

# STRAIGHTWAY

*And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].*

## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach of Foundations Bible College  
P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, North Carolina 28335

VOLUME 37

JULY/AUGUST 2009

NUMBER 4

### “Exercise Thyself unto Godliness”

Dr. H. T. Spence

But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come (I Timothy 4:7-8).

Callings in Scripture appear in a number of unique and specific contexts covering the lifetime of a Christian. There is the calling to God-consciousness that comes to a child early in life, gently echoing through a variety of circumstances appointed of the Lord. A definite call to “Come unto Me” is that calling which brings the soul to the threshold of the New Birth.

As the Christian continues in his or her walk with God, there will be the commanding call, “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (I Thessalonians 4:7). The Scriptures also declare callings to specific ministries for one's life; these may include callings to be a pastor, preacher, teacher, missionary, or evangelist.

Strongly interwoven through the Word of God are also commands couched in a call from grace specifically about one's life in Christ. It is a command-calling concerning how the life should be lived before the Lord. One such command-calling is found in First

*This edition includes a second article*  
**The Postmodern Church (Part One)**

Timothy 4:7 and summons the whole life to a spiritual pattern of living.

But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

### **Exercise Thyself**

In the context of First Timothy 4:7, the Apostle Paul calls Timothy away from the trivia that tends to surround religion and draws him to this crucial command, "exercise thyself rather unto godliness." The word *exercise* is a very delicate Greek word meaning "to strip or to make naked." It is a metaphor for runners, for wrestlers, for those in athletics in whose heart and mind there must be a resolve to put off all those things that would diminish or hamper strength and power in the match or race. It is a laying aside of any constrictions that would hinder one's purpose. In this passage Paul declares to Timothy, "You must let godliness be the object of all your care; it must, at all costs, be the object of your life. You must lay aside anything that hinders you. This

must become the prominent principle in your life. To come to this I exhort you to strip away anything that will keep you from this one thing; you will have to focus your mind and your attention on this aspect of godliness for your life."

The second word found in this phrase is *thyself*. My first spiritual concern as a Christian is for myself. I may have been called to preach and teach God's Word as a minister of the Gospel. I may have been called to pour out my life in the preparation of young men and women to face the onslaught of this wicked, corrupt, apostate age. But rising above the multitude of hours in a day—physically and mentally pouring out my life in such a calling—there is something higher and of a greater imperative nature: the urgent care of my soul. Evangelism does not approximate the value of this necessity; regular visitation will never be a valid substitute; the consumption of time in study can never replace the daily care of the soul's relationship with God.

My priority in life is the spirituality of my personal life before God. I have a burden for my wife and for my children, but one thing that must consume my life almost every waking moment of the day is the consciousness that I must personally and privately be ever preparing to meet my God. I cannot invest my life to inspire others in Christ if I do not have that inspiration within myself. This inspiration of God and

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for God must be controlling my life as I plead for it to do so in others. Heaven's calling and command is for me to intensely pursue the exaltation of God and His holiness in my own heart.

The greatest accountability I have is my own life. I may give untold hours in a week to the ministry of the Lord. But there is something that rises above every person I love, every student I teach, and every soul to which I minister. This something is the priority of my concern and burden for myself and my walk with God. Is that selfishness? Or is that for the Christ within me? The Apostle Paul declared "For to me to live is Christ." Such a declaration refers to the fact of Christ being the unfolding of his living every moment of the day. This spiritual realm is a reality when every moment of the day is in communion with God. *This is the greatest way one exalts Christ in the life.*

### **The Biblical New Birth and Its Life**

Unto what is the Christian to exercise himself? It is unto "godliness." This command-calling demands that I strip away from my soul's living before God everything that would compete or hinder this godliness from controlling my life. Such a life is in another kingdom, a spiritual kingdom. No flesh can reign or attend this kingdom, for no flesh can glory in the Lord's presence. Jesus Christ has come to reign within and He is eternal life for

me. The contemporary philosophy controlling the modern church today has destroyed the full understanding of this matter of eternal life. It seems the only thing many are concerned about is that once they die, they will enter into the realm of eternity or a life in eternity. This is basically the message of modern evangelism. The famous question is, "If you died right now, where would you spend eternity?" Thus the hereafter becomes the greater burden in modern evangelism rather than the truth of a Christ-life presently to be lived on earth.

The phrase "eternal life" in the Bible is not simply referring to the duration of life or the fact that we will live for eternity. Eternal life is a quality of life to be known now in this life. It is not simply I will have eternal life in the future, implying that to possess that life I must first physically die. I am to have eternal life right now. It is not only a future life beyond the grave but also a present life that is of a quality not of this earthly kingdom. Life now for the Christian should transcend in its thought and living into the realm where God resides. Life is viewed from His perspective now, not Adam's. This is the dilemma of a true backslider—he has turned from the quality of life in Christ and resorted back to the old life of the temporal, the mundane, the earthly, the fleshly, and the worldly. He has left the sphere of eternal living.

### **Who Is a Christian?**

A proper understanding of the

term *Christian* has fallen on hard times. The contemporary Church has its own definition of what a Christian is; however, it is a false definition that has allowed almost everyone who attends some kind of church to use the title. There is only one infallible, definitive revelation of who is a Christian, and it is found in the Bible.

The passages which give God's definition of a Christian, or of being "born of God," are found in the First Epistle of John. Each of the passages found there is in the perfect passive. The perfect tense is a combination of the aorist (the crisis tense) and the present (the continuation tense). Thus, there was a crisis in the past of a New Birth (John 3:3), but the work of that crisis continues to the present. Modern evangelism is only content with the crisis and not with the continuation of this divine work in the life.

The **first** of six markings of a truly born again Christian is found in First John 2:29:

If ye know that he [Christ] is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth [in the present tense] righteousness is born of him [God].

Oh, this is of great importance. It is not what I have professed or done for God for many years. The power of God's birthing must be evident in the life. Such a birth power will give the evidence of the righteousness of God continually in the life.

The **second** marking of a true Christian is found in 3:8-9:

He that committeth sin [in the present tense; this is his living/practice] is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

If this birth power is truly within the individual, he will not be given to premeditated sin in his life. Why? "For his seed remaineth in him." This phrase is either declaring that the Christian, God's seed, remaineth in Him, God; or, God's seed, the Word of God, remaineth in him, the Christian. Both would be true. Premeditated sin is the exception to the rule of the Christian (see I John 2:1).

The **third** mark of being born again is presented in 4:7:

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth [and I have to keep that in the context of God's true saints] is born of God, and knoweth God.

Again, all of this is present tense.

The **fourth** mark of being born again John declares in 5:1:

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ [the Messiah, the Anointed One] is born of God.

A person born of God gives the evidence that he believes that Christ Jesus is Who He is.

The **fifth** mark of being truly born again is found in 5:4:

For whatsoever [or whosoever] is born of God [in the perfect tense; the power of the election in that man] overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Such a person will be overcoming the world rather than being drawn into that from which he was to be delivered.

The **sixth** marking is found in 5:18:

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not [it is not his practice to premeditatively sin; we read that in 3:9]; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

This final mark acknowledges that we are responsible, at least in this context, for keeping ourselves. We are exhorted in Proverbs 4:23 to “keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Jude 20-21 exhorts, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.” There is a keeping that I cannot keep, and only God can keep. But there is a keeping that God will not keep, which is my responsibility. May these marks of a true Christian ever be evident in our living.

### **Unto Godliness**

The Apostle Paul exhorts one to exercise himself unto godliness. This term *godliness* must be accompanied by a biblical presupposition, for some writers have replaced the term with the word *religion*. Typically, the broader base of Western civilization

would readily respond to the Christian inquiry, “Oh, I’m a religious person; I believe in religion.”

There are two etymologies for the word *religion*. The first carries the meaning “to choose again.” Biblical history reveals that the first choice man made in the Garden of Eden was the choice of the flesh, the choice away from God. Thus, when man embraces religion, he is now making a second choice, not for the flesh or not away from God, but a choice to God, unto God, or for God. A second etymology for the word *religion* emphasizes “a binding or a knitting back again.” Isaiah 59:1-2 announces that what broke man’s relationship with God was man’s sin: “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Sin was the only thing on the planet that separated our Beloved Lord from His Father. Christ called Him “Father” at the beginning of the Cross ordeal and at the end. But when He was made sin at high noon, Christ could not use that title; it was the cry “My God, My God” because our sins separated Him from His Father. Sin intrinsically is the power to separate from God. Apart from Christ, we have no hope; Christ becomes the propitiation for our sin *only if* we turn to Him in repentance. True religion is the returning to God. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

The Greek word *godliness* in First Timothy 4:7 is *eusebea*, meaning “to devote one’s life well to God.” Godliness is a God-consciousness in everything we do and say. How can an individual be conscious of God in every decision he makes during the day? All tend to make decisions simply through self, and such decisions at times are costly and far-reaching. Therefore, one must cultivate in his life that in every decision made—if it is a hundred or a hundred and fifty a day—there must be a consciousness of God (Proverbs 3:5-6). Because the average professing Christian is not conscious of God in such things, godliness is not the consistent marking of his life’s character. It does not mean that he curses or blasphemes God; it simply means he does not bring God into the consciousness of his present-tense living. The past is gone; the future has not been lived. We only have the present moment in which to live; in that present moment we must live for Christ. We must make our decisions for Christ; we must pray for Him to be in that moment.

If this truth is not part of our moment by moment living, then we must cultivate it throughout the day. How can one cultivate this? One classic revelation is made after the occasion of the man who had gathered sticks on the Sabbath day (Numbers 15). His judgment was to be stoned to death in accordance to the word of God. The Lord then immediately revealed to the children of Israel (15:37-41) the need of sewing

a “ribband of blue” into the hem of their garments. Why a “ribband of blue” in the hem of the garment? This young man’s sin involved the bending down and picking up of sticks on the Sabbath, which resulted in blaspheming God’s Law. So the next time one was tempted to bend down and pick up sticks he would see the blue, thus reminding him of the call to godliness. Three things were to come to mind: “that ye may look upon it, and (1) remember all the commandments of the LORD, (2) and do them, and (3) be holy unto your God” (15:39-40). What could be a “ribband of blue” to cultivate godliness today? It could include verses of Scripture on a refrigerator, on notebooks, appropriately on mirrors, or even the dashboard of a car. These little reminders placed strategically in life’s path call us and remind us, “Have you included God in your decisions today?” There will come a day when these “ribbands of blue” will have helped to establish a mind stayed upon the Lord. *Eusebea* is a consciousness of God in all that we do, “well-devoted” at any moment.

## Conclusion

The Christian who hungers for this godliness must pray to God to be stripped away of anything and everything that will affect this godliness. Is the heart pursuing money, honor, a certain job, etc.? Or, even pursuing just self? What is my pursuit in life? A variety of things could encumber a Christian life from exercising itself unto godliness: pride,

self-centeredness, preaching/teaching, exhorting for the wrong reasons, or studying for the wrong reason. There must come a day when God begins to strip away everything that hinders this godliness. We may respond that there will be nothing left if God lays my soul naked. Well, this is where God wants to bring us: that in His sight, we “are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13).

Godliness or well-devotedness is also specifically tied up in the word *worship*. Worship must become the moment by moment attitude of the heart. Worship comprehends all that respect which a man owes to God and that he gives to God. Worship to God is both external and internal. Men in the Old Testament who fell on their faces before God were revealing the heart attitude of *eusebea*. However, there must also be internal worship of loving God and trusting God at every moment, delighting in Him, and even knowing deep sorrow at times for offending Him. That is *eusebea* too. Those that worship God give Him their most intense love, their highest joy, their deepest sorrow, their strongest faith, their greatest fear. When Abraham took the greatest object of his love, his beloved son, to Mount Moriah, he told his servants, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you” (Genesis 22:5).

This “godliness” also may be likened to a sentinel guarding a gate or entrance, examining everyone that

seeks to pass through. Why such intensity of protection? Because there is a king within! Some years ago while visiting Windsor Castle on a weekend when Queen Elizabeth II was in residence there, I was drawn to the presence of a guard dressed in his full soldierly regalia standing as a sentinel at a door. He stood impressively with a machine gun in his hand. Some yards away was a white line drawn on the pavement accompanied by an obvious sign warning that no one was to cross that white line. At that moment some visiting teenagers began to toy with the soldier as they threatened to cross the line. He just stood there until finally one young man did cross the line. Immediately, the machine gun came down from his shoulder as his strong voice demanded the youth get back behind the line.

One may wonder why he was so serious about this matter. Well, there was a queen behind the door, and he was ready to protect her at all cost. Oh, that we as God’s people would have such a tenacity of heart to never allow petty things, grieving things, and sorrowful things to come to our soul. How much more victorious our lives would be if such a vigilant sentinel attitude, standing at the door of our heart, controlled us. Such a life would cry out, “I refuse to allow anything to disturb my king.” That is biblical *eusebea*. It is the worshiping of my God in inward motions of the heart and the outward actions of my life. It is where all the springs of my affections and conversation

run clear; this is true godliness. It is my moment by moment living in His presence—to please Him.

A warning arises from Ezekiel 43:7-8 to us who live in the End Time of the Last Days:

And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.

This is the delusion of the hour! The Institutional Church believes it can build another threshold of entrance into God's Kingdom, another post of the Cross erected, or another wall to keep us from the full holiness of God for our lives. We need walls of biblical separation established in Christianity today, but many tend to make up their own wall and place it beside God.

“Exercise thyself unto godliness” is the call. May godliness be a precedent in all of our actions. Even down to old age, when the body is declining, may we ever be pursuing godliness right down to the last moment of life on this earth, when even at that late hour God will be stripping away the final shreds of hindrance to bring us to the full reality of Christ in the life.



## **JULY/AUGUST**

### **“SERMONS OF THE MONTH”**

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# Blessed Cross

Written in 1995

H. T. Spence

Robert Wilson

1. On the lone - ly hill of Cal - v'ry, There to die for all man-kind,  
2. Bless - ed Cross, 'tis God in hid - ing; Smit-ten Rock, the Cleft to see!  
3. Wrath of God poured out from Heav-en! Sin is judged up - on that Tree!  
4. Hear, ye sin - ner! Now a - wak - en! Hear, ye Chris-tian! Now re - vive!

Was the Sav - iour, Heav-en's beau - ty, Glo - rious death! Oh, grace di-vine!  
Fool - ish - ness to man de - rid - ing; But in faith, man's lib - er - ty!  
But there, too, God's peace was giv - en; There Re - demp - tion came to be!  
Through the Cross the dead are shak-en! Through the Cross man comes a - live!

Bless-ed Cross of Christ the Sav-iour! Bless-ed Cross of Christ the Lamb!

There I'm brought in - to God's fa-vour. Won-drous Christ, the Great "I am!"

# Thirteenth Congress of Christian Fundamentalists

## Theme

*“Wherefore Lift Up Thy Prayer For the Remnant That Is Left”  
(Isaiah 37:4c)*

## Speakers

Dr. H. T. Spence

*Pastor & President, Foundations Ministries*

Dr. Dennis Lowry, Foundations Ministries

*Associate Pastor & Vice President*

Rev. Ivan Foster

*Free Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland*

Throughout the years, Foundations Bible College has sought for spiritual leaders in Fundamentalism to be guest speakers for our annual Congress of Christian Fundamentalists. It is the full intention of our hearts, by the Grace of God, to proclaim and defend historic Christianity in the twenty-first century. This year we welcome Rev. Ivan Foster, from Kilskeery, Northern Ireland.

Never has there been a time in American history when we needed to more fervently “Hold the Fort” and “Keep the Faith.” However, never has there been a greater privilege and opportunity to live for the Lord Jesus and preach the Word of God than in this generation.

Foundations Bible College holds the Separatist-Fundamentalist position.

This year we are extending the Congress from a three-day to a five-day schedule.

## Schedule

### Wednesday, October 7th

7:00 PM . . . . . Dr. H. T. Spence  
*“The Biblical Perspective of the Remnant  
in the Times of the Apostasy”*

### Thursday, October 8th

9:00 AM . . . . . Dr. Dennis Lowry  
*“The Purpose of Intercessory Prayer”*

10:15 AM . . . . . Rev. Ivan Foster  
*“God’s Remnant in Times of Apostasy  
in Church History” (Part 1)*

7:00 PM . . . . . Rev. Ivan Foster  
*“God’s Remnant in Times of Apostasy  
in Church History” (Part 2)*

### Friday, October 9th

9:00 AM . . . . . Dr. Dennis Lowry  
*“The Call to Prayer for the Remnant”*

10:15 AM . . . . . Dr. H. T. Spence  
*“The End-time Remnant”*

7:00 PM . . . . . Rev. Ivan Foster  
*“The Power and Safekeeping of the Remnant”*

### Saturday, October 10th

7:00 PM . . . . . Drama  
*The Martyr of the Catacombs*

### Sunday, October 11th

9:00 AM . . . . . Rev. Ivan Foster  
*“The Present Crisis in Northern Ireland”*

10:30 AM . . . . . Dr. H. T. Spence  
*“A Plea to Fundamentalism and Its Remnant”*

6:00 PM . . . . . Rev. Ivan Foster  
*“God’s Hope for the Remnant”*

# **The Postmodern Church (Part One)**

Dr. H. T. Spence

During the early 1800's as America passed from the blessings of the Second Great Awakening, a movement called Liberalism emerged out of the European Enlightenment birthing the "modern" era of Western Civilization. Born within the theological world of Protestantism in Germany, Liberalism began to pervade all of Western society's Christianity. This openly antichrist, anti-God movement from within Christianity denounced the literality of the Scriptures and basically rejected all the cardinal doctrines of the historic Christian Faith. Not only were all the miracles of the Bible defamed as myths, but also the historicity of Jesus was strongly condemned.

Once the literality of Scripture was destroyed in the public Christian view, the Liberals needed a hermeneutical principle to interpret these so-called mythical Scriptures. This principle was called Modernism. These handmaidens of apostasy—Liberalism and Modernism—birthed a new Christianity that essentially was based on the social aspect of man, denying any spiritual perspective. Accompanying this view was a new mentality concerning Christianity: modern Christianity must be interpreted from the contemporary perspective or from the ever-changing present philosophy of each age.

## **A Present Philosophy**

Toward the end of the 1800s, a philosophy previously associated with Georg Hegel's Dialecticism was finally systematized in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's Existentialism was a philosophy that rejected absolutes, making life and truth a mass of floating islands with no accountability. He placed his Existentialism in philosophy's so-called "upper story" of knowledge. The upper-story belief could be anything an individual wanted to believe; it did not require validation or verification with the lower story's established absolutes. Existentialism essentially denounced the linear logic of Western Civilization, which was based upon clear, contrasting terms such as *light* and *darkness*, *truth* and *error*, and *God* and the *Devil*.

Dialecticism had endeavored to bring these antithetical terms and beliefs together into a synthesized new concept of truth. This philosophical environment had led to a flourishing of pragmatic semantics in Western thought. Now, Existentialism took logic beyond the stretched boundaries of Dialecticism and created a world of thought where absolutes were conspicuously absent. Man's world could merely be what he willed or believed it to be. He did not have to prove it through absolutes; he simply needed to make a "leap of faith" into his imaginative world.

When Liberalism began to dominate the theological world of Europe and

America in the latter part of the 1800s, it systematically attempted to destroy any hope the belief of God and the Scriptures had given to mankind. Thus, man was plunged into humanistic despair. This especially became true after World War I when leading institutions of thought had hoped that the twentieth century would be a century of peace and “Christianity.” Even the magazine *The Christian Century* was born in this positivistic view. But such hope was shattered by the first concept of a “world” war.

The theologian Karl Barth arose within these troubled hours of Church History. He was a student of the Liberal patriarch Adolph von Harnack and knew if the message of the Bible were done away with, there would be no hope for man. Through his readings of several men including Kierkegaard, Barth wondered if there was another way to interpret the Scriptures other than from the literal position. While he fully agreed with the Liberals in denouncing a literal interpretation of the Bible, he chose to embrace Existentialism as his new method of interpreting the Bible.

With the new hermeneutical key of Existentialism for approaching the Scriptures, Neo-Orthodoxy was born. Rudolph Bultmann’s “form criticism” used Existentialism as a methodological interpretation for the Scriptures. With it he attempted to find the *kerygma* (the kernel or core) of what the Bible was actually saying. Along with Emil Brunner and others, these Neo-Orthodox theologians denied the existence of the historical Christ, as well as the true existence of God. They believed that perhaps one could “existentially” believe that Christ and God did exist, thus fabricating a personal existentially-created “upper story” view of Christianity. Whether it was true or not in the absolute sense, they believed one should at least take a leap into the dark believing at least something to be existentially true for one’s life. This is the reason Paul Tillich could call himself a “Christian Atheist.” In the “lower story” of reason he was an atheist, but in the “upper story” of existentialism he was a Christian.

### **From Modernism to Postmodernism**

Existentialism’s interpretation of life brought a realm of thought into existence that was contrary to linear logic, reason, and even to the Enlightenment Period, that child of the Age of Reason. It was a realm of thinking that was “post” modern; Existentialism had opened a new frontier of thought that would do away with the past, even the past “modern” thought. Existentialism has no boundaries or limits in its view of logic; it is so elastic and fluid that it would permit whatever path or realm of imagination one would desire to travel. It lives for the present “moment” or the “now.” The past roots or the future consequences are never considered. It provides accommodation for whatever one wants to believe without the need of proving it with absolutes. Other philosophies have their limitations and boundaries,

but Existentialism denies even the absolutes of its own boundaries.

By the 1940s, another theology destructively erupted out of existential Neo-Orthodoxy. It was proclaimed as Radical Theology, commonly called Theothanatology—the “God is dead” movement. This theology came as the result of the writings of Neo-Orthodoxy, whose men were realistically atheists but existentially theists. Thomas Altizer and William Hamilton were two prominent authors of this new theology. This theology attacked the very root of theology—God Himself.

Theothanatology has had a variety of interpretations. Three common ones are (1) that God never existed, (2) that God died when Christ died on the cross, or (3) that all present-day terminology concerning God must die. The latter belief calls for man to first obliterate any historic view of God and then out of the ashes create a new imagery of God, a new deity with its own set of descriptions and theological thought. In 1963, about two decades following the rise of Theothanatology, the Anglican bishop John A.T. Robinson published *Honest to God*. This work publicly announced that we need a Christ-less Christianity, that secular man needed a secular theology. Such a belief leaned directly into the postmodern era of the church. Welcoming this teaching were the myriads of liberals permeating seminaries and pulpits around the world. Both the world and the church were coming to another threshold of thought; the modern was passing away and a postmodern era was raising its mysterious head.

The President of these United States has become a classic example whose leadership presses for a “post” modern society. He forces America to spend money that it does not have in order to accommodate that which has no meaning. He lives for the “now” with no allegiance to the past and no accountability to the future. He is the man that has brought us into a postmodern era. His form of logic is neither the old liberalism nor the old modernism. He has brought us into a new era of thought, of politics, and even a new era of religious thinking. He has entered into precincts that no man has tried before in order to bring about a postmodern perspective. He seeks a postmodern society that must control the very essence of our birth, living, and dying; it must control all education in America. As a nation we can never return to any resemblance of the past treasured thoughts of living. We are called upon by this Administration to simply believe without reason, proof, or consciousness of consequence. This is the saddest aspect of postmodernism—there is no map and no plan, for where postmodernism is taking us is an unknown destination. The individual or the collective state makes a leap into the dark embracing only a fabricated, false hope.

The gurus of such existential thinking are quickly rising in global influence.

One such man of influence is Eckhart Tolle, who found his benefactress quickly in Oprah Winfrey; she has become a member of his New Age following. Coming out from a mental and emotional breakdown and a self-inflicted insanity, Tolle created his own version of Existentialism. He calls us first “to leave our analytical mind,” believing it has created a false self, and then connect to the indestructible essence of our Being, which to him is god or our personal divinity. It is neither the past nor the future that should concern us, only the present moment. This is postmodern thinking.

### **The Postmodern, Emerging Church**

One of the prominent evangelical leaders of our time, Brian McLaren, gives a classic example of postmodern belief:

You see if we have a new world, we will need a new church. We won't need a new religion per se, but a new framework for our theology. Not a new spirit, but a new spirituality. Not a new Christ, but a new Christian. Not a new denomination, but a new kind of church in every denomination.

This is a plea from the contemporary indicating that even the “modern” has lost its influence and effectiveness for the Church. In the light of the changes that have come to the secular world, the Church must now move into another era. Liberalism truly broke the ties with biblical Christianity and set the Church free as a floating island to eventually chart its own course for the future. As the “modern” thought is fast leaving the world—both secularly and religiously—we have entered into the transition that is to lead to this “new church,” this “framework of theology,” this “new spirituality,” and this “new kind of church in every denomination.”

Although the grid for the presupposition of this postmodern church was prophetically built fifty to sixty years ago, its rise to visibility has been in the past quarter of a century. The “mega” churches have stepped forward with their impressive clout, their massive attendance, their overwhelming financial resources, and their secularist know-how to bring the church into the corporate business mentality. All of this is part of the postmodern church. The mega church is part of the “emerging” new view of the concept of the church. It believes that because the modern church still has some roots or cords tied to antiquity, it will not survive the aggressive changes now arising in society. The gurus of the postmodern era are announcing that the church must be ready to make the changes. To them it is a survival theology for the future existence of Christianity. And yet to survive, all terminology of religions must die. We need to release ourselves from all the former terms, concepts, traditions and every aspect of the former view of the church, even down to the architecture and furniture. A new concept of the Church must “emerge” by way of a full surrender to every change needed. A full and complete makeover of

the church, including its purpose and nature, will be needed for the future emerging society.

It is now clearly evident that the modern church will not be the end product of Liberalism and Modernism; the modern church is but a transitional path to prepare the way for the postmodern era of the Church. If the institutional church *must* be assimilated into all the religions of the world and accommodating to the governments of the world, then it must get ready for drastic and radical changes. A blank mind about God will be imperative to remold and reshape humanity for the coming new religion. How will this emerge with seven billion people on the planet controlled by thousands of religions? If there are enough men strategically located globally in all of these religions and sympathetic toward this cause, it can be done.

Since World War II, a postmodern era has emerged from a modern world. In religion this was evident in the birth of Neo-Evangelicalism (1948), Neo-Pentecostalism, and the World Council of Churches (1948). By 1967, the Charismatic movement was underway; within just a few years its postmodern, existential influence had spread into Roman Catholicism and all the major Protestant denominations. This Charismatic movement became a religious glue to support the transition of the church deep into the postmodern era of the global church.

### **Transitional Movements**

Just as America can never return to its former days, the visible, public church will never return to the true Christ. The reason is twofold: the antiquity of truth is dimming in memory, and the “neo” Christian movements now control and redefine the “old.” This must be understood. *Whatever movements within today's Evangelical spectrum that appear to sound honorable and biblical on the surface are largely controlled by Neo-Christianity.*

One clear example is Focus on the Family. While claiming to place emphasis upon the family, it drew the family into the concepts of the Neo-Christianity. Biblical separation was not part of its heart and fabric. No matter the apparent surface benefits, Neo Christianity controlled its presentations and publications of the old traditional values.

The Bill Gothard ministries also came to the evangelical scene with a call to address the conflicts of youth and home; and yes, it truly was a need longing to be addressed. However, Mr. Gothard was a graduate of Wheaton College, a bastion of Neo-Evangelicalism. From his ministry's beginning there has been an absence of biblical separation. Today his expanding ministry has mushroomed in its associations with Charismatics and Southern Baptists. Its leanings are ecumenical in heart and spirit.

The threads of the “old” found within the “new” are often the enticements to the heart of the seeker. Nevertheless, as time unfolds, the “old” becomes dim and more and more the “neo” takes over the old. Then when the visually appealing cry to return to the “old” arises in contrast to the postmodern “new,” one finds only an empty shell of the “old” present, its heart absent. This is why non-separation is a controlling factor of any organization or movement that sounds good now. Such movements dangerously promote and cultivate “neutrality” toward apostasy. Although the mind is drawn to good and honorable things, it is simultaneously drawn away from the needed truth of separation from the apostasy. Among the many I have met who came by way of the influence of Bill Gothard, invariably they were soft and neutral on the apostasy within the Church. Yes, although it is an “old” hope for the family, it is controlled by the Neo-Christianity. A “delusion” is not the absence of truth—it is the addition of error.

Another movement that arose some years ago calling for a restoration of Christian family culture is Vision Forum. It too is a movement controlled by the Neo-Christianity. This movement’s call for morals, family, and patriotism is certainly a refreshing one in our day and time; nevertheless, Neo-Christianity controls the package of the “old” they provide for the family. Today it is a thoroughgoing Neo-Evangelical movement with all the characteristics of contemporary music to cater to the world; its associations denounce biblical separation. I even have concerns for its unusual view of father-daughter relationships. The bonding technique of having daughters shave the faces of their fathers during their Father and Daughter retreats seems strange. The call of the father to “lead, woo, and win” his daughter’s admiration also tends to minimize the needed mother-daughter relationship. Is it at all possible to eventually hear of the sin of family incest arising as a result of certain abnormalities and improprieties influenced by Vision Forum emphasis?

We also are concerned about American Vision’s promotion of the work of Douglas Wilson. American Vision claims to be a ministry trying to “restore America to its biblical foundation.” Nevertheless, it promotes the May 2007 debate between Douglas Wilson and the atheist Christopher Hitchens. These fruitless debates have ultimately produced a bond between friend and foe with Wilson and Hitchens ending up at a bar laughing, joking, and drinking. This is not pure, biblical Christianity. Biblical Christianity abhors the world, its music, its associations, and its ecumenicity. This is a false Christ that, with some appeal and appearance of the “old,” is controlled by the “new.”

*We are now facing an evangelical generation that is contributing to the genocide of true Christianity.* It is true that these movements mentioned have by no means caught up with Obama’s postmodernism; however, such movements are greatly assisting the assimilation of evangelicals into the mainstream transition

to postmodernism. Amidst the ever-increasing numbers who follow such movements, there will be a conspicuous absence of a strong stand against the contemporary apostasy pervading Christianity today. These movements breed within their followers neutrality towards the apostasy. The sheer power of the flesh moves the movement; the sheer power of money maintains the appearance that it is blessed of God. The form of godliness is certainly present, but because of its dialectic principle to merge the flesh and a so-called Spirit, the power of Heaven is not present. While we in our naivety will only see the good such movements portray, we tend to be willfully blind to the darkness that accompanies their methodology and ecumenicity.

### **Conclusion**

In both politics and religion, global society is in the transition now beyond liberalism. We are beyond the radicals; we are emerging into a new thought, a postmodern era. Linear logic is gone, absolutes are gone; when what will not work is being accepted, we may say even pragmatism is departing. The institutional church is now clamoring for a new church to emerge out of the rubble that is not like the church before. It is the era of acrylic pulpits, lounge chairs and couches, church cappuccino cafes, Hollywood entertainment, psychological pep-talk preaching, and casual worship attire. Christ is mentioned now and then, but there is no biblical theology in this emerging church. There is no doctrine; it is all based on this postmodernity to prepare religious humanity for the End-time globalism. Even the word *church* is disappearing; it is a term identified too much with Jesus, too much with the Lord. In its place are terms such as worship center, deliverance center, and family center.

Our next issue addresses the inward view of the Emerging Church's fabric and destiny. We are truly coming to the end of the Church as it is biblically known. May God have mercy upon us in these days of the greatest delusion and deception the Church, whether liberal or conservative, has ever confronted. S

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## God Requireth the Past

*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*

*That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.*

(Ecclesiastes 3:14-15)

All human history is the result of what appears as tides, driftings, trends, turning points, catastrophes, and climaxes in time. Even the Bible records such tendencies. The tides and the driftings are most subtle, covering long segments of history which men do not readily discern. The trends are initiated by man with the hope to change current and contemporary history. But there are turning points, like awakenings and revivals, as well as the catastrophes and climaxes in history, which are often authored by God Himself.

However, the Bible Christian believes that behind all of these seasons of history, there remains God. He is the primary will and force behind either the permission or the action of that which history renders and the mercy God extends. Only a Biblical faith in the God of the Holy Scriptures includes such comfort and victory for man in his time.

In the beginning, “before the foundation of the world,” God drew a straight line when He created time out of eternity. That straight line represents the sovereign will of Almighty God, as well as the protection and mercy needed for all men. Man was created by God on that straight line, in the precious will of God, in the image and likeness of God. Man fell into sin from that line, away from the original will of God for man. Man zigzags on that line. However, this is still the very best world possible for the workings of God’s ultimate will for fallen man, extending providence, prevenient grace, and saving grace to mankind.

All of man’s sins fall either to the right or the left of that line, and until this very day, all fallen men live in the sin of either the work systems of Legalism or the licentious deeds of Libertinism.

However, this legalism and libertinism only represent the fruit of man’s rejection and unbelief in God’s Son for his redemption. Immediately after the fall of man, God commenced His own revelation through His Holy Word, and man was invited back to Paradise and the Tree of Life through the Incarnation and Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross of Calvary’s Tree. Man now could only be saved by God’s free grace through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. This means man is brought back to the sovereign line of God’s will. Only redemption can place man back in the will of God. All the fruit of sin—whether Legalism or Libertinism—is the direct result, since the fall, “because they believe not on me,” saith the teachings of Jesus (John 16:9). The Gospel continues to make this call: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Man does not always see this, but “God requireth that which is past.” This simply indicates that no matter what happens in the history of man, God requireth an accountability to history by men.

— from *The Human Spirit*, Volume One  
by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence