothing good in them.

Even when many say, "There's nothing good in me," deep down they are saying, "I'm so good for stating this."

The only way anyone can see this truth of man's intrinsic sin nature is by a head-on confrontation with Jesus Christ. Then we see ourselves like Peter who came to the end of himself when he said, "Depart from me because I am a sinful man, O Lord." Or like Paul who said, "There is no good thing in me."

When one sees this truth it results in despair, humility, and disgust with one's self. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to repentance and trust in Jesus Christ as One who saves us by His sacrifice on the cross.

This is contrary to today's message that permeates the Christian media—the message that we should put aside such feelings and think of ourselves as glorious in Christ even while we are living sinfully.

When we see ourselves in comparison to Jesus Christ, how can we do anything but despair of anything within us being good? It's devastating to realize just how hopeless we are without Him. The realization must come that in this life we are never going to be good enough to stand before the living God. This should crush us.

How many times in our lives have we sinned?

Just think. There are 365 days in a year. Multiply that by the number of years you have lived, and then multiply the result by how many times you merely think you sin per day. And anyone would dare say they can stand justified before God without the blood of Christ covering them?

Even as we despair over our sins we risk the danger of being self-righteous. We think we should be righteous within ourselves

and we butt our heads against a wall wondering why we can't live sinlessly in sinful flesh.

The Lord does everything He can to help us see that we are not righteous within ourselves. That's why He died for us; that's why He had to save us more from our flesh than from the world and the Devil.

And so by faith we come to the place where we are accepted in the Beloved; we are accepted in Christ. We now have imputed righteousness.

So we walk up to the Throne of Grace; we embrace God, and we cry on His shoulder, because we are so simple. And we say, "Father, how can I even come into Your house? I'm so unworthy, but I can't leave You!"

And He embraces us on the basis of Christ's righteousness. Our relationship with God is not based on our righteousness, but on the realization of our own sinfulness. And we say with the apostle Paul, "Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

So there we are in the throne room of God, embracing His Son, fellowshiping with the Father over just how sinful we are. But as long as we are there in the Spirit we are not committing sin. It's very difficult to sin in the Lord's presence. As soon as we find ourselves tempted it becomes a habitual thing in our nature to cry out to our Father for help.

So we look at the Law and we realize how wonderful it is simply because it reflects the holiness of God. But we are not under it because, being sinful, we can never achieve the perfection the Law demands. The Law says we have to be perfect in our belief and behavior in order to have communion with God. So in His mercy God pulled us out from under the Law and established us in His grace.

While the Law reflects the holiness of God, it also reflects His mercy just by His giving it for our instruction. So while the Law proves we cannot live perfectly, it demonstrates our need for God's grace.

God's grace says that because Christ has lived perfectly on our behalf and has offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins, never to be sacrificed over and over as Israel had to offer their sacrifices under the Law, we are accepted when we believe. The perfect nature of His sacrifice is graphically illustrated in the Book of Hebrews:

For the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come, not itself the very image of those things, can never with those sacrifices that they continually offer year by year make those who come to it perfect. For would they then not have ceased to be offered because the worshippers, once purged, would have had no more conscience of sins?

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year because it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins.

Therefore, when He comes into the world He says, "Sacrifice and offering you would not, but You have prepared a body for Me. You have had no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, 'Look,

I come to do Your will, O God (in the volume of the book it is written of Me).”

Above, when He said, “Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin You would not, nor had pleasure in them that are offered by the Law,” then He said, “Look, I come to do Your will, O God,” He takes away the first so that He may establish the second, by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**.

And every priest stands daily, often ministering and offering the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But this man, after He had offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down on the right hand of God, from now on expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by **one offering** He has perfected forever those who are sanctified, of which the Holy Spirit is also a witness to us. (Hebrews 10:1-15)

To suggest that we can offer any sacrifice for our sins, including our own good works, or even to suggest that Christ Jesus Himself could be sacrificed again, is to deny the efficacy of His perfect work on the cross of Calvary.

To try to live under the Law is to say, “I’m going to prove to God and to the world how good I am.”

God will not accept us on that ground. It is only on the basis of our admitting that we are sinners and that His Son paid the price for our sins that He will accept us.

Jesus spoke this parable to some whom he perceived to be self-righteous:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed within himself thusly: ‘God, I thank you that I am not as other men are, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.’

“And the tax collector, standing far off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to Heaven, but struck upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be abased, and he who humbles himself shall be lifted up.”

God is not in the business of perfecting our flesh; He’s done away with our flesh. In Christ we are dead, having died with Him on the cross through our faith in His atonement on our behalf (Luke 15:10-14).

I can do nothing righteous. Therefore, any righteousness that I perform I credit to Jesus Christ.

Now, we must be careful not to take our freedom in Christ as license to sin. We cannot say, “Because God loves me, and I’m His child, I don’t have to be concerned about how I live my life. I can do anything I please. He’ll understand.”

That’s a very scary place to be. Because now that we belong to Him—now that we are His property—He can discipline us. And in this we have reason to fear. What child does not fear a father

who, though loving, is willing to mete out discipline in order to bring correction? And our heavenly Father will discipline us:

For whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. (Hebrews 12:6)

So we are free in Christ, but we are also open to His chastisement. Which is totally different from condemnation.

Trying to keep the Law condemns us. Our position in Christ risks at the worst chastisement for our sins, but carries the benefit of reward for our compliance to His chastising work.

This subject is very confusing to many believers—particularly to those new in the faith. It is often presented in ways that confuse people more than it helps them. They will not let go of the Law, or of the idea that they can strive to keep the Law perfectly. This is because so much teaching is an appeal to the flesh to do “right.”

They say, “We’re delivered from the ceremonial law, but not from the moral law.”

Well, is that good news? I can do the ceremonial law a lot easier than I can do the moral law!

That is the basis for many of the dos and don’ts of religion—even Christian religion. It still puts us back under the Law.

Confusion enters into the equation when we think that doing away with the Law is the same as doing away with right and wrong. It’s mistakenly thinking that once the Law is done away there is no sin. Add to this that James tells us “sin is the transgression of the Law.”

The problem is often that we tend to focus on one area of Scripture rather than take the whole counsel of God. The Law is summed up in the Law of Love. If we love God and man we will not purposely live contrary to the leading of His Spirit. The difference is that we are not under the system of the Law that says we must do these things to attain unto God. We follow the Spirit of God; we do not follow the Law of God which was meant to keep in line those who did not have His Holy Spirit. Let me say that again: we follow the Spirit of God, not the Law of God.

We still recognize sin, which we hate, and we still recognize righteousness, which we love. It does not take that away; it just takes us out from depending upon keeping the Law as a means of righteousness and/or salvation. The Law, whether written on paper or written on the hearts of men (Romans 2:15), is the system by which the whole world will be judged, except for those who are in Christ and, thus, are indwelt by His Holy Spirit.

It seems a contradiction to say this, but it is precisely because we recognize we cannot keep the Law that we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us into all righteousness. It is His strength, not the strength of our flesh that compels us to do according to the will of the Father and not the will of our sinful flesh. If we live according to the Law of Love by the power of the Holy Spirit in compliance with God’s Word, we do not have to strive to keep the Law. That’s what it means to live by faith and not by the strength of the flesh.

If we fail on occasion, we need merely confess our sin to the Father and be assured that He will lift us up as He has always done. ❖

GOV. RICK PERRY SIGNS MARRIAGE PLEDGE

(Continued from page 5)

able to license marriage by first assuring that those being married are not infected with a communicable disease, particularly an STD. Outside of that the only other interests the government has in marriage are related to income tax regulation and certain other spousal rights granted by the government. The income tax being what it is, a Marxist concept adopted by a left-leaning Congress in 1913, in expectation of supporting the Federal Reserve System, there is no legitimate reason for government being involved in marriage other than for reason number one. Therefore, the government should stay out of defining marriage, and support the definition of marriage's creator. However, as the mores of the nation become more lax the government of the nation will reflect that laxity. All governments are, after all, part of Satan's domain.

As far as "spousal rights" granted by government, these have to do with inheritance and personal issues, some of which are also tied to the income tax.

Although it's necessary that taxes be collected by government in order for it to function (we won't address wasteful spending and unconstitutional abuses of fiscal responsibility), the progressive income tax and its myriad regulations based upon individuals' ways of living and spending is evil by its nature. It makes all citizens indentured servants (slaves) to the state.

Eliminating the present system of income tax for a more equitable system that leaves one's way of life out of the equation would eliminate much of the controversy surrounding same-sex marriage. That would leave only one issue to be dealt with regarding that controversy: the definition of marriage.

Were the taxation and spousal rights issues eliminated there would be little or no desire (considering all the effort required) on the part of homosexuals to "marry." If someone wants to leave his estate to a homosexual partner, or if someone in the hospital wants to name any person other than a spouse as an accepted person to determine one's medical treatment, that should be okay for heterosexual couples or even single people. Homosexual marriage wouldn't enter into the picture. This principle could be applied to all aspects of living according to one's conscience except where it would result in a crime.

With the government out of the way, what people do within a community cannot be regulated. Anyone can make a pledge and call it "marriage." But that doesn't make it marriage in the eyes of God or of His people. And that's really all that counts.

I'm aware that this might rankle some who are passionately against homosexuals having the right even to live. But Jesus died for homosexuals as much as He did for all mankind (sorry, hyper-Calvinists).

As far as presidential aspirants signing pledges, that, too, is contrary to the words of Jesus:

"Again, you have heard that it has been said by them of old time, 'You shall not perjure yourself, but shall be

faithful to your oaths before the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your word be, 'Yes, yes,' 'No, no,' for whatever is more than these comes from evil." (Matthew 5:33-37)

I understand, and appreciate to a degree, what Governor Perry and NOM are trying to accomplish. But we cannot fight evil with evil and still remain in God's will and blessing. The only way we can fight evil is with good. Because only God is good according to the true nature of all beings, we can fight evil only by applying God's Word. And His Word commands us not to swear oaths.

And while we're on the subject, that does not mean only oaths in secular society; it applies even more to the Body of Christ. The practice of churches and ministries to compel people to support them by making pledges is contrary to the words of Jesus also. Christian leaders who do this are sinning. Worse, they are causing others to sin.

And here's something to consider: even marriage vows are unscriptural.

What!? Then how can marriage be performed?

Consider: those who break their vows through divorce or adultery or in any other way, sometimes through circumstances beyond their control, are committing the additional sin of breaking their vow. Originally, marriages in Scripture were entered into through mutual consent of a man and woman (or they were arranged by parents), usually in the presence of the community of faith (even pagan faiths). Faithfulness was implied in the mutual consent and everyone understood that. As well, the roles of husband and wife were defined within the community of faith, so the couple understood their roles. But ever since the government got involved somewhere, sometime, during the age of the so-called "Church Fathers," marriage vows were instituted. "Bishop" Ignatius of Antioch, writing around AD 110 to "bishop" Polycarp of Smyrna stated:

If any one can continue in a state of purity, to the honour of Him who is Lord of the flesh, let him so remain without boasting. If he begins to boast, he is undone; and if he reckon himself greater than the bishop, he is ruined. But it becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own lust. Let all things be done to the honour of God.¹

Prior to this decree, Christians married by mutual consent in the presence of the community of faith and/or their families. The "Church Fathers," who were precursors to the Holy Roman Empire which melded a form of Christian religion with the state, established the requirement for the "bishop" to sanction the

¹ Ignatius of Antioch, *The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp Shorter Version*, Chapter V, "The Duties of Husbands and Wives" (Roberts-Donalson translation), EarlyChristianwritings.com.

marriage. When the “Church” became one with the state, the precedent was set for the state to sanction marriage. There was no distinction between the Roman church and the state. That would come later as Western Civilization evolved toward freedom from religious tyranny. But the requirement for the state to sanction marriage remained. Thus marriage came under the auspices of the state in Western Civilization (and elsewhere it has influenced) and has remained so until today.

Now, I’m not advocating anarchy regarding how marriages are performed in society today. What is, is. And it is important for our testimony that we comply with civil laws as long as they don’t require us to act contrary to God’s Word. So marriage licenses and officiating by duly recognized authorities by the state are not to be dismissed as unimportant. In truth, to defy these customs today would scandalize the vast majority of Christians and non-Christians who believe the state, or at least the “church” must be involved. This is meant only to inform, and to help us all exercise discernment, not only regarding how the world has influenced marriage, but how it has influenced many aspects of our lives in relation to our God.

Please don’t throw stones....❖

NASA ends Space Shuttle program

With the touchdown of Space Shuttle Atlantis on July 21, NASA brought to a close its highly successful program that has provided transportation to and from orbiting space stations for the past 30 years. In 1998 the International Space Station (ISS) replaced the U.S. space stations that began with Skylab in May, 1973. ISS is a joint venture with Russia, Japan, France, Canada, and the EU. Now that the Space Shuttle program has been scrapped, astronauts will rely on Russian space craft to shuttle them to the ISS and back to earth.

NASA has announced that it will continue to send astronauts into orbit for research purposes, but that its primary focus will be on working with private and foreign manufacturers to supply space craft for deep space exploration by robots, eventually leading to manned flights to asteroids and eventually Mars. For the time being, at least, there is no interest in returning to the moon; the U.S. will leave that to other countries and perhaps private space enterprises.

COMMENTARY

Many Americans, including American Christians, are upset over the prospect of this nation giving up its leadership role in the ISS program. In a speech at John F. Kennedy Space Center on April 15, 2010, Barack Obama assured NASA personnel that the United States would focus on deep space exploration instead. Truly, at this point only the United States has the resources to do so, at least in cooperation with other nations if not exclusively.

Much benefit for mankind has been derived by the low-earth-orbit laboratories whose research has helped achieve advances

in medicine, agriculture, and myriad other disciplines. But it has always been the dream of those involved in the space programs of the nations to send men into deep space to explore other planets and, should technology provide for it, interstellar and intergalactic space.

I am reminded of the Tower of Babel whose construction began with men saying, “Come! Let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach into the heavens, and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4).

There is even serious talk of building a space elevator, a non-rocket spacelaunch that would transport material from earth into space. There is no current technology to make such an elevator feasible, but it demonstrates how far men will go in their desire to “slip the surly bonds of earth” and place themselves into the heavenly realm.

When YHWH scattered mankind over the face of the earth He did so for a good reason:

And YHWH said, “Look! The people are one, and they all have one language, and they begin to do this. Now nothing that they have imagined to do will be withheld from them.

“Come. Let us go down, and there confound their language so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (Gen 11:6-7)

Consider how far man has come in his science and technology in just over the past 100 years. It was in 1903 that the Wright brothers made their first controlled-power airplane flight. Sixty-six years later Neil Armstrong placed his feet on the surface of the Moon. Virtually every major advance in science and technology has taken place within the past 150 years. For some six thousand years prior, the vast majority of mankind was bound to living out their lives never traveling more than a few miles from where they had been born. Now mankind is legitimately considering the exploration of Mars and beyond.

None of this could have been accomplished without mankind being brought together in a way that only the United States of America could have provided. Emigration from all the nations of the earth has made the U.S. a cultural melting pot. What God performed at Babel has almost been undone except for the completion of the globalist agenda. And God’s prophecy that nothing man imagined to do would be withheld from him is being fulfilled. Except that God will allow man to go so far, and no further.

If Jesus is truly coming back to rule the nations then it stands to reason that at that time no man or woman will be far from the earth’s orbit.

It should encourage believers in Jesus to think that the Lord will most certainly return before man is able to place his foot on Mars (or at least after any man has returned from Mars). The projected date for man to travel to the rusty planet is the mid-2030s—about two decades away.

Considering all the other “signs of the times” we are witnessing in nature, governments, and the human condition of

apostasy, we should not lament the U.S. surrendering its sovereignty in the space program. The move to Mars is a good indicator that the Lord's return cannot be far off. ❖

Jack Van-Impe parts with TBN

In a June telecast, end times preacher Jack Van-Impe ran afoul of Paul and Jan Crouch when he accused world renowned pastors Robert H. Schuller and Rick Warren of promoting what has come to be called “Chrislam”—the uniting of Christianity with Islam for social, environmental and economic cooperation. TBN pulled the program in question after its first airing and refused to allow it to be rebroadcast in its regularly-scheduled time slots. This prompted the board of directors for Jack Van-Impe Ministries to no longer work with TBN for fear of having to “look over our shoulder wondering if a program was going to be censored because of mentioning a name.”

In a letter of response to the decision by Jack Van-Impe Ministries to no longer work with TBN, Paul Crouch, the television network's president and founder, stated:

Although I understand, and actually agree with, your position that you “will not allow anyone to tell me what I can and cannot preach,” I trust you understand that TBN takes the same position with its broadcast air time as well.

Jack Van-Impe Presents is still featured on TBN's website, but under the program schedule it states, “No show times are scheduled in the next two months, please check back later.”

COMMENTARY

As much as I disagree with many of Jack Van-Impe's eschatological conclusions, it's refreshing to see him call out Warren and Schuller for their compromise of the faith, and to stand up against TBN's decision to pull his program. It seems as if TBN is still holding out hope that Van-Impe will “repent” and come back to the “TBN Family.”

I don't care to comment further except to say we'll have to wait and see. ❖

Organizations unite to promote interfaith services

Interfaith Alliance and Human Rights First have joined together to establish Faith Shared, an organization that seeks to bring members of Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations together in mutual worship and prayer services. The objective is to have clergy read from each other's sacred texts in order to demonstrate mutual understanding and respect for each

other's faith traditions. The stated objective is to “seek especially to promote respect for the faith and practitioners of Islam.” On June 26, Faith Shared engaged some 50 churches in 26 states, including the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., to hold interfaith services in January and February, and it continues to lead efforts to expand the number of such services.

At the same time, the Vatican is urging Muslims and Catholics to promote spirituality together. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, cited common concern about the challenges of materialism and secularization as well as the loss of the importance of spiritual and moral values in society.

COMMENTARY

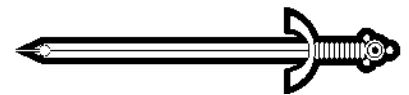
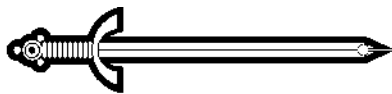
The news out of the Vatican comes as no surprise considering how the late Pope John Paul II set the course on spiritual unity with all religions by suggesting that they all worship the same god (but, of course, that the Roman Catholic Church has the more perfect way).

We have reported in the past on how churches of many denominations have been seeking broader unity with Islam prompted by a collective, contrived “guilt” for driving radical Muslims to attack the West. After 9/11, especially, church leaders have bent over backwards to create an unofficial unity that has come to be called “Chrislam.” Interfaith services in which Muslims read from the Koran and affirm their belief in Jesus as a prophet are compromising faith in Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father. Proponents of Chrislam make the excuse that this is the only way to ensure peace in the world and to solve all of mankind's problems, which they believe stem from lack of unity among mankind—particularly religious unity.

On that Sunday, June 26, Faith Shared collaborated with a number of churches across America to bring leaders of Islam, Judaism and Christianity (including Roman Catholicism) together for mutual worship and fellowship. The most prominent church involved was the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The overriding theme was unity in love without regard to religious beliefs.

We have no problem with unity in love with all mankind. But we must draw the line when it comes to fellowship in faith. And why must Christians continually be the ones to bow to Islam as a show of solidarity? We concede that not all Muslims are terrorists, and that we must love them as we do all mankind, including our enemies. But love is best expressed through ministry of God's Word that brings conviction of sin and the need to believe in Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father, lest the ones we ostensibly “love” perish in unbelief. Instead, however, the major voices in Christianity (including Evangelical Christianity) are telling us that Muslims, Jews and Christians really worship the same god—the monotheistic god of all three religious traditions.

What is witnessed at these “love-ins” is not the love of the true God of the Bible. Nor is any truth that leads to salvation presented. Rather, the gullible are led to believe that it doesn't really matter what one believes as long as one doesn't say anything to offend non-Christians. It's okay to offend Christians

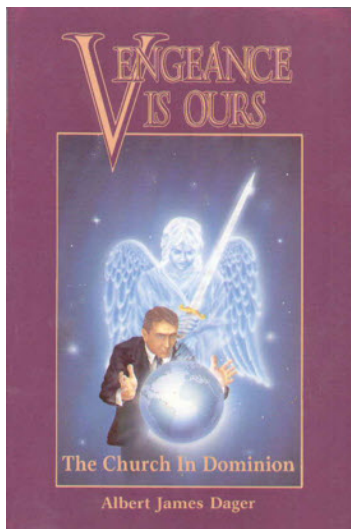


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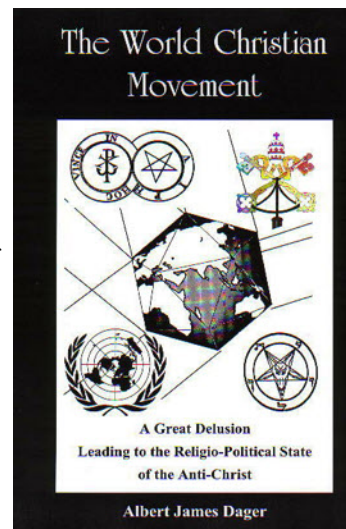
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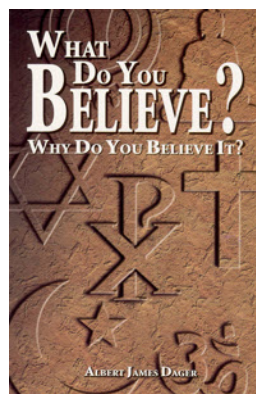
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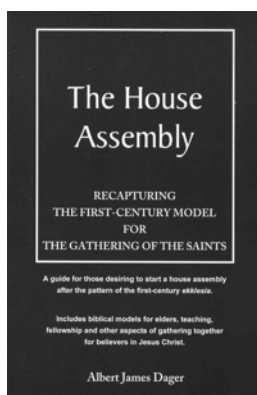
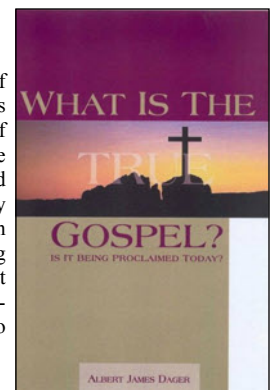


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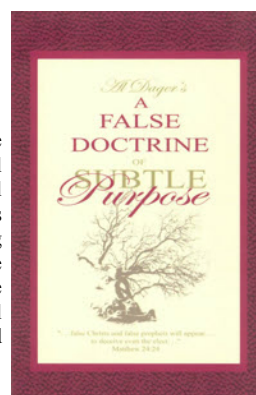
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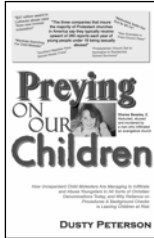
Thousands of churches and tens of thousands of pastors are being strongly influenced by the writings of Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church in California. His two best-selling books, *The Purpose-Driven Life* and *The Purpose-Driven Church*, have taken churches by storm. But are Warren's teachings and methodologies truly biblical? This book reveals many of Warren's unscriptural teachings. It is not a polemic against Warren, but a careful analysis of his teachings and methods lauded not only by Christians, but by the world. (*Media Spotlight* articles)

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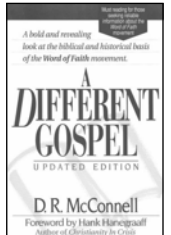
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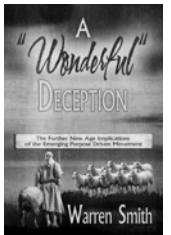
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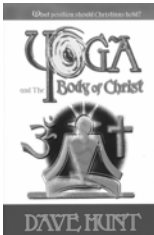
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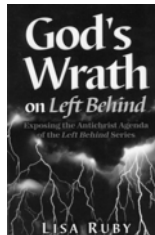
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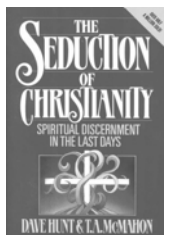
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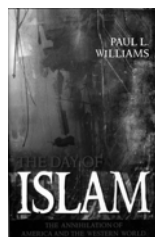
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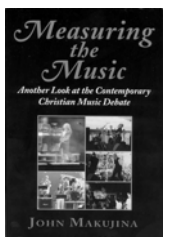
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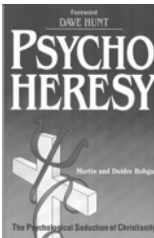
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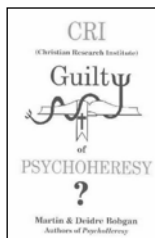
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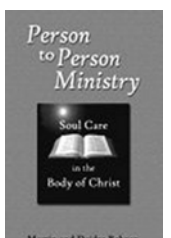
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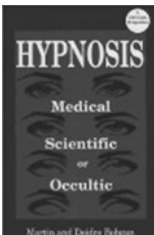
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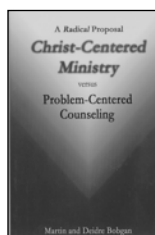
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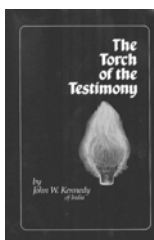
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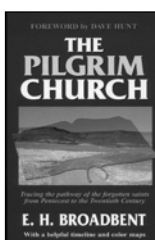
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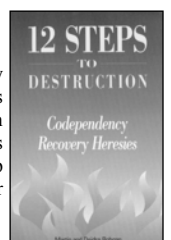
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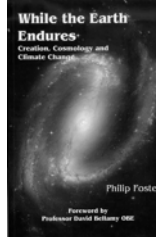
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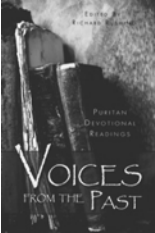
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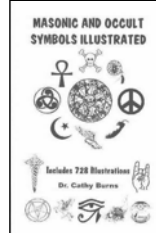
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by denying Jesus or, at best, ignoring Him in these services (except to give Him lip service in reminding us of His command to love everyone).

As an example of the sellout conducted at these Faith Shared services, we offer excerpts from the one held at the National Cathedral.

The service kicked off with a procession followed by prayers by a female rabbi, an imam who sings praises to Allah, another imam who prays, and a minister who prays to a generic “god.” Then each takes turns reading short passages from their “sacred texts,” the rabbi from the Torah, the imam from the Koran, and the minister from the Bible. After some unintelligible singing by the choir, Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, president of Interfaith Alliance, gave the sermon. (Dr. Gaddy has lauded Rick Warren for his 2008 Saddleback Civil Forum with then-presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama.) We will look at just a few excerpts from Gaddy’s sermon and offer brief comments.

I come here today to share with you a challenge and good news—good news about the promise of this moment and the possibilities of positive change in our world. Seldom, if ever before, have the monotheistic, Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—faced as positive and the opportunity as that which exists right now. Our religions’ words and actions can help shape our country and impact the international community for great good. A harried, schismatic, fragmented and skeptical world is ready and eager to be surprised by the discovery of the power of these religions to promote understanding, nurture mutual respect, and lead residents in our global village in taking a giant step toward tranquility, interreligious cooperation and international peace.

Dr. Gaddy’s “good news” is a far cry from the truly Good News (Gospel) of Jesus Christ. But he never offered the Gospel to the Muslims and Jews present (or to the alleged “Christians”).

Reading each other’s scriptures as we have done in corporate worship this morning is a good way to begin. This practice models a starting place for learning, seeking understanding and growing in respect for each other’s sacred books and the traditions those sacred books have inspired. But we must be careful here. Proceed with caution as well as with resolve as we read each other’s scriptures. We must keep in mind a fundamental principle of sound scriptural interpretation. No one verse or one passage in any book of scripture should be allowed to hijack and hold hostage the central truth—the overarching as well as pervasive moral mandate—which emerges from the full sweep of truth in those books of scripture. Cherry picking isolated texts from the whole of the scriptures from which they appear allows mean-spirited people to turn the scriptures of our religions into weapons rather than respect them as sources of truth that begets love.

“Sound scriptural interpretation”? Where is Gaddy qualified to address that? He equates the Koran with “scripture,” placing it in the same category as the Bible as the inspired Word of God, even though the Koran contradicts Scripture on many levels, not the least of which states that “God has no son.”

Critics of Islam continue to blame the Koran for mandating Muslims to eradicate non-Muslims from the face of the earth.

Wait a minute. That’s what fundamentalist Muslims believe. He shouldn’t blame “critics of Islam” for what a huge contingency of Islam promotes.

The second step in my recommended strategy for better cooperation and a worldwide demonstration of the positive power and healing force of religion [**So true healing isn’t in Jesus alone!**] is a rock solid commitment to, and vigorous public support for, religious freedom.

Gaddy should tell that to the governments of many Muslim countries. The U.S. Government is not infringing on the right of Muslims to practice their religion. Granted, some Muslims have been persecuted by private citizens, but so, too, have Jews, Christians, and members of other religions.

Freedom is religion’s best friend; indeed, apart from people’s freedom to mandate choices and to act on decisions related to religion, there is no authentic religion.

Gaddy may not realize it, but he is saying that suffering persecution in the name of Jesus is not authentic religion.

The founders of this government gave us a formula for dealing with that diversity in a manner that is good for religion, good for interreligious cooperation, and good for government: no establishment of religion, and the free exercise of religion for all religions. These early patriots knew that unless all people are free, none are really free.

Not true; slave owners are free; if he means spiritually free, the only truly free are those in Christ; he should be preaching Christ as the way to freedom to the rabbis and imams present.

What we have done together in this great cathedral this morning, along with others in similar services in houses of worship across our nation, can alter the image and substance of our nation as well as of religion. Today’s wonderfully, beautifully written liturgy, informed by Islam, Judaism and Christianity declares unambiguously, “We are not exclusively isolationist, rather, citizens of the world; we are not scripture burners, but scripture readers; we are not fear mongers wanting only our way; we are peacemakers seeking only God’s way.

God’s “Way” is Jesus Christ. “He who denies the Son does not have the Father (1 John 2:23). Islam and Judaism (and Christians who join in fellowship with them) deny the Son.

Our love for all men compels us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them. But quislings in purple robes would deny them that gift from God. ❖



THE RESPONSE

(Continued from page 3)

“Gov. Perry called for prayer to confront the crisis faced by our nation,” said Jay Morris, an organizer with the gay-rights group GetEqual Texas, one of several groups that protested outside Reliant Stadium on Saturday. “Sadly, those sponsoring the event are the cause of the crisis that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans and their families are facing.”

Yet in spite of the protests, The Response was apolitical. Neither Perry nor any of the other speakers addressed any political issues—not even homosexual rights. They did, however, spend an entire segment calling out to God for forgiveness for the national sin of abortion.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

What were once moral issues have become political issues, primarily because of departure by many from God’s Word as the authority for their lives. There was a time when even atheists and agnostics acknowledged the national mores predicated upon the biblical ethic inherited from the founders of the republic. The Bible may not have been regarded by many as the inspired Word of God, but it was nevertheless the basis upon which society in America was guided. When public figures mentioned “God” they were in their minds referencing the God of the Bible; they were not referencing Allah, Krishna, or any of the myriad pagan deities.

With the emergence of modern humanism, Western culture has steadily devolved into a morass of relativism. The government education system has worked especially hard during the past century, and particularly during the past three generations, to turn society away from moral absolutes toward relativism; truth became whatever one believes truth to be. Thus, issues such as abortion and homosexuality have come under the protection of government as “rights” based on the idea that one’s personal feelings and inclinations are sacrosanct. This has escalated in some minds to include the right to anarchy and destructive behavior with little threat of consequence.

The major goal of the Communist Party USA was, and continues to be, the fomenting of class struggle. The objective has been to pit black against white, rich against poor, labor against management, religious against non-religious, and virtually any other area where differences exist. Those who think communism is dead simply because of its failed experiment in the former Soviet Union and everywhere else it has been tried, are dangerously naïve. The class warfare which communism worked so diligently to inculcate is in full blown evidence today.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the United States of America is a house divided, and there is little hope that the strong divisions that exist will ever be mended. The issues that separate the people are not merely political. They are primarily spiritual; they strike at the hearts and souls of American citizenry. In that regard, Rick Perry and those associated with The Response are correct that God is the only solution to our problems. Because unless He intervenes there is no way that America will ever be a nation that enjoys the same degree of unity of mind and purpose that it once did.

At The Response it was evident that the vast majority of people in attendance were sincere in their desire to see God move in America and to bring revival to both the nation and its churches. But were they representative of American citizenry, or even of Christianity as a whole? Can The Response truly speak for all Christians—even the average Evangelical Christian?

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?

Throughout the day the manner of worship, praise and ministry in general was most reflective of charismatic Christianity. There was plenty of emotion, and much loud crying out to God, which isn’t a bad idea, particularly in view of the difficult and dangerous condition in which we find the nation and the churches in general. The music was of the contemporary Christian version with much repetition that can induce a mind-altering state that might be experienced at a Vineyard church.

The Tabernacle of David

Music plays a large, almost inordinate, part in the dominion theology movement—particularly of the charismatic persuasion. It is considered a means to move God called “The Tabernacle of David.” IHOP’s description of The Tabernacle of David was written by Mike Bickle, and states in part:

The building of David's tabernacle - Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15: 16-17. The 3 dimensions to this restoration. A priestly dimension - focused on 24 hour a day worship and intercession that follows the Davidic order of worship. A prophetic dimension - focused on the release of the prophetic ministry in the church of Jesus Christ - Acts 2:17. A kingly dimension - focused on the apostolic ministry that accomplish the tasks of the kingdom with power fulfilling the Great Commission - evangelism, community and equipping. The Tabernacle of David in all 3 dimensions had its beginning of restoration in the New Testament church. However, the completion of these 3 dimensions have not yet been fully restored that the nations might know God. The Tabernacle of David is essential in the completion of the Great Harvest of souls promised to the church at the end of the age. We believe that city wide prayer ministries will fill the earth before the Lord returns.¹

Bickle says that he came across the “secret” to a vital prayer life when he was studying the tabernacle of David, the perfect model of a 24-hour-a-day prayer and worship ministry.

¹ Mike Bickle, “Tabernacle of David Fact Sheet,” International House of Prayer.

Acts 15:16-17 references Amos 9:11, which speaks of the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus returns; it has nothing to do with charismatic dominionists taking it upon themselves to move God through ritual. Isaiah 16:5 speaks of the tabernacle of David where the Lord will sit upon the throne “judging, and seeking judgment, and being diligent in righteousness.”

Dominion theology consistently usurps Millennium promises and tries to apply it to the present age in order to justify its agenda to transform society into the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Tabernacle of David teaching places the Body of Christ back under the Law. The temple has been destroyed and the Ark of the (Old) Covenant is no longer available. God’s presence dwells within the true believer in Jesus, not in temples made by hands (Acts 7:48). Our heavenly Father is not moved by ritual. Nor does He submit His eternal plan to the whims of man.

The Response was not a 24-hour prayer and worship ministry, but the repetitive and almost continual music that took up the majority of time fits the Tabernacle of David teaching.

One aspect of spiritual warfare a la dominion theology is the blowing of the shofar (the ram’s horn)—a call for God’s glory to descend. It is believed by some that blowing the shofar causes confusion in the spirit realm, scattering demonic powers and opening Heaven for the glory, power and presence of God to fall upon the congregation. Thus, many charismatic dominion events begin with the blowing of the shofar, just as was done at start of The Response.

I don’t say these things as a judgment of the people’s hearts. I have no doubt that many of those on stage and most in the audience were sincere in their desire to approach God. But corporate ritual is not the way to God’s heart. It may be fine symbolism to move the hearts of the people, but to think that it must be done to move God’s heart places it in the category of works for the sake of righteousness—what God required of Israel for a time until the Holy Spirit was given to all believers.

There are many Christians who would not fit in at such a function simply because they do not lean toward charismatism. But at the least we can agree that for charismatics and Pentecostals, The Response provided a catharsis and an opportunity to feel as if something was taking place that would move God to respond. At the same time, however, The Response represented very little of the Body of Christ in America as a whole.

Yet there was great optimism expressed from the stage. Luis Cataldo, program coordinator for The Response, said, “Something has transpired not only in the spiritual realm, but in the temporal realm as well, as a result of this gathering.”

Identificational Repentance

If anything of consequence transpired in the spirit realm it is not evident at this point. People came, they cried out to God, they wept, they sang, they danced, they made a joyful noise. They also pointed out the sins of the nation—particularly abortion—and repented for allowing it to exist. But in the thinking of the leaders, personal repentance isn’t enough; it was necessary for the people to repent for the nation, as if that carries any weight with our heavenly Father.

This is called identificational repentance—the identification of individuals with a corporate group of people to confess that group’s social sins (e.g., White men are guilty of stealing the land from the Indians; I am a white man; ergo, I am guilty of stealing the land from the Indians). The idea is to “stand in the gap” as a substitute for a corporate people in order to nullify so-called “generational curses.” It is the basis for the Reconciliation Movement which purports to address the foundational sins that have hindered the Gospel from reaching indigenous people.

No man can repent for any other man or group of men—certainly not for an entire nation. I carry no guilt for the sin of abortion or any other of the national sins lamented from the stage. I can repent only for my personal sins.

The idea that Christians can repent for the sins of the nation is based on a teaching prevalent within the World-Christian Movement and the New Apostolic Reformation—that a Christian presence sanctifies a nation or a people group, regardless if the vast majority of the nation or people group ever repents and turns to Christ for salvation.

And this is where we must part on an ideological basis with The Response. It’s not that we don’t agree that America is spiraling downward to destruction spiritually and temporally. It’s not that we don’t agree that God is the only solution. It’s not that we don’t agree that personal repentance and ministry to the lost is of utmost importance. Nor do we question the love most of the people attending have for the Lord.

No, our parting is on the philosophical basis upon which The Response rested: the desire and attempt to work toward Christianity taking over the world through gradual attainment of control over various aspects of human society—the “Seven Kingdoms,” or “Seven Mountains,” or “Seven Spheres” of society: family, religion, government, the media, arts and entertainment, education and business.

This is the objective of all forms of dominion theology, predicated on the belief that Jesus cannot return to the earth until “the Church” has taken dominion over the nations and subdued all mankind to a godly, worldwide governmental structure.

I would not question the love for the Lord held by the vast majority of rank-and-file Christians who have come to believe this deception, nor even for many of its proponents. It is because they lack proper understanding of the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world that they work themselves into a frenzy in the hope of moving God to transform society. Also, if society could be transformed it would make being a Christian so much easier. Think how wonderful it would be if all our government leaders worked to eradicate the evils of abortion, homosexuality, prostitution, etc. Why, we could lead such comfortable lives not having those evil sinners hanging around.

ABERRANT ELEMENTS

Although much of the secular media’s criticism of The Response has been predicated more on pre-judgment of motives and intentions, we cannot dismiss all they have had to say. Rachel Maddow also recognized that some of the endorsers of The Response adhere to the belief that Christianity is destined

to gain control over the various aspects of society through the New Apostolic Reformation. In particular she named C. Peter Wagner, Bryan Fischer, Mike Bickle, John Benefiel and Cindy Jacobs, as well as Christian Zionist John Hagee. To illustrate, she played video clips of each of them in their worst form, saying some pretty outlandish things.

We see C. Peter Wagner saying that Japan is one of the nations that have “consciously, openly invited national demonization.” He claims that the Sun goddess visits the emperor of Japan in person and they engage in sexual intercourse. Thereby they become one flesh—an invitation to the Sun goddess to demonize the whole nation.

A clip of Bryan Fischer reveals that in his judgment “permits should not be granted to build even one more mosque in the United States of America—not one.” He believes that “alternate religions to Christianity have no First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion.”

Mike Bickle accuses Oprah Winfrey of having a spirit of deception and being one of the main pastors of the harlot movement.

John Hagee attributes the Holocaust to God’s purpose of returning the Jews to Israel.

John Benefiel indicts the Statue of Liberty as a false goddess—a demonic idol given to the U.S. by French Freemasonry.

Cindy Jacobs prattles about drum fish dying and birds falling out of the air in Beebe, Arkansas because the governor of Arkansas’ name is Beebe, and former Arkansas governor Bill Clinton introduced the “Don’t Ask; Don’t Tell” policy for the military.

I believe Hagee is correct in his assessment of the Holocaust, and, yes, the Statue of Liberty is a goddess adopted by Freemasonry. I’ve written of these things myself. As far as the others go, they are out to lunch. But to the world even the true statements are just plain silly if not perverse.

Of course Maddow would present the worst possible connection to Rick Perry, but the fact remains that several endorsers and participants in The Response are proponents of aberrant teachings.

As much as it may pain believers to admit it, Maddow’s assessment of these people hits close to the mark. To be truthful, there are far worse things that could be attributed to not only these, but others associated with The Response.

New Apostolic Reformation

The connection of several leaders of The Response to the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) is a matter of record. Briefly, the NAR posits that God is restoring the offices of apostles and prophets for a coming revival of Christianity (see our 2006 special report, *Apostolic Reformation: a New Move or an Old Deception?*). Under the NAR, C. Peter Wagner is considered the chief apostle for “the Church” today.

Although not stated at its inception, the NAR has adopted the dominion theology teaching that its leaders believe will spearhead the transformation of society by attaining control over the “Seven Mountains.” Once society is transformed to godliness, the Lord can then return. This has been the objective

of the World-Christian Movement and most forms of dominion theology for decades (see my two books, *Vengeance is Ours: The Church in Dominion* and *The World Christian Movement* [Sword Publishers]).

Connections to The Response

Many if not most in the audience and on the platform of The Response likely have little or no knowledge or understanding of the New Apostolic Reformation. But The Response was heavily influenced by those associated with that movement, as well as other aberrant teachings. We will look at a number of these and consider their philosophies. Most of those listed as “Leaders” of The Reponse are connected to two organizations in particular: the International House of Prayer (IHOP) and American Family Association (AFA).

International House of Prayer

The International House of Prayer played a large part in The Response. The two primary leaders on stage were IHOP’s founder in Kansas City, Mike Bickle (of Kansas City Prophets infamy) and Luis Cataldo who is on staff at IHOP. Three other IHOP officials listed as “Leaders” were Randy & Kelsey Bohlender and Dave Sliker. The website for IHOP states this:

The International House of Prayer of Kansas City is an evangelical missions organization that is committed to praying for the release of the fullness of God’s power and purpose, as we actively win the lost, heal the sick, feed the poor, make disciples, and impact the seven spheres of society—family, education, government, economy, arts, media, and religion. Our vision is to work in relationship with the larger Body of Christ to serve the Great Commission, as we seek to walk out the two great commandments to love God and people.

Although IHOP doesn’t openly stress dominion theology, its goals fit perfectly into the dominionist strategy. Being largely charismatic in its functioning, IHOP leans toward the Latter-Rain brand of dominionism.

American Family Association

The American Family Association was the host for The Response, footing the lion’s share of the costs. Founded in 1977 by Donald Wildmon, AFA is “one of the largest and most effective pro-family organizations in the country with over two million online supporters and approximately 180,000 paid subscribers to the AFA Journal, the ministry’s monthly magazine. In addition, AFA owns and operates nearly 200 radio stations across the country under the American Family Radio (AFR) banner.”

According to the AFA website, AFA maintains activist websites that rally Christian activists to contact companies asking them to drop their advertising from objectionable TV shows. AFA websites average over 40 million hits and five million visitors each month.

The philosophical statement for AFA states:

The American Family Association believes that God has communicated absolute truth to mankind, and that

all people are subject to the authority of God's Word at all times. Therefore AFA believes that a culture based on biblical truth best serves the well-being of our nation and our families, in accordance with the vision of our founding documents; and that personal transformation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest agent of biblical change in any culture.

So the objective of AFA is to change American culture to function on the basis of biblical truth bringing biblical change. This is the dominionist agenda.

AFA does provide a valuable resource for Christians who want to be politically and socially aware. There no evidence that AFA openly espouses dominion theology. But its brand of Christian activism certainly serves the dominionist agenda, and its philosophical statement puts it in the dominionist camp by its working to transform society. The fact that AFA picked up the tab for The Response and was the "host entity," brings into question why AFA would align itself with IHOP and certain other dominionist elements.

We are not unsympathetic to what AFA does in informing Christians of issues that affect them. But there is a pattern of using the faith to promote political activism, and the approach is not always with an attitude of humility. That said, AFA has received a good share of unfair and biased opposition from left wing elements, which is to be expected.

ARE WE TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

On the face of it, who could argue with the goals of IHOP and AFA? The problem is not that they want to "influence" the seven spheres of society, but that their hidden purpose is to prepare Christians to actually take over those seven spheres in order to establish a godly society. That may seem a noble purpose, but it is contrary to the Lord's words that His Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). It is also contrary to the many Scriptures that reveal a great apostasy and the kingdom of the anti-Christ ruling the earth just prior to the Lord's return. Will Christianity win the world only to lose it again? Then what's the purpose?

Believers in Jesus have not been given the mandate to transform society or to change the world. On the contrary, we are told that we can expect nothing from the world except tribulation and persecution. All attempts by "the Church" to rule the world have been disastrous: Roman Catholicism brought the world the Dark Ages; millions of Jews and non-Catholic Christians were slaughtered in order to force them to conform to the dictates of the papacy. The Church of England persecuted those who refused to bend to its rulership. Calvin in Geneva, Luther in Germany—every attempt to bring society into conformity to one version of the faith or another has succumbed to satanic manipulation. This is because, by the will of the Father, the world (including the realm of religion) is Satan's domain until Jesus returns.

Think about that for a moment. One of the spheres which these entities wish to gain control over (or at least influence) is religion. That means that either all the world's religions will have

to submit to the new order of apostles and prophets or face consequences. At the least, in order to influence the world in the realm of religion, Christianity will have to compromise itself, much as it is currently doing with Islam under the move toward "Chrislam"—finding common ground on which to establish and manage a moral society as a whole.

Churches can't manage themselves in a godly way. And they're going to manage the world?

OTHER ABERRATIONS

We will look at just a few of the many leaders and endorsers of The Response where there is reason for concern. The website for The Response lists an impressive slate of leaders, some of whom spoke at the rally in Houston.

Mike Bickle: Mike Bickle addressed The Response, as did several other IHOP leaders. Bickle founded IHOP in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1999. Prior to that he was pastor of the Kansas City Fellowship (now known as Metro Christian Fellowship), infamous for spawning a group of false teachers called the "Kansas City Prophets." Again, the dominionist agenda to take over the seven spheres of society was presented. During his prayer he called upon God to "Transform every sphere of society. Touch the marketplace, the government, the media, the education, with the glory of God."

Luis Cataldo: As director of The Response as well as program coordinator, Luis Cataldo is currently on staff at International House of Prayer in Kansas City. Cataldo called upon the younger generation to step into the mantle of revival from the older generation.

There is a teaching within the Latter-Rain movement that emphasizes passing the "mantle" from one person to another so that the second person may continue the prophetic ministry of the first. It is taken from 1 Kings 19:19 and 2 Kings 2:13 where Elijah passed his mantle to Elisha.

But there is no mantle (cloak) being passed around. It's more a claiming of passing the mantle as if one's will can cause God's anointing to be passed around like candy. The basis for this practice is not scriptural, of course, but is predicated on the Latter-Rain teaching that God is preparing a last generation of apostles and prophets to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth so that Jesus can return. The teaching has been going on since the 1940s at least, and each generation has failed to accomplish the goal. So it's necessary that each generation pick up the mantle from the previous generation in order to keep the dream alive.

But that dream is futile because Jesus will come at a time when the world is in such utter darkness that He asked, "When the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

But lack of belief in revival to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth is considered pessimistic. So these people exercise themselves into a spiritual frenzy in the same manner the priests of Baal did on Mount Carmel. And it will avail nothing, first of all because their motive is not righteousness for righteousness' sake, but righteousness in order to move God in the direction they want Him to go.

I'm not speaking of the participants who follow the leaders ignorantly and out of good faith as much as I am the adherents to the Latter-Rain heresy who use psychological tactics to move the masses as they wish.

Buddy Smith: In charge of Accounting and Legal for The Response – Currently the Executive Vice President of American Family Association and American Family Radio. He is well known for spearheading a boycott against Home Depot for sponsoring and participating in numerous gay-pride parades.

David Lane: National Finance Chairman for The Response – Lane is a political activist for the Christian right, and is largely funded by Wildmon's American Family Association. Lane has stated, "What we're doing is the mobilization of pastors and pews to restore America to her Judeo-Christian heritage. That's our goal."

Randy & Kelsey Bohlender: Program Coordinators – Prayer missionaries with the International House of Prayer on the leadership team of TheCall, rallies promoting revival and change in America and around the world. They are also the founders and directors of the Zoe Foundation, which promotes adoption as a positive alternative to abortion.

Doug Stringer: National Church and Ministry Mobilization Coordinator – Founder and President of Turning Point Ministries International and Somebody Cares America/International. He is considered an apostle for these last days.

Alice Patterson: Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma Church Mobilization - Founder of Justice at the Gate in San Antonio, Texas. Patterson wrote *Bridging the Racial and Political Divide: How Godly Politics Can Transform A Nation*. The website for Justice at the Gate says about her book:

This book will help you to understand how to bring change on the:

- The personal level
- The governmental level
- The strategic spiritual level

Her book is endorsed by C. Peter Wagner, Ed Siloso, and Jay Swallow, the latter two also appearing at The Response.

Governor Perry's website has announced Patterson's endorsement of Perry and lauds Patterson for her "strong moral leadership and commitment to upholding the values that protect life, strengthen families and defend freedom."

Again, it's not that we have any objection to Patterson or anyone else exercising their freedom in Christ to involve themselves in politics, but the objective to transform society is a dominionist strategy for Christians to rule the nations without the Lord present on earth.

John Benefiel: Heartland Apostolic Prayer Network, Oklahoma City, OK

Bryant Fischer: Who among the leaders of The Response reveals the attitude of dominion theology better than Bryant Fischer who stated, "alternate religions to Christianity have no First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion"?

This is the cry of Christian Reconstruction that would see Christianity as the only religion sanctioned by government.

These are merely a few among the many people involved to one degree or another in The Response. The most prominent are involved in the New Apostolic Reformation, which has a dominionist agenda.

Again, however, not everyone involved is aware of, or consciously involved in, the aberrant movements associated with dominion theology and the New Apostolic Reformation. But it would behoove us to refresh what dominion theology proposes.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF DOMINION THEOLOGY

There are two basic elements within Christianity that espouse some form of dominion theology. These are charismatic dominionists, who have adopted the Latter-Rain teachings of last-days apostles and prophets, and Christian Reconstructionists, who believe that Christianity will eventually come to dominate the world through the proclaiming of the Gospel. The former are much more mystical in their approach than are the latter, and the latter look down on the former as somewhat addled, but are willing to work with them to achieve their dominionist goals.

In my book, *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church In Dominion*, I quote some dominionists who state strongly how, when Christianity takes over, the Old Testament penal sanctions will be reinstated. I will quote only a few. Keep in mind that this book was published in 1990, and was three years in the writing. It remains the only book still in print on the subject of dominion theology.

Dominion theology is predicated upon three basic beliefs: 1) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve; 2) The Church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan; 3) Jesus cannot or will not return until the Church has taken dominion by gaining control of the earth's governmental and social institutions.²

A godly law order will work to disinherit, execute, and supplant the ungodly and to conform the godly in their inheritance. For Christians to work for anything less is to deny God.³

Because they perceive sin and its consequent evil as ethical issues, Reconstructionists believe that the Old Testament penal sanctions against certain sins are still in effect, and that it is the responsibility of government to implement those sanctions; because government has been usurped by atheists and humanists, it has perverted the role entrusted to it and is about to experience God's judgment. That judgment will come in the form of destruction upon all human institutions that do not comply with God's Law, and their replacement with Christian-oriented leadership. It is the Church's responsibility to place itself in the forefront of political and social action in order to take the reins of control out of the hands of the ungodly (e.g., the unethical), and implement rule under a theonomic structure (*theo*: God;

² Albert James Dager, *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church In Dominion* (Redmond, WA: Sword Publishers, 1990), p. 87.

³ Rouses J. Rushdoony, "Power from Below," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1:2 (winter, 1974), pp. 9-10, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours.*, p. 174.

nomos: law). This will establish Jesus Christ as Lord over His creation through the ministry of His Body, “the Church,” while He remains in Heaven.

David Chilton, a major voice within Christian Reconstruction (the movement to reconstruct society based on God’s Law) has this to say about Matthew 5:13-16:

This is nothing less than a mandate for the complete social transformation of the entire world. And what Jesus condemns is *ineffectiveness*, failing to change the society around us. We are commanded to live in such a way that someday all men will glorify God—that they will become converted to the Christian faith. The point is that if the Church is obedient, the people and nations of the world will be disciplined to Christianity. We all know that everyone *should* be a Christian, that the laws and institutions of all nations *should* follow the Bible’s blueprints. But the Bible tells us more than that. The Bible tells us that these commands are the shape of the future. We must change the world; and what is more we *shall* change the world. (Chilton’s emphasis)⁴

Matthew 5:13-16 is not a “mandate for the complete social transformation of the entire world.” It is a mandate for *personal* holiness that will manifest itself as salt and light to the world.

But for dominionists witnessing about Jesus is not enough:

The Great Commission to the Church does not end with simply witnessing to the nations. Christ’s command is that we disciple the nations—all the nations. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of Christ. They are to be disciplined, made obedient to the faith. This means that every aspect of life throughout the world is to be brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ: families, individuals, business, science, agriculture, the arts, law, education, economics, psychology, philosophy, and every other sphere of human activity. Nothing may be left out. Christ “must reign, until He has put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). We have been given the responsibility of converting the entire world.⁵

Here we see the “spheres” of society laid out in a slightly different form from that enumerated by the major players at The Response. This is where the concept originated, whether or not today’s proponents realize it or agree with the ultimate idea of world conquest by “the Church” instead of by Jesus at His return.

But how are the kingdoms of the world to be “made obedient to the faith”? Another major voice within Christian Reconstruction, Ray Sutton, tells us it will be through implementation of the Old Testament penal sanctions:

First, Paul’s Romans 1:18-32 language indicates that New Testament penal sanctions are *similar to the Old Testament*. The vast majority of Old Testament penalties

penalties should still be instituted. As earlier sections of this book indicate, the proper hermeneutic for determining what carries over into the New Testament is the principle: continue what is not changed in the New Testament. This would apply to the penal sanctions of the Old Testament. The death penalty offenses that should be extended into the New Testament are witchcraft (Deut. 18:10-11), idolatry (Deut. 13:10), murder (Gen. 9:6), blasphemy (Lev. 24:11-23), homosexuality (Lev. 18:22-29), bestiality (Lev. 18:23), rape (Deut. 22:25-27), adultery (Lev. 20:10), incest (Lev. 20:14), incorrigibility of teenagers (Deut. 21:18-20), kidnapping (Exod. 21:16), and some instances of perjury (Deut. 19:19-20).

...not every convicted homosexual would have to be put to death according to I Corinthians 6. In the New Covenant Age, only the “unreformable” element would be put to death.(Sutton’s emphasis)⁶

I’d hate to see how many of today’s prominent Christian leaders would be put to death for adultery, or how many would have been put to death when they were incorrigible teenagers.

As far as dealing with the “unreformable” elements, isn’t that what every religious society—including Christian societies—have done historically? If someone “repents” and conforms to the religious authorities they are spared. If not, off with their heads! Where is the grace of God and love for our enemies in that?

And who among today’s Christian leaders could be trusted to administer these penal sanctions without error?

It’s been twenty-one years since we published *Vengeance Is Ours*. That generation of dominionists are still in the background, working to see their agenda achieved. Today’s dominionist teachers are more low-key, realizing that the vast majority of Christians would back off from their agenda if they knew its true nature.

GOVERNOR PERRY’S DILEMMA

After sending e-mails and making phone calls to Governor Perry’s office with no response as of the publishing of this issue, we don’t know exactly how the governor is reacting to the criticism from the leftist media. Nor do we know if he fully understands or agrees with the dominionist agenda of the leaders of The Response. My suspicion is that he may be a victim of their stealth approach to achieving their goals.

Governor Perry seems to be a truly devout believer whose faith is substantial if perhaps somewhat traditional (he is a Methodist, but attends an Evangelical church). As a politician—particularly a Christian politician—he knows the base of his support, and at the center of that base in Texas are those in the New Apostolic Reformation.

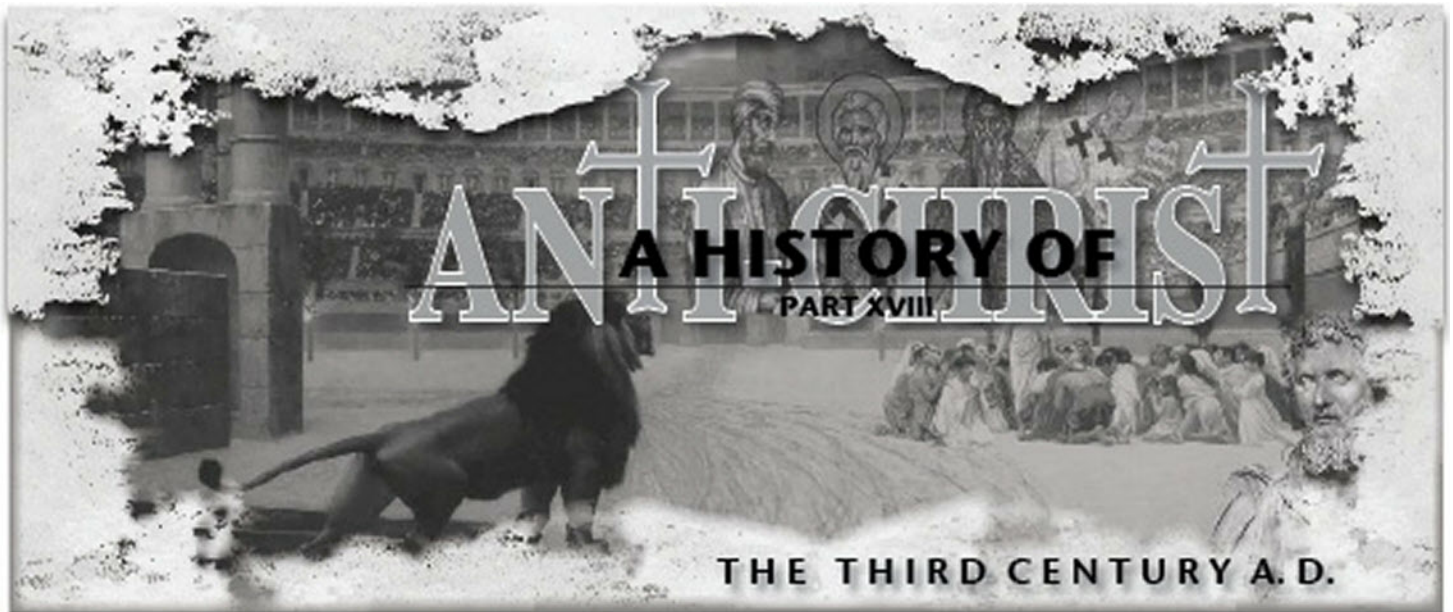
In September, 2009, Perry was visited by two Texas pastors who claimed to bring him a prophetic word. The two, Tom Schlueter from Prince of Peace Church in Arlington and Bob Long of Rally Call Center in Austin, prayed over Perry,

(Continued on page 31)

⁴ David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Forth Worth: Dominion Press, 1985), p. 339, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours*, p. 183.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours*, p. 184.

⁶ Ray Sutton, *That You May Prosper: dominion by Covenant* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics [ICE], 1987), p. 189, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours*, p. 188.



The third century AD saw much turmoil as Anti-Christ continued his persecution of believers in Jesus. The Jews were largely left alone within the Roman Empire even though they did not engage in emperor worship and the worship of the Roman Pantheon. Christians who did not submit to the pagan worship of Rome did not escape so easily. Anti-Christ busied himself with trying to stamp out this ever-growing faith in Christ among the pagan populations of the world. The rest of the nations remained largely enslaved to their heathen gods and continued to war with one another.

Numerous successions to the emperor's throne in Rome ended with murder, several by the emperors' own troops due to discontent with defeats or other causes.

Under the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (146-211), the third century began with severe persecution of Christians.¹ Upholding his predecessors' earlier rulings prohibiting conversion to Christianity, Severus continued the tactic of attacking the leadership of the growing faith community. Christianity's widespread departure from a plurality of elders within the assemblies to the election of primary authorities called "bishops" made it easier for the anti-Christ forces of Rome to target the assemblies within the empire.

Some of those bishops had to flee to avoid capture as persecution under Severus reached Egypt. This illustrates a major problem with the clergy-laity system under which the vast majority of assemblies called "churches" operate: strike the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Anti-Christ knows well how to employ this tactic.

All departures from the truth of God's Word are anti-Christ in nature. In this case, Anti-Christ fomented the clergy-laity model, then used it to weaken the assemblies by attacking the clergy. Unfortunately, the vast majority of Christians living under clergy-laity systems throughout the centuries have not recognized the unscriptural nature of that model. Most Christians continue

¹ The word "severe" comes from the Latin, *severus*, coinciding with the name of this Roman emperor. The *Online Etymology Dictionary* says it possibly combines two Latin words, *se vero*, "without kindness."

to subject themselves to it. Even today, wherever the faith is attacked the first to suffer are the clergy.

Those who recognize this chink in the armor of Christianity lament the persecution of pastors and other clergymen, and we must admire them for their willingness to suffer for the faith. Many have paid the ultimate price to protect the Lord's flocks over which they took charge. In some countries devout men take leadership fully aware that they will be the primary targets for persecution. In spite of the unscriptural nature of the clergy-laity system, it's very likely that the Lord has allowed that system to exist in order to protect the congregations at large even though it means suffering by their pastors.

Yet the nobility of such leaders does not fully offset the problems created by the clergy-laity system. It was bound to devolve into authoritarianism simply because of the sin nature of men who seek power over others, and the natural tendency of the average person to look for leadership from others rather than rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth.

Upon the death of the original apostles, the Anti-Christ saw the opportunity for inroads into leadership over believers in Christ. There was no longer a central authority to which they could go for instruction, and copies of the Gospels and letters they left behind were few and far between. The vast majority of believers were from among the poor and illiterate. In the minds of many the faith was ill-defined. This created fertile ground for men of wealth and education to gain ascendancy within the assemblies and to establish an ungodly authoritarianism. The third century saw strong growth of that authoritarianism as power over the assemblies within the Roman Empire became more and more centralized.

The question arises why the Lord would allow His sheep to come under that authoritarianism. As we continue in this series (if the Lord is willing) we will find that, in spite of the evils that came from it, the Lord used it to accomplish many of His purposes. We must not forget that the Lord uses evil to test His people, and that from the beginning of man's history He has

always retained a small remnant who remained true to His Word and who will inherit His coming Kingdom on the earth.

Just as the Jews fell victim to the religious leaders who usurped power over them, yet a remnant remained, those who have called themselves Christians over the past two thousand years have largely fallen victim to the religious leaders who have usurped power over them. Yet a remnant has remained, and will remain until the Lord returns.

The Jews fell victim to a religious system called “Judaism”—a melding of pagan traditions and the Hebrew Scriptures; Christians fell victim to a religious system called “Christianity”—a melding of Greek pagan philosophy with the writings of the apostles, and with a smaller reliance on the Hebrew Scriptures.

Greek philosophy began to be melded with Scripture to some degree even during the first century, continuing through the second century. The third century saw the Hellenizing of the faith become more aggressive to the point of changing significantly the way in which Christians would from then on understand much of Scripture. In attempts to distance the Body of Christ from its Hebrew roots, partly as a response to the Judaizing of the faith by those insisting on placing it back under the Mosaic Law, some of the bishops began to instill Greek elements of philosophy into their teachings. These bishops became known as “the Church Fathers”² who developed a new discipline based on the integration of Greek philosophy with faith. That new discipline became known as “theology,” and its educated proponents were called “theologians.” It wasn’t long before the theologians became more authoritative in the minds of Christians than the original apostles had been in their day.

Theology is, and has always been, largely anti-Christ because, due to the influence of the “Church Fathers,” it is based mostly on the Greek and Latin philosophies integrated into the institutions that collectively became known as “the Church.” As well, there have developed over the centuries various schools of theology that are at odds with one another (and with Scripture) in many respects. Theologians and clergy learn specific religious traditions according to the particular school of theology under which they study. Each school of theology paints the faith in the light of the theological philosophy that guides it. Anti-Christ has developed many schools of Christian theology started by, and attended by, people whose noble intentions are misdirected into belief systems that pervert Scripture to a lesser or greater degree.

Space does not allow for exhaustive treatment of the subject, so in this installment of our series on the history of Anti-Christ we will deal only briefly with those theologians and Church

² The title “Church Fathers” is apt because these men begat the institutionalism that formed the basis for “the Church” (Gr., *kyriake oikia*: “the Lord’s House”), as opposed to the true *ecclesia* (the called out, or assembly of believers). God does not dwell in temples (church buildings and “sanctuaries”) made by hands (Acts 7:48; 17:24), but in the bodies of His called out people. The only true Father of the Body of Christ is our Heavenly Father, although Jesus could be called the Father of the New Covenant (this could be one reason He is called “the Everlasting Father” in Isaiah 9:6). If any men were to be called the “Fathers of the Faith,” as opposed to “Fathers of the Church,” they would have to be the original apostles who walked with the Lord, not these come-lately philosophical integrationists. However, because “the Church” refers to the institutionalization of the faith and to the buildings that house them, it’s not altogether inaccurate to call these men “Church Fathers.”

Fathers whose influence spanned the third century. I suggest our readers delve further into this subject on their own in order to understand some of the Greek and Latin philosophy that has influenced the teachers who, in turn, may have influenced them. We will see how subtly Anti-Christ has perverted the religious thinking of Christians during that time and afterward.

I must state that although I am focusing on the anti-Christ aspects of these “Church Fathers,” not everything they taught was error. In some cases they came to the defense of some crucial doctrines of the faith, and some paid the ultimate price of martyrdom for their faith. Yet in spite of the noble character displayed in some cases, we cannot ignore the truth that these Church Fathers integrated Greek and Latin philosophy into their teachings, resulting in confusion and the diminishing of the true Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus commanded His disciples to proclaim. That philosophical integrationism would spawn the great apostasy known as Roman Catholicism.

This was also a time when power struggles increased among the newly formed clergy class. Even before Constantine would later solidify the central authority of the churches in Rome, the bishop of Rome was gaining ascendancy as the primary bishop within the Roman Empire, and was even referred to as “the pope,” or “father” of all the faithful. Yet we find that the real power over Christian thought came from outside of Rome as the Church Fathers developed a hybrid pagan/Christian belief system.

Most came from Egypt, which has historically been one of Israel’s greatest enemies. This fact may have played a large part in the developing anti-Semitism among early believers.

THE GREEK FATHERS

Although those considered among the Greek “Church Fathers” were not truly Greek, they wrote in Greek and were influenced by Greek philosophy which they melded with their understanding of Scripture. Short treatises on the two Greek Fathers of the third century follow.

Clement of Alexandria

Titus Flavius Clemens (150-215?) was the second known leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria in Egypt. His birthplace is unknown, but he was the son of wealthy pagans. He was foremost in synthesizing Greek philosophy with Christian teachings, and attempted to mediate Gnostics and Christians. A devotee of Plato, Clement developed a form of Christian Platonism, suggesting that the goal of Christian life is deification, identifying with Plato’s idea of assimilation into God. Having come from a wealthy pagan upbringing, Clement referenced thousands of quotations from pagan sources in his theological writings.

Although Clement wrote most of his theological treatises during the latter part of the second century, his doctrines became most accepted during the third century as his students promoted them in attempts to further define the faith according to the anti-Christ Greek philosophical school of thought.

Origen

One of Clement’s most famous students was Origen Adamantius (184?-254?), an Alexandrian scholar and theologian,

another of the Church Fathers from the Greek school who was Egyptian by birth, but to Christian parents. His father, Leonides, was a man of means, but when he was martyred under the persecution of Severus, his family became impoverished. Origen came under the protection of a wealthy woman for a time, and was able to muster some possessions including an extensive library of Greek philosophy.

Origen is considered the first systematic theologian and philosopher of the Christian Church. In 203 Origen succeeded Clement as leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria. Among other theological/philosophical writings, Origen wrote *De Principiis (On First Principles)*, what some consider the seminal work of Christian Neoplatonism. Neoplatonism developed from Hellenistic syncretism and spawned movements such as Gnosticism and Hermeticism. Yet a dichotomy existed in that Origen opposed Gnosticism as a philosophy. He did, however, admire Gnosticism's system for reaching others with one's philosophy.

Hermeticism is the basis for much Western esoteric tradition, incorporating three primary disciplines: alchemy, astrology (the operation of the Moon), and Theurgy (the operation of the stars). Neoplatonism can be found as an undercurrent in such occult traditions as Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, both of which have ties to ancient Christianity through the Hellenization of the faith.

So although Origen did take a strong stand for the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and opposed much pagan thought, his pagan philosophical background influenced much of his thinking in producing his syncretistic melding of Scripture with pagan philosophy.

Origen taught the preexistence of souls, and that, in the end, all beings, including perhaps even Satan, will be reconciled to God. However, his position on this belief (called *apokatastasis*—"restitution") seemed to vary in different writings. In some cases he stated strongly a case for universalism; in other cases he stated just as strongly that only those who choose God and live according to the virtues of God will enter into Heaven.

Origen's *On First Principles* begins by laying the basis for his understanding of a divine hierarchical triad, or "Trinity." Briefly, Origen posits that the God and Father, who holds the universe together, is superior to all beings; the Son is less than the Father but superior to all other creatures; the Holy Spirit is still less than the Son and lives only within the saints. This theory, called subordinationism, asserts that the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate to God the Father not only in position, but in being and nature. The difference between Origen's theory and that of Arianism is that Origen believed that the Son and the Holy Spirit emanated from the Father, and Arianism considered the Son to be a created being. The dispute was settled in the fourth century with the doctrine of the Trinity, which we will address in the next installment of this series.

Origen adopted a rigid ascetic lifestyle, no doubt influenced by the asceticism of various Greek religious sects that demanded purity of life for priests who would offer sacrifices to their gods. According to Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, Origen's asceticism was so severe that he had himself castrated in keeping

with a literal application of Matthew 19:12, which states that there are some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The asceticism of early Christianity, adapted from Greek and other forms of asceticism, formed the basis for the establishment of monastic communities, and the Roman Catholic religious orders of priests and nuns which would come later.

Other Greek Fathers would be influential during the fourth through eighth centuries in developing Christian doctrine and combating heresies (and perceived heresies) that would arise as struggles for supremacy over an increasingly centralized "church" ensued.

THE LATIN FATHERS

The Latin Fathers are early Christian theologians who wrote in Latin. They continued the clergy-laity model and worked to refine it. Although called the Latin Fathers, their philosophical education was largely based on the Greek tradition, and further contributed to the Hellenization of the faith.

Tertullian

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 225), the son of a Roman centurion, was converted to Christianity a few years prior to the beginning of the third century. He wrote prolifically on theology and apologetics, and promoted asceticism in line with many of the Church Fathers' views on the evil nature of the physical realm, particularly man's flesh. Although Tertullian's and others' understanding of the fallen nature of man was correct, their adoption of asceticism was an overreaction, and intruded greatly on the individual believer's freedom in Christ.

In keeping with his moral rigorism and stand against worldliness, in his later life Tertullian joined the Montanists, a sect that engaged in mystical practices and alleged prophetic utterances by adherents while in a trance (see Part XVII of this series).

Despite his shortcomings Tertullian offered strong resistance to philosophical integrationism. In his writing on *Heretics*, he correctly stated that "philosophy is the material of the world's wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and dispensation of God." Charging that heresies are instigated by philosophy, he asked what Athens has to do with Jerusalem, and what the Academy has to do with the Church.

Because of this he has been falsely charged over the centuries as epitomizing the "anti-intellectualism" of the early Church, this in spite of being highly intellectual himself. This charge is an example of how the anti-Christ spirit within the churches has consistently maligned those who object to the influences of the world's philosophies within the Body of Christ.

Yet in spite of his polemic against Greek philosophy Tertullian did integrate Greek thought into his teachings. Thus he represents some of the best and some of the worst among the theologians that arose during the early centuries of faith in Jesus Christ.

Cyprian of Carthage

Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus was born of pagan parents sometime during the early third century. He was known as a

prominent trial lawyer and teacher of rhetoric after the Greek philosophical schools. In the early days of his conversion to Christianity Cyprian was influenced by the writings of Tertullian, prompting him to write *Epistola ad Donatum de gratia Dei* ("Letter to Donatus concerning God's Grace") and the *Testimoniorum adversus Judaeos* ("A Testimony against the Jews"). An apology against the Hebrew roots of the faith, this latter work fueled the anti-Semitism that festered under the continued influence of the Anti-Christ.

Another ploy of Anti-Christ has been to place new converts in positions of authority over the saints. In this case, Cyprian, who was baptized sometime between 245 and 248, was "ordained" a deacon, and soon after that he was "ordained" a presbyter. Sometime between July 248 and April 249 he was chosen bishop of Carthage.

Cyprian's essay, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, was an appeal for unity among Christians and for the importance of bishops to ensure that unity. Although the term "Catholic" at that time did not refer to the institution later formed under Constantine, but merely meant "Universal," Cyprian's idea of unity under the bishops contributed to the increasing move toward centralized institutional authority, with the bishop of Rome holding supremacy. Cyprian offered arguments both for and against such papal authority.

Due to the persecution of Christians within the Roman Empire at the time, many fell away and became known as *lapsi* ("the lapsed"). As many of them asked to be received back into fellowship Cyprian insisted that they demonstrate earnest repentance of their failure. This met with much opposition among the more liberal clergy who were eager to receive them without conditions.

Cyprian himself had fled Carthage to avoid having to either make sacrifice to the emperor or take a public stand against the edict to do so under the Decian persecution. However, he later would die a martyr.

THE DESERT FATHERS

During the third century communities comprised of Christian hermits, ascetics, monks, and women committed to asceticism congregated in the deserts of Egypt. The more prominent of the men who formed and led these communities came to be known as the Desert Fathers. The communities formed by and around these men were the beginnings of monasticism within Christianity. The women formed communities of separation, eventually coming to be known as "nuns."

Although monasticism seems a pious endeavor for holiness, the end result is to cloister Christians away from the general population where they can have little or no influence in spreading the Gospel. This is another of Anti-Christ's ploys to disrupt the Great Commission. On the other hand, monasticism did provide the means by which the Scriptures would be copied and preserved over the centuries, demonstrating how God can use anything, even those things inspired by the anti-Christ spirit, to accomplish His purposes.

Paul of Thebes

Not much is known of this Paul, but legend has it that as a young man he fled to the desert wilderness during the persecu-

tion of Christians by Decius and Valerianus around AD 250. He is said to have lived in a desert cave for almost one hundred years. Although Paul of Thebes is not numbered among the Desert Fathers, his influence on Anthony the Great resulted in the creation of the desert communities, among which Anthony was most prominent. It is said that Anthony the Great visited Paul of Thebes to learn from him. But Paul's self-imposed exile to the desert was not for ascetic reasons as much as it was to avoid persecution, at least initially.

Anthony the Great

What is known of Anthony the Great (ca. 251-356) is found in the *Life of Anthony*, written in Greek around AD 360 by Athanasius of Alexandria. Through Latin translations of the *Life of Anthony* the concept of monasticism spread throughout Western Europe during the fourth century and afterward.

Although there were many ascetics before him, Anthony was considered the first known ascetic to go into the wilderness. Around the age of 19 Anthony heard a sermon on Matthew 19:21, stating that perfection could be achieved by selling all of one's possessions, giving the money to the poor, and following Christ. Around the age of 34 he made the decision to take Jesus' words literally to mean that he should live in solitude, or at least away from the mainstream population. He gave away some of his family's estate to neighbors, sold the rest, and gave the proceeds to the poor. He then submitted himself as a disciple to a local hermit.

Anthony became known as "Father of Monasticism," which wasn't truly accurate because Christian monasticism was already being practiced in the Egyptian deserts by ascetics who lived on the outskirts of cities. But Anthony was known to be one of the first ascetics to live away from the cities, cut off completely from civilization.

Athanasius credits Anthony with suffering persecution directly by Satan, even to the point of being beaten into unconsciousness. Eventually he moved farther into the desert, living in an abandoned Roman fort for some twenty years.

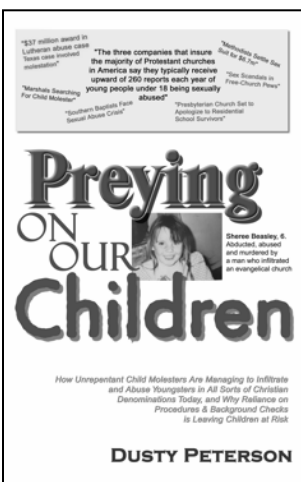
Wishing to become a martyr, he went in 311 to Alexandria and visited those imprisoned for their faith in Christ. Refusing the threats of the governor who ordered him not to appear in the city, Anthony argued with him publicly, hoping to be tortured and martyred for his faith, but the governor did not oblige him.

He then returned to his desert refuge in the old Roman fort where he taught those who came to learn from him. But because these visits pressed upon his time for worship he moved even farther into the Eastern desert of Egypt.

Again we see how a devout believer might be deceived into thinking that solitude is the ideal life for believers in Jesus rather than living and ministering to the lost wherever one may be. Anti-Christ used this pious man to teach others how to shrink from the commandment of the Lord to go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the lost. Indeed, Anthony is reported to have availed himself only to those who were spiritually disposed, leaving ministry to the lost to others.

Book Review

For the past decade the news has been replete with reports of child sexual abuse at the hands of Roman Catholic priests. The scandal has reached the very highest echelons of the Vatican whose prelates have sanctioned the relocation of pedophile priests and bishops while keeping their offenses secret.



But the finger is not pointed only at the Roman Catholic Church. Such abuse has been occurring in other congregations far more often than has been revealed. The abuse has been committed those who hold a high degree of trust within the congregations.

Four years in the making, *Preying on Our Children* presents a thorough job of addressing the problem from a biblical perspective and offers this warning: if you think your child is immune to the wiles of sexual predators inside your church, it's time to wake up. And it does no good to stick one's head in the sand in order to avoid the unsavory truth that should concern all parents and others who love children.

Dusty Peterson does a masterful job of outlining the types of predators who infiltrate churches and family circles in order to work their evil. This book reveals how such abuse is on the increase throughout the denominations and explains why this growth is taking place. The author offers scriptural and practical advice on implementing the simple, God-ordained ways in which assemblies can avoid this problem and keep their children safe from even the most cunning, determined and experienced molesters.

He also counters arguments offered by those who reject God's Word as the solution, preferring to trust human wisdom to guide them. Psychology is not the answer, nor is any other form of human wisdom. Only God's Word applied through the leading of the Holy Spirit holds the answer.

And for those who think God would never allow innocent children who believe in Him to be harmed in such a way, Dusty reminds us of Jesus' warning that "whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (If, as some folks think, God automatically protects any child who soundly believes in Him, why did the Lord choose to give such a warning about the abuse of exactly this category of child?) Since child molestation is extraordinarily serious to our God, it should be similarly so among His people too.

Every parent should read *Preying on Our Children*. But not only parents. Every leader within the assembly should read it as well in order to learn or be refreshed on God's Word as it applies to trust within the assembly for those given places of ministry. ❖

Preying on Our Children is available through Sword Publishers.

Other Desert Fathers would follow Anthony, but the more prominent of them would be active during the fourth century along with certain Desert Mothers (women who lived ascetic lives in the deserts of Egypt, Palestine and Syria).

It was from the Desert Fathers and Desert Mothers that ecstatic experiences, contemplative prayer, and other forms of mysticism would become central to the future institutional church that became Roman Catholicism.

It is probably no coincidence that the earliest of these Church Fathers strove to remove the faith from its Hebrew roots.

Many of the Church Fathers who gained ascendancy over the assemblies rejected the idea that Jesus will one day return to establish His millennial Kingdom on the earth and again gather Israel in peace to the Promised Land. They saw the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures as nullified because Israel rejected her Messiah. The only writing of the apostles that details the fulfillment of those promises is the Book of Revelation. But because the Church Fathers largely rejected the millennial Kingdom, they deemed the Book of Revelation too cryptic to understand (as if God gave His Word with the intent that no one understand it—at least no one outside the priests of the hybrid religion of Christianity).

As anti-Semitism grew among the developing clergy class, the "Church" became the fulfillment of the promise—the Kingdom of God on earth, destined to rule the world with a rod of iron. Anti-Christ was setting the stage for centuries of bloodshed at the hands of "the Church" which would soon become consolidated under the bishop of Rome. The military might of Rome would be the instrument through which the rod of iron would be administered.

The third century closed with the reign of Gaius Aurelius Valerius (Diocletian [244-311]), who would abdicate voluntarily in 305.

The most significant birth during the third century would be that of Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus (272-337), who would come to be known as Constantine the Great. ❖

NEXT

THE FOURTH CENTURY

He who would dominate,
first makes himself pitied,
and the underdog of today
becomes the overlord of tomorrow.
Albert Dager (1939)

THE RESPONSE

(Continued from page 25)

proclaiming that Texas is the “Prophet State,” and Perry would have a special role not only in Texas, but beyond, leading the United States into revival and godly government.

The visit was prompted by Chuck Pierce (son-in-law of C. Peter Wagner), who gave a prophetic message to Schlueter that Schlueter should “pray by lifting the hand of the one I show you that is in the place of civic rule.”⁷ That “one” is Governor Rick Perry, and Schlueter went with Long to fulfill the prophetic word.

Does Governor Perry understand the implications of working with these new “apostles and prophets”? If the criticism from the leftist media has not alerted him or caused him to retract his association with them in terms of public appearances and endorsements, one must wonder what would do so.

I don’t believe Perry engaged in *The Response* as a means to enhance his campaign for president of the United States, but it doesn’t seem to have hurt him. According to syndicated columnist David Brooks:

There have been a slew of polls showing Gov. Rick Perry of Texas surging to double-digit national leads. He leads across demographic groups — among educated Republicans and less-educated ones, among upscale and downscale. Most impressive, he’s winning over the Republican activists who pay the closest attention and wield disproportionate influence with primary voters.

A poll by the conservative political websites *The Daily Caller/Conservative Home* surveys these activists. When asked this week which candidate was most electable, 46 percent named Perry, while only 20 percent named Romney. When asked who would do the best job on the economy, 27 percent said Perry and 14 percent said Romney. When asked who would do the best job controlling Washington spending, 20 percent chose Perry, 17 percent said Rep. Paul Ryan (who isn’t running) and only 8 percent chose Romney.⁸

If Rick Perry were to win the White House, the dominionists would surely rejoice, thinking his election a major step toward their desired Christian World Order. But Perry is smarter than that. He is, after all, a politician, albeit it seems, a decent one (only time will tell). He would still have to work with all the leftist powers that exist as well as more sane elements on the right.

One thing on which we can agree with these alleged apostles and prophets: Governor Perry needs prayer, now more than ever.

WHAT IS THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS?

The dominionists can cry out to God all they wish; they will never achieve their agenda because it is contrary to God’s Word and the prophecies of the last days. They are the proverbial mouse-that-roared—a fringe element within Christianity that has a sense of self-importance and strength than what matches reality.

⁷ Forrest Wilder, “Rick Perry’s Army of God,” *Texas Observer*, August 3, 2011.

⁸ David Brooks, “It’s time to take Rick Perry seriously. He could be our next president,” *Seattle Times*, August 27, 2011.

There are approximately seven billion people in the world, some two billion of whom are Christians of one persuasion or another. Over half of those are Roman Catholics, 500 million are Protestants, and about 648 million are Evangelicals or Bible believing Christians. Christianity is on the decline everywhere except sub-Saharan Africa. There are about 500 million Charismatic Christians, admittedly a relatively large pool from which the New Apostolic Reformation can draw, but about a quarter of them are Roman Catholic, and not all charismatics are disposed toward the agenda of the new “apostles and prophets.” The vast majority would distance themselves from these people if they understood fully the dominionist agenda and what it really means. Granted, a considerable segment of adherents to Reformation theology adds considerably to the number of those believing in Christian Reconstruction, but in spite of the claims by leaders within Christian Reconstruction, most prefer to distance themselves from the practices of charismatic dominion theology.

In the meantime, Islam continues to be the fastest growing religion in the world and in the United States in particular, and there is no indication that these trends will reverse themselves—certainly not in our lifetime.

So why be concerned? If they can’t achieve their goals in the long run, why not just ignore it?

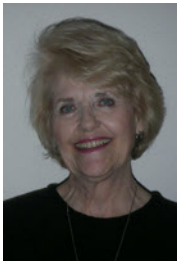
Because they are causing many true believers in Jesus to place their hope where there is no hope, and more importantly, to pray for things contrary to God’s will.

Jesus said that the prince of this world is already judged (John 16:11). Yet we know that Satan and his minions continue to work evil. But this world system under Satan’s control is judged. There is no hope for it. His domain cannot be saved apart from the return of Jesus. By its nature it exists as an enemy of God, and always will be His enemy. We await a new world governed by the risen Christ Jesus and His resurrected saints. To try to clean up what is filthy by its nature is futile. Even if a modicum of righteousness were to prevail for a season it would only revert to its true nature.

Does this mean Christians should not be concerned about evil in the world? Should we not voice opposition to those evils? Of course we should. We are all concerned, and long for the day when those evils will be dealt with justly by the Lord Himself. And we are free in Christ to work in whatever way we see fit to combat those evils as long as we do not violate the law of love or act contrary to God’s will. Because His will does not include the transformation of society by “the Church,” but only by the Lord when He returns, those working for such transformation are at best wasting their time in futility, and at worst warring against God’s will. He never commissioned His people to establish a Christian society.

The idea of a Christian society may seem appealing as long as it isn’t a reality. But there is nothing worse than religious tyranny, even in the name of Jesus. That is what the Holy Roman Empire was about. It was the first attempt at dominion over the earth without the Lord present.

Thank you, but I’ll wait for the Lord to transform society after He returns. ❖



Jean's Turn

A Quiet Place

By Jean Dager

I grew up in a fairly quiet home. My father passed away when I was nine and I was an only child. I can remember the first time I was invited for dinner by a new girl who moved into my neighborhood. Her name was Betty and she came from an Italian family. During the meal I became very uncomfortable because everyone addressed each other in loud voices. At first I thought everyone was angry. But they weren't—talking loud was just normal for that family!

When Al and I married, we discovered that he prefers the volume turned up when listening to music, and I, of course, prefer it low. Needless to say, after 33 years of marriage, we're still adjusting. I have a friend who has the same sensitivities that I do when it comes to music. She had just left the Catholic Church and we studied the Bible together. Once we tried visiting a local church service. But when we sat down, the highly amplified music began. Needless to say, we fled out of the auditorium. She had never experienced ear-splitting music in a church service before (certainly not during the Catholic mass) and was actually alarmed! We did go back for just the sermon portion.

I have a wonderful small study room in our home where I can go to spend a quiet time with the Lord in prayer and devotions. I realize that not everyone is blessed with such a place. For instance, I read that Susannah Wesley, mother of John and Charles Wesley, raised a very large family. When she desired to take time out for prayer during her busy day, she simply threw her apron up over her face. That was a sure signal that the children were not to bother her.

C.H. Spurgeon's devotional, *Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*, struck a chord with me when I read the following verse in Ezekiel 11:16:

Therefore say, thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come."

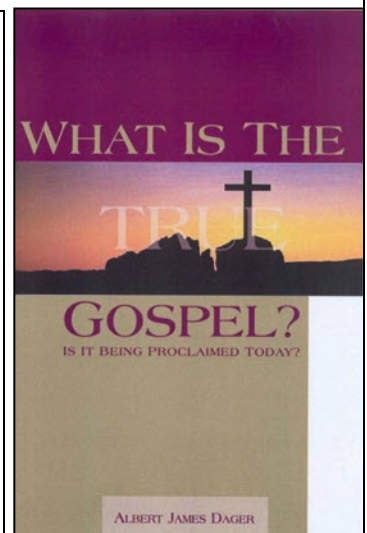
Spurgeon stated that "God is to His people a place of refuge...To them also He will be a sanctuary of *quiet*, like the Holy of Holies, which was the noiseless abode of the Eternal."

Most of us speak to the Lord constantly in our daily lives. But when we want to hear His voice, it's necessary to shut out the noises of the world and find a quiet place to be with Him. The voices of the world are demanding and noisy. But His voice to us is quiet. Just as it was to Elijah when he heard the still, small voice of the Lord. We can trust that He will always be faithful to speak to those who seek Him if we just listen.

"...and the sheep hear His voice; and He calls His own sheep by name..." John 10:30. ❖

Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and commissioned His disciples to do the same.

Many false gospels have arisen since then. A great apostasy based on the traditions of religious institutions substitutes a weak easy-believism in place of the true Gospel of the Kingdom. This book points the reader back to Scripture for understanding the significance of the true Gospel Jesus proclaimed.



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