

REDEEMING THE TIME

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

WINTER 2010

Unbelief by Any Other Name ...

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Theological liberalism (or Modernism) is still alive and well, in spite of suggestions that it is obsolete or even dead. Many other man-made "theologies" have come forth in the intervening years since Modernism first gained ascendancy. However, to paraphrase Juliet's famous question to Romeo: "What's in a name? [Unbelief] by any other name..." is still unbelief!

Bishop Spong—a Case in Point

Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong is a case in point. Spong has gained notoriety for being a main-line religious establishment "shock jock." Among his many best-selling books are such titles as: *Rescuing the Bible From Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture*; *Eternal Life: A New Vision*; *Why Christianity Must Change or Die: A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile*; *A New Christianity for a New World*; *The Sins of Scripture*; and *Jesus for the Non-Religious*.

Couching his writings and speeches in a quite confident—and elitist—air of scholarship, he peppers his remarks with mockery of the historic Christian faith and attacks virtually every Biblical doctrine, with a con-

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Rev. Randy Ardis, Rev. Mark Evans and Mr. Brad Gsell protest a conference featuring apostate Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, October 16-18, 2009, at Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC.

Kenya Famine Relief Offering Reaches \$11,705!

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor..." (Psalm 41:1).

When we first announced the Kenya famine relief fund in the last issue of *Redeeming the Time*, we hoped that we could add a few hundred dollars to the relief efforts of Dr. and Mrs. Howard Carlson, Miss Judith Collins, Rev. and Mrs. Gary Johnson, and Rev. and Mrs. Mark Kim. All had told us of the suffer-

ing of those with whom they worked.

The readers of *Redeeming the Time* came through in ways we couldn't have imagined! We praise the Lord that when the December 1 deadline arrived, \$11,705.00 had been given by God's people!

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J. Gresham Machen Was Right

BY MARK W. EVANS

The Lord prepared His servant, J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) to confront false teachers within the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. His witness is still valuable to us today. Our sovereign God will have a testimony, even when His enemies seem to triumph. When we look at church history for help, to whom do we

"In the sphere of religion, as in other spheres, the things about which men are agreed are apt to be the things that are least worth holding; the really important things are the things about which men will fight."

turn? We do not turn to compromisers or appeasers, but to the faithful remnant—the persecuted, the martyrs, the valiant warriors for truth—who were faithful unto death. Machen was such a man.

J. Gresham Machen was born a covenant child in a family blessed with a Southern Presbyterian heritage. He learned the Word of God and memorized the Westminster Shorter Catechism from earliest years. His home was a place of Christian love and faithfulness. Machen's mind developed rapidly under good teaching at home and later at a private high school in Baltimore. He was well prepared to enter Johns Hopkins University, and completed his undergraduate and graduate work with

highest honors. He enrolled as a student at Princeton Theological Seminary, committing to only one year of study. Three years later, he graduated. The seminary's president, Francis L. Patton, asked him to teach Greek and related subjects, but he searched his soul and knew he was not ready.

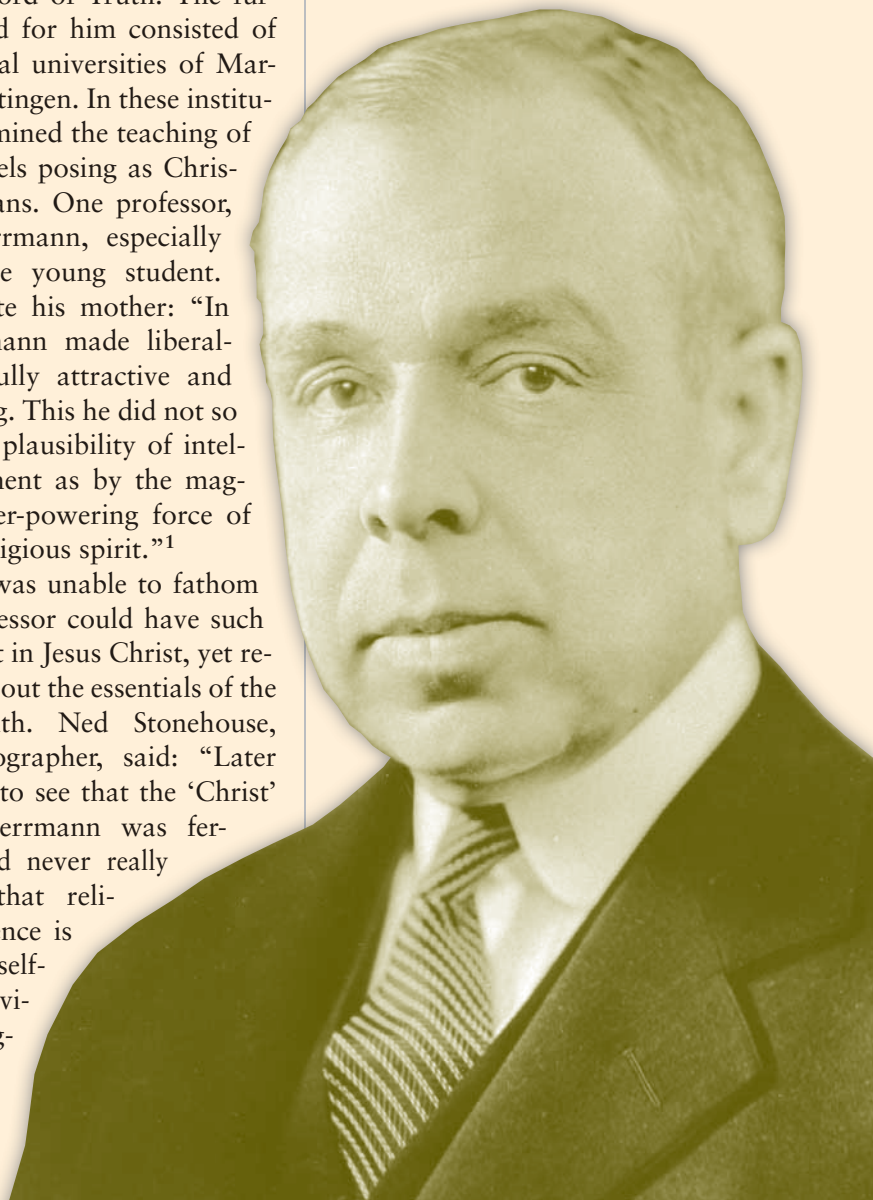
Machen decided to travel to Germany for further education. The sovereign Christ cannot fail when He calls His laborers into His vineyard. Saul of Tarsus learned this truth on the road to Damascus. Machen needed to go through the fire before possessing assurance that he could wield the Sword of Truth. The furnace prepared for him consisted of the two liberal universities of Marburg and Göttingen. In these institutions, he examined the teaching of brilliant infidels posing as Christian theologians. One professor, Wilhelm Herrmann, especially enthralled the young student. Machen wrote his mother: "In short, Herrmann made liberalism wonderfully attractive and heart-gripping. This he did not so much by the plausibility of intellectual argument as by the magnetic and over-powering force of his fervent religious spirit."¹

Machen was unable to fathom how the professor could have such apparent trust in Jesus Christ, yet remain silent about the essentials of the Christian faith. Ned Stonehouse, Machen's biographer, said: "Later Machen was to see that the 'Christ' to whom Herrmann was fervently devoted never really existed and that religious experience is not as such self-validating. Evidently, to a sig-

nificant extent, he became aware even while he heard and read Herrmann of basic weaknesses and inadequacies. He certainly never came to the point of substituting Herrmann's views for those of orthodox Christianity."²

Christ's future warrior poured himself into his studies of the Scriptures and saw the fallacies of his teachers. He was troubled at the dearth of Biblical refutation of the liberals' false pretensions to true Christianity. He also came to see more clearly how the Lord could use his training to meet this need.

In the summer of 1906, Machen received an invitation from William Park Armstrong, professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, to teach Greek and other subjects. He accepted the offer and began his career as a teacher and defender of orthodox Christianity.



When we look at church history for help, to whom do we turn? We do not turn to compromisers or appeasers, but to the faithful remnant—the persecuted, the martyrs, the valiant warriors for truth—who were faithful unto death. Machen was such a man.

Machen's collision with German liberalism convinced him of the extreme danger of false doctrine and the need to overcome it by the mighty weapon of God's Word. His fervent Christian zeal for truth and unyielding rejection of error stand as an example for all believers, especially for lay elders and pastors. The following are a few of Machen's teachings and observations, gleaned from his book, *Christianity and Liberalism*, published in the 1920s:

- "The type of religion which rejoices in the pious sound of traditional phrases, regardless of their meanings, or shrinks from 'controversial' matters, will never stand amid the shocks of life. In the sphere of religion, as in other spheres, the things about which men are agreed are apt to be the things that are least worth holding; the really important things are the things about which men will fight" (pp. 1,2).
- "Presenting an issue sharply is indeed by no means a popular business at the present time; there are men who prefer to fight their intellectual battles in what Dr. Francis L. Patton has aptly called a 'condition of low visibility'" (p. 1).
- "After the apologist has abandoned his outer defences to the enemy and withdrawn into some inner citadel, he will probably discover that the enemy pursues him even there....

Mere concessiveness, therefore, will never succeed in avoiding the intellectual conflict. In the intellectual battle of the present day, there can be no 'peace without victory'; one side or the other must win" (p. 6).

- "The liberal attempt at reconciling Christianity with modern science has really relinquished everything distinctive of Christianity, so that what remains is in essentials only, that same indefinite type of religious aspiration which was in the world before Christianity came upon the scene. In trying to remove from Christianity everything that could possibly be objected to in the name of science, in trying to bribe off the enemy by those concessions which the enemy most desires, the apologist has really abandoned what he started out to defend" (pp. 7,8).
- "If a condition could be conceived in which all the preaching of the Church should be controlled by the liberalism which in many quarters has already become preponderant, then, we believe, Christianity would at last have perished from the earth and the Gospel would have sounded forth for the last time" (p. 8).
- "The whole development of modern society has tended mightily toward the limitation of the realm of freedom for the individual man. The tendency is most clearly seen in socialism; a socialistic state would mean the reduction to a minimum of the sphere of individual choice. Labor and recreation, under a socialistic government, would both be prescribed, and individual liberty would be gone" (p. 11).
- "A public school system, if it means the providing of free education for those who desire it, is a noteworthy and beneficent achievement of modern times; but when once it becomes monopolistic it is the most perfect instrument of tyranny which has yet been devised. Freedom of thought in the Middle Ages was combated by the Inquisition, but the modern method is far more

effective. Place the lives of children, in their formative years, despite the convictions of their parents, under the intimate control of experts appointed by the state, force them then to attend schools where the higher aspirations of humanity are crushed out, and where the mind is filled with the materialism of the day, and it is difficult to see how even the remnants of liberty can subsist. Such a tyranny, supported as it is by a perverse technique used as the instrument in destroying human souls, is certainly far more dangerous than the crude tyrannies of the past, which despite their weapons of fire and sword permitted thought at least to be free" (p. 14).

- "Liberalism is not Christianity. And that being the case, it is highly undesirable that liberalism and Christianity should continue to be propagated within the bounds of the

"The liberal attempt at reconciling Christianity with modern science has really relinquished everything distinctive of Christianity, so that what remains is in essentials only, that same indefinite type of religious aspiration which was in the world before Christianity came upon the scene."

same organization. A separation between the two parties in the Church is the crying need of the hour.

"Many indeed are seeking to avoid the separation. Why, they say, may not brethren dwell together in unity? The Church, we are told, has room both for liberals

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Mrs. Sandra Hendricks at the protest of Bishop Spong

UNBELIEF BY ANY OTHER NAME ...

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tempt expected of one of lesser gravitas. Yet, Spong's website states that he "delivers more than 200 public lectures each year to standing-room-only crowds throughout the world."

Recently, Spong's speaking tour brought him to western North Carolina to the United Methodist Conference Center at Lake Junaluska, among several other engagements. Then, the *Charlotte Observer* gave major coverage to the return of one of its native sons (growing up, he was the newspaper delivery boy for Billy Graham's parents) for a series of lectures at the prestigious Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte. The seminar was sponsored by the Church's "Jesus the Christ in the 21st Century Committee," making one wonder whether the Jesus of eternity past was needing to be revised or replaced for the new millennium.

The *Myers Park Baptist News*, October 2009, stated: "In one way he [Spong] epitomizes the liberal theological movement begun in the mid-19th century Europe. Like the famous Harnack, he seeks 'The Essence of Christianity,' the religion of Jesus set free from 1st century 'clothes.' He has helped us unite science and faith rather than see them as combatants.... And he has challenged us theologically to go beyond traditional 'theistic' concepts of God to imagine God in new ways."

His Favorite Theologian

Spong follows in a long train of apostate church leaders who over the last century and a half have denied virtually every tenet of the Christian faith, while incredibly—and we would say dishonestly—retaining the name "Christian." Spong's favorite theologian, Paul Tillich, once wrote in his book *Courage to Be*: "God appears as the invincible tyrant, the being in contrast with whom all other beings are without freedom and subjectivity.... This is the God Nietzsche said had to be killed because nobody can tolerate being made into a mere

"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

object of absolute knowledge and absolute control. This is the deepest root of atheism. It is an atheism which is justified as the reaction against theological theism and its disturbing implications."

Tillich also denied the exclusivity of the God of the Bible. In a series of lectures at Columbia University in 1961, he displayed the leaps in logic typical of those bent on attacking the Word of God: "The exclusive monotheism of the prophetic religion is not due to the absoluteness of one particular god as against others, but it is the universal validity of justice which produces the exclusive monotheism of the God of justice. This of course, implies that justice is a principle which transcends every particular religion and makes the exclusiveness of any particular religion conditional." Tillich ignores such passages as Isaiah 45:22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

Bishop Spong Protested

The Rev. Randy Ardis, Mrs. Sandra Hendricks and I (from the Charlotte Bible Presbyterian Church), and the Rev. Mark Evans (from Hope Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC) held protests in front of the Myers Park Church. We were passed by hundreds of Charlotte's well-heeled and well-coiffed—many with great positions of influence in the community—as they came to hear Bishop Spong. The large church was filled to capacity. On Friday evening, Pastor Ardis and I put our signs away when the meeting began, but had to go to an overflow room to watch the speech on a large screen.

True to form, Bishop Spong ridiculed the Christian faith from beginning to end. Several of his points:

- Jesus Christ was just a man. He was "not God masquerading as a human being."
- "Have you ever heard people say, 'Jesus died for your sins'? That is just a guilt message."
- "If God sent His Son to die for our sins, that would make God 'the ultimate child abuser.' And, if Christ did it willingly, that would make him 'masochistic.'" [The audience laughed.]

- Christ's death on the cross "does not pay the price of sin."
- "In our church we say 'Lord, have mercy' a number of times. When we get tired of saying it in English, we say it in Greek: *kyrie eleison*. It has us begging like slaves to a slavemaster."
- Too many churches have made a "fetish out of the blood of Christ. The Protestants like to bathe in it and the Catholics like to drink it."
- "We have to stop talking like we know what's going to happen in the afterlife."
- When the Bible talks about "eternal rest" or "sabbath rest," it "sounds like 500 years of playing shuffleboard at a retirement home."
- "God is not Christian, Jew, Muslim or Hindu."
- The Great Commission does not mean that we are to "convert people." The Gospel is that in Christ "all human barriers fall and a new humanity is created." "People are drawn out of their tribal identities and security systems." "Converting people is not the ministry of the Christian Church, no matter how you perfume it." Pentecost was not speaking in different languages, "but the freedom to break tribal barriers."
- It is "absolutely arrogant" to say that Christ is the only way. [The audience applauded.]

The above comments were all made in the session titled "Separating Jesus From Religion." The other seminars were: "Redefining God—Beyond Theism," "Redefining Jesus—Beyond Rescuing or Saving," "Redefining Scripture," and "The Way Ahead—A New Reformation."

In stark contrast to Spong, who Myers Park's pastor describes euphemistically as being an "adventurous theologian," one can't help but think of such faithful Christian scholars as Princeton Theological Seminary professor Charles Hodge, who claimed before his death that nothing new was ever taught at Princeton. Unlike

Spong, Hodge dedicated his life to faithfully teaching the blessed truths of the revealed Word of God—the Bible.

Members of the Myers Park Church's "Jesus the Christ in the 21st Century Committee" were most gracious in telling us personally that "all people [including protesters!] are welcome at Myers Park Baptist Church." Following Spong's speech, one of the Committee members, who was managing the book table, recognized me from holding my sign on the sidewalk. As I walked by, he asked, "So, what did you think?" I told him that there was very little with which I could agree. He asked for an example. I replied that Bishop Spong had said that Christ did not rise literally from the dead. I then quoted 1 Corinthians 15:17: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

"If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20



I challenged this young gentleman to read and consider the claims of Scripture, and to ponder what purpose a man would have to attend church and bear the name "Christian," yet deny that there is a supernatural God, or that we even have any need to be saved from our sins.

We returned the next morning with our signs and were greeted by members of the church Committee bearing trays of food for our breakfast! At first, we weren't sure whether to partake, but upon consideration thought it best not to spurn the generosity and appear ungrateful. Any

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

offense needed to remain centered on the important issues involved. However, when the protest was over, this gave us opportunity to return the trays and to have further contact!

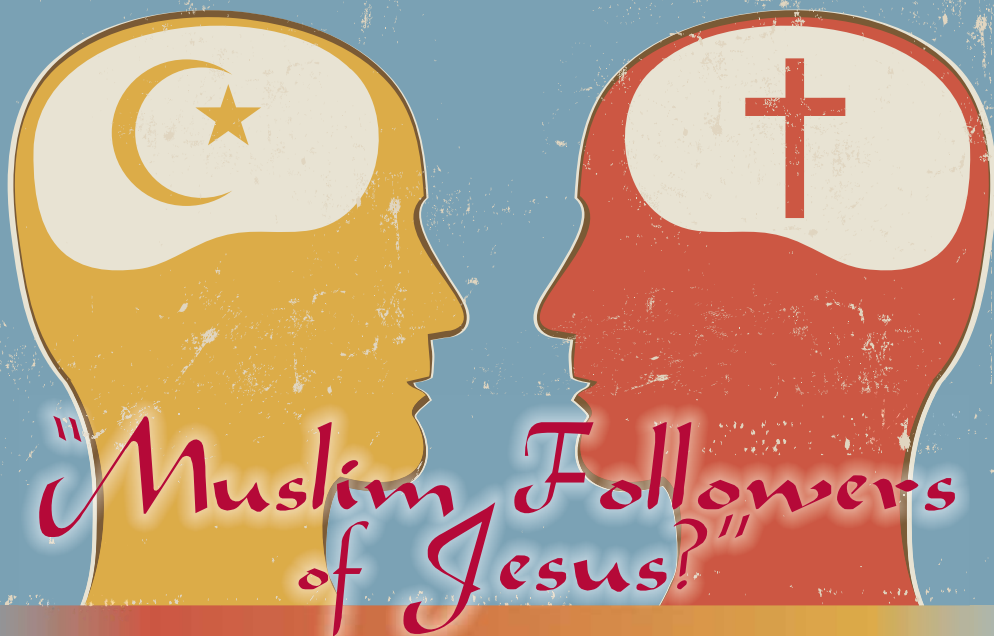
As we carried the trays in, I was greeted by the man with whom I had spoken the evening before. We again entered into a friendly discussion and he presented me with a copy of one of Spong's books, as "a gift from the Committee." When I returned home, I immediately ordered two copies of *Christianity and Liberalism*, by J. Gresham Machen. As soon as they arrived, I sent a letter of thanks to the Committee for the food and for the book they had given me. I challenged the entire Committee to read and study Machen's book. Be in prayer that they might do so!

Liberalism Is Alive and Well

The basic principles of liberalism are still alive and well. Ever since the serpent asked Eve in the Garden, "Hath God said...?" unbelief has flourished in this sinful world. When Spong wrote *Why Christianity must Change or Die*, the June 15, 1988, *Christianity Today* carried this quote from the Bishop: "Those who think Christianity consists of a supernatural deity who invades the world periodically, who works through a virgin birth, a physical resuscitation, and a cosmic ascension...those who believe that creeds are literally true, Bibles are inerrant...will call this heresy." And indeed it is! •



Mr. Brad Gsell is an elder and minister of music of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, and Vice President of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.



KENYA FAMINE RELIEF OFFERING REACHES \$11,705

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The Johnsons, Carlsons and Miss Collins were each given \$3,735.00. An additional \$500 was given to Rev. and Mrs. Mark Kim to provide meat and vegetables for a special meal for the students of the Bible College of East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, and Arusha, Tanzania.

In keeping our pledge to you, not one penny was taken by *Redeeming the Time* for administrative costs. Likewise, the missionaries are using 100% of the funds entrusted to them for the purchase, transportation and distribution of the relief goods. Following are notes from our missionaries:

From Dr. & Mrs. Howard Carlson

GO! International Mission gives thanks to God for the kind and generous gifts from *Redeeming the Time*—with the purpose of lifting some of the oppressive famine from our brethren in East Africa.

Our distribution was done in several ways. Raymond Carlson has been in Kenya and personally gave out some food in the area of Rongai. He then met with Christian leaders in the Mau mountain area and set up a committee of local leaders to distribute about half of the funds we received from you. I arranged for the rest of the funds to be sent to one of the main church groups with which we work, who were meeting in their Synod meeting. There the funds were distributed by church committee to the families of their pastors and retired pastors, and the widows of former pastors. The families will not buy toys or decorations or even some Christmas special foods—just corn and beans. But they will have enough

“Can one be a Muslim and a follower of Jesus?” begins an article in the December 2009 *Christianity Today*. The article is part of a series entitled “The Global Conversation,” which, the magazine describes as “address[ing] important issues related to world evangelization in preparation for the Lausanne Movement’s Cape Town 2010 conference. The Lausanne Movement is a continuation of Billy Graham’s World Congresses of Evangelization.

After discussing “Messianic Judaism,” writer Joseph Cumming states: “In the 1980s a similar movement began among Muslims who had come to faith in Christ. These were Muslims who trusted Jesus as Lord and divine Savior, believe Jesus died for their sins and rose again, and insisted this did not make them ex-Muslims or converts to the Christian religion. They wanted to remain within their Muslim community, honoring Jesus in that context.”

Cumming comments further: “On the Christian side, defenders see them as ‘Messianic Muslims’ whom we should accept—just as we accept Messianic Jews—as authentic disciples of Jesus. Critics argue that Islam and Judaism are different, that Muslim identity cannot be reconciled with biblical faith.”

The author offers some surprisingly faulty thoughts. He writes, “For

example, most American Christians assume one can be both a patriotic American and a faithful Christian, though they may disagree with some things that their government or fellow citizens do.” He then states: “...evangelicals have insisted that what matters most to God is not one’s identity as ‘being a Christian,’ but rather whether one has a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.” Neither of these comments has anything to do with claiming to follow Christ while remaining within a false religion!

Cumming concludes his article by saying: “...I want to be careful not to hurtfully reject brothers who have already suffered rejection and prison for Jesus.” He then mentions two men who hold different positions on this subject, and states: “...we must respect their fundamental human right to sort out—under the authority of Scripture—how they express their identity as followers of Christ.”

To the Bible believer there is little to sort out. 2 Corinthians 6:15,16, says: “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?...” Elijah, in 1 Kings 18:21, “came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.” •

for the pastors to keep preaching in their churches. Strict accounting has been provided of all funds given. God has been pleased and the church leaders lifted up with joy. Praise God!

From Rev. & Mrs. Gary Johnson

Upon arrival in Kenya we did find that it was raining in the Kitui District, and praised the Lord for His blessing to the people there. Many of the people did not have seeds to plant, so 36 two-kilo bags were bought to at least give a start to many families and for the Bible School grounds. The pastors met together and gave amounts of maize (corn) and beans needed for their churches, based on families to be helped with food. The corn and beans were bought and delivered by truck to some churches and by ox cart to other churches. Gary, along with our visitors, Pete and Joshua Rawlings and Jim Carr, were able to go to many of the churches for the food distribution. Some of them could not be reached by car since the roads, which are bad, were worse with the rains. It was a blessing to

know that our church families were helped, along with some of the needy in their areas. The pastors' families, former clinic workers, watchmen, needy neighbors, carvers' families, and some AIDS children also received food. Truly the Lord blessed abundantly and each one was very thankful! There were over 500 families that were helped—families not being just one person. There were nearly 3,000 people who received food! One pastor's wife came to say that in their church there was an older lady who nearly in tears said she thought no one cared, but now she knows people do care for her! And so does the Lord! We are so thankful for those helped, and are thankful that mid-December they will be able to receive some more food! The seeds were coming up, corn being out about eight to 10 inches, but the rains had stopped. If it does not rain more there will again be famine and hunger. PRAY for rain in Kenya. [Note: The Johnsons had additional funds to those sent by *Redeeming the Time*.]

From Miss Judith Collins

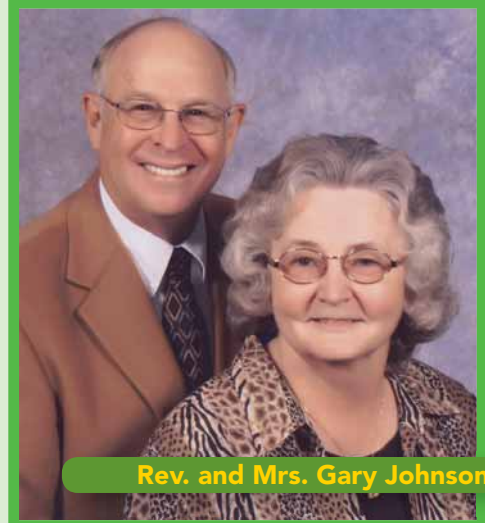
Dear Readers of *Redeeming the Time*:

How kind and generous you have been for the Rendille hungry! We have fed Rendille Baalah throughout the months of dreadful famine. Always it has been individuals and households, among whom the village elders have that traditional responsibility to look after the neediest in every village. So when their own herds were decimated, they became needy themselves. We have not discriminated or fed only

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Rev. and Mrs. Mark Kim



Rev. and Mrs. Gary Johnson



Miss Judith Collins



Dr. and Mrs. Howard Carlson



A pastor offers a prayer of thanks for famine relief given by readers of *Redeeming the Time*.



Gary Johnson measures out maize into individual portions.

KENYA FAMINE RELIEF OFFERING REACHES \$11,705

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the church congregation, and the elders know who gets food from their husbands or sons working in lower Kenya, so they fed the hungry families. This time with the gifts to us from you, we put on a community meal; I was there and so was Peter Lkayo. It was Baalah School Parents' Day. The mamas of the villages borrowed huge cooking pots and everyone was welcome to come and eat! They slaughtered goats. What a tasty soup it was and plentiful with rice, potatoes and good gravy. All leftovers—must have been “twelve baskets full,”—were given to needy households, and help was also given to other needy to buy what they needed. Nothing was wasted. Even the bones would have fed the community dogs. The great communal Baalah meal was the first in a long, long time. I don't think we were “5,000 plus women and children,” but we were very many, and the occasion was doubly happy, for food and for the children's performances to accompany it. Baalah thanks you for your feast in the wilderness.



Church members pose with their food which was donated by the readers of *Redeeming the Time*.



Students at the Bible College of East Africa in Kenya and Tanzania will enjoy a special meal when they return to classes in January 2010.

From Rev. & Mrs. Mark Kim

Greetings in His precious Name!

We had our 39th graduation at the Bible College of East Africa on November 28 with 25 graduates, and had a thanksgiving service on the 29th. Over 800 attended the graduation service and there were over 500 for the thanksgiving service. We thank God for that.

Thank you for your gracious gift for the students here.... Both schools will be reopened on January 11. I think it would be good to have a meal with all of them [when they return for classes]....

Thank you again and God bless. •

Students at the Baalah Primary School are served maize in the school kitchen.

Photo: February 2009



Conversing With the Prophets of Baal

THE MORMON-EVANGELICAL DIALOGUE



The Mormon Temple,
Salt Lake City, Utah

Christianity Today, September 2009, reports that “since 2000, small scholarly teams of Mormons led by [Brigham Young University professor Robert] Millet and evangelical teams led by Fuller Theological Seminary president Richard Mouw have managed to hold 17 intense, closed-door dialogue sessions. The latest, held in mid-October at Wheaton College, centered on proselytism, a topic on which the two sides are intense rivals....

“The talks are not the only breakthrough. LDS [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)] president Thomas S. Monson and his two counselors permitted Standing Together, an alliance of 90 Utah evangelical churches, to use the historic Salt Lake City Tabernacle for a September 13 revival meeting. Throngs of evangelicals and Mormons enjoyed gospel songs and prayed together.”

Richard Mouw raised controversy in 2004 when at the Mormon Tabernacle he publicly declared that “we evangelicals have often seriously misrepresented” Mormon be-

liefs and practices. “We have sinned against you,” he said. In 2005, he wrote what *Christianity Today* describes as “a friendly foreword and afterword to Millet’s *A Different Jesus?: The Christ of the Latter-Day Saints* (Eerdmans).”

Even *Christianity Today*, whose own editor in chief, David Neff, has participated in these “dialogues,” points to Mormonism’s unorthodox beliefs such as: “God is married and has ‘a body of flesh and bones,’” “the LDS Scriptures teach a plurality of Gods,” “the millennial prospect that human saints will be ‘made equal with’ God.” Whole books have been written outlining how Mormonism diverges from Biblical Christianity.

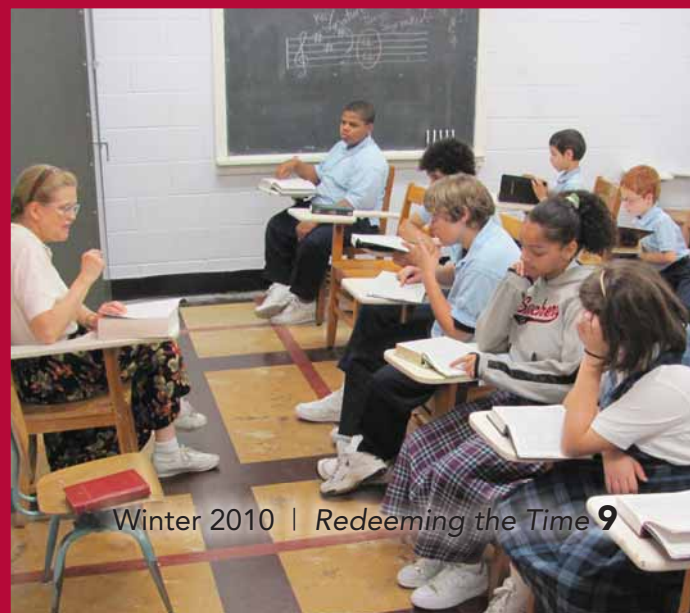
The article further reports that there is “hope for a publicly known conference between [evangelical and

Mormon] leaders, perhaps as early as next year. Another prospect is a series of formal statements on agreements and differences along the lines of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, though that will require LDS officialdom’s sanction.”

It is pointed out in the article that “Not many years ago, evangelicals would have deemed substantive contact with Mormonism ... improbable.” Now, the magazine reports, 40% of “Evangelical Protestants” consider Mormons to be Christians. This is another example of where Evangelical compromise eventually leads. We should seek to win Mormons to Christ; but, when it comes to dialogue, Ephesians 5:11 commands us: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” •



Faith Christian School, Collingswood, NJ, opened for its fall semester in September 2009. Here shown is a class being taught by Mrs. Judy Spencer. We congratulate the pastor and congregation for their tireless efforts, with the Lord’s direction and enabling, which made this needed ministry possible.



The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23

Longsuffering

by Brad K. Gsell



In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul describes for us the fruit which is to be found in the life of every Christian. This is the fifth in a series of articles which will discuss these characteristics of the Christian life.

When studying the “fruit of the Spirit,” as outlined by Paul in this passage, it becomes increasingly evident that these “fruits” do not manifest themselves independently of each other. They are not isolated entities. Instead, they overlap and flow from one to the other. We see an example of this in 1 Corinthians 13:1, which states that “charity [love] suffereth long.” Here, one fruit of the Spirit (longsuffering) is shown to be an intrinsic part of another (love). These fruits of the Spirit are combined into the seamless cloth of the godly Christian life.

A man will not be longsuffering who does not also possess love, joy, peace and the other attributes which follow it in the list given in our passage. To be longsuffering is against everything that the natural man desires and lusts after. The unregenerate man is by definition selfish and self-centered. Paul tells Timothy: “For men shall be lovers of their own selves...” (2 Timothy 3:2), and continues with a whole list of sinful traits—all of which put the self before others and before God.

Following this, Paul contrasts his own actions and “manner of life” (2 Timothy 3:10,11). Paul is

not boasting here, since Timothy already “fully [knew]” these things for himself. One attribute Paul mentions is “longsuffering,” and then continues in verse 11 by talking of the persecutions and afflictions which he endured in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. Paul displays no bitterness or desire for revenge concerning these things. Instead, he glories in the fact that “out of them all the Lord

*“...be patient toward
all men. See that none
render evil for evil
unto any man....”
(1 Thessalonians 5:14,15)*

delivered me.” Paul certainly knew whereof he spoke. In Romans 8, 2 Corinthians 11, and other places, he chronicles a whole list of terrible things which had happened to him.

The man of God who truly understands God’s mercy will be compelled to be longsuffering. Indeed, any longsuffering we can possess is miniscule in comparison to the pervasive example from the beginning to the end of Scripture of the longsuffering nature of God. Here are just a few examples.

When God called Moses back to Mount Sinai and again wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone, following Israel’s great sin,

He said: “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” (Exodus 34:6,7).

Peter reminds his readers in 1 Peter 3:20: “...when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” Noah preached for 120 years before the flood, and God did not destroy the earth.

In Genesis 18, we see the longsuffering of God when Abraham pled with Him not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if there should be certain numbers of righteous men living there. Abraham feared God’s anger as he continued to receive God’s assurances, only to return with reduced numbers of righteous men in his pleas. But, the Lord patiently heard Abraham’s pleas until the number was reduced to 10 righteous men!

In the New Testament, Paul, the great persecutor of Christ’s church who was gloriously saved, tells Timothy: “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Timothy 1:16). Paul held himself up as an example of how the mercy of God in salvation could be extended to the very “chief[est] of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). Fanny Crosby states this well in her hymn “To God Be the Glory:

“The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon [‘forgiveness’ in some hymnals] receives.” Then, he who has received the mercy of God is of necessity to display longsuffering in his life toward those around him.

Indeed, Peter makes this connection: “For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:17,18).

Matthew Poole, the Puritan commentator, defines longsuffering as “opposed to a hastiness to revenge, and inclining us patiently to bear injuries.” Kenneth S. Wuest, in his *Galatians in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, says that longsuffering is “steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It includes the idea of forbearance and patient endurance of wrong under ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge.”

Longsuffering is one fruit of the Spirit which has in its very name the idea of enduring something unpleasant, something which we would rather not experience. Any man on earth could make a very long list of things which have disappointed him, annoyed him, angered him, hurt him, revolted him, discouraged him or in some other way brought about a less-than-desired experience. These could range from minor annoyances to major heart-breaking events.

The Good News...

“We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.... Now know I that the LORD saveth his annointed” (Psalm 20:5,6).

There certainly are times when a man must defend himself, and to be longsuffering does not mean that we are to excuse evil. However, in following the example of our Heavenly Father, the child of God is not to put his own rights and interests first. He will not be easily discouraged in the face of adversity.

In Romans 12, Paul tells us in verse 12 that we are to be “patient in tribulation.” Verse 14 tells us to “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.” Paul ends the chapter by instructing us not only to endure suffering but to actively do good to those who afflict us. In verses 17-21, Paul says: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

1 Thessalonians 5:14-18 further shows the spirit we are to have in the midst of suffering: “be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks....”

May we save ourselves much heartache and spiritual peril in the face of tribulation and evil done against us by patiently rejoicing in the Lord, praying for His aid, and offering thanks for all His blessings. If our focus genuinely is placed on these things, the carnal desire for revenge, being overwhelmed with bitterness, and hastily losing patience with others will not be able to take their destructive grasp upon our hearts and souls.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN WAS RIGHT

Continued from page 3

and for conservatives. The conservatives may be allowed to remain if they will keep trifling matters in the background and attend chiefly to the ‘weightier matters of the law.’ And among the things thus designated as ‘trifling’ is found the Cross of Christ, as a really vicarious atonement for sin” (p.160).

- “Shall we be satisfied with preachers who merely ‘do not deny’ the Cross of Christ? God grant that such satisfaction may be broken down! The people are perishing under the ministrations of those who ‘do not deny’ the Cross of Christ. Surely something more than that is needed. God send us ministers who, instead of merely avoiding denial of the Cross shall be on fire with the Cross, whose whole life shall be one burning sacrifice of gratitude to the blessed Savior who loved them and gave Himself for them!” (p. 176).

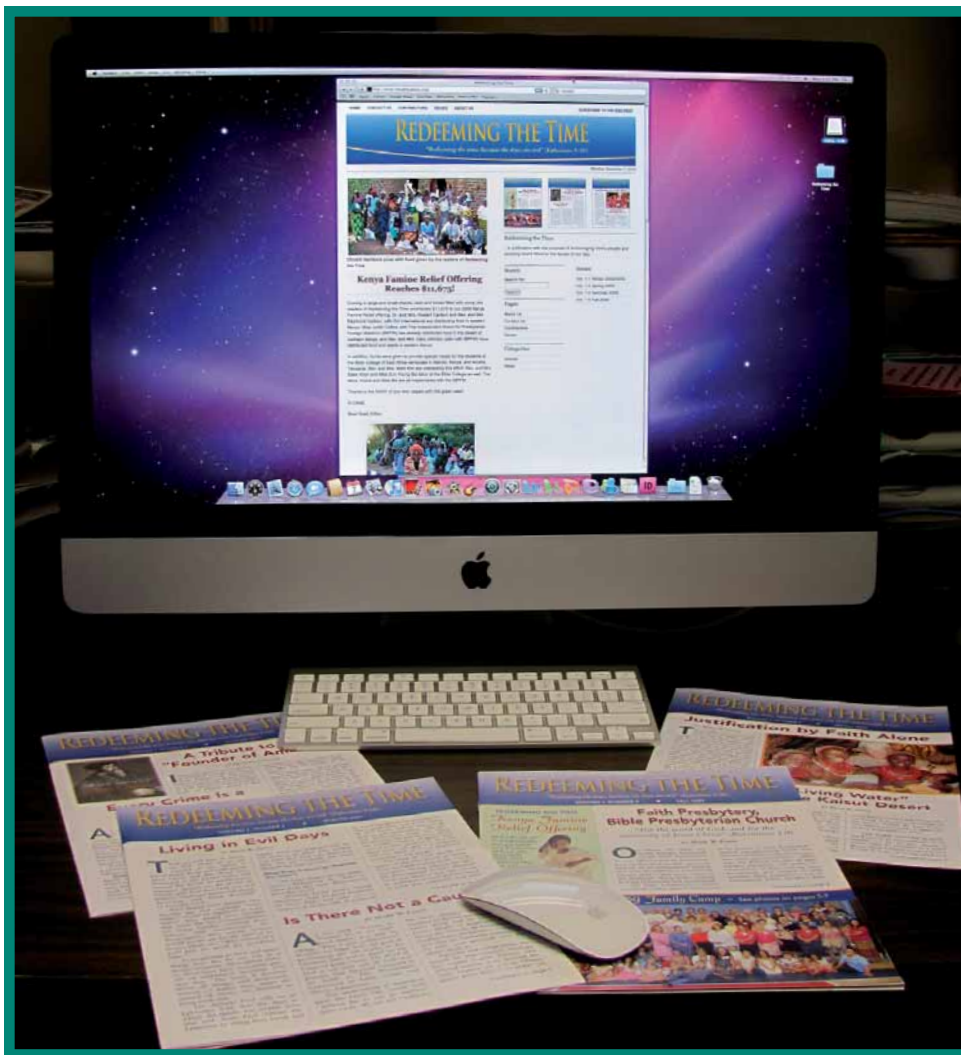
As in Machen’s day, pressures and temptations continue to abound to compromise the separated position maintained by our spiritual forefathers. Our prayer is that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers like Machen, who will untangle the deceits of Satan, stand for the truth, regardless of consequences, and maintain a separated testimony for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), p. 105.

²*Ibid.*, p. 108.



The Rev. Mark Evans is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC, and is vice moderator of Faith Presbyterian Church.



Redeeming the Time Now on the Web

We praise the Lord that *Redeeming the Time* now has its own website! A special thanks is due to Mr. John Clouse and son Jason Clouse for their many hours spent in getting the site up and running and for having great patience with the editor as he seeks to learn his way around. The Clouses are members of Hope Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC, where the Rev. Mark Evans serves as pastor.

A friend of the editor, who lives in Charlotte, was able to give some additional one-on-one help and aid-

ed in tweaking the appearance and functionality of the site.

All issues of *Redeeming the Time* will be available on the site in PDF format. We also plan from time to time to include extra photos which we could not fit into the printed edition, as well as links to other articles dealing with issues discussed in the publication. News and other information also will be featured occasionally.

The web address is:
<http://www.rttpublications.org>

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Faith Presbytery News

- ◆ **Dr. H. Ronald Vandermey and the Rev. Vance Vandermey were received as ministers in Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church,** at the Presbytery's fall 2009 meeting on September 25. The Vandermey brothers are copastors of Bethany Bible Presbyterian Church in Glendale, CA. **Mr. Chris Salerno, also of California, was taken under care of the Presbytery.**
- ◆ **The Spring meeting of Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church,** will be held on Friday, March 26, 2010, at the Apollo, PA, Bible Presbyterian Church. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. The Rev. Chris Sidwell is the host pastor.
- ◆ **Faith Presbytery's Family Camp** will be held from August 9-13, 2010, in Unicoi, TN. Plan now to attend! All ages are welcome! More details will be given in the next issue of *Redeeming the Time*.

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REDEEMING THE TIME

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Redeeming the Time is a quarterly publication with the purpose of encouraging God's people and applying God's Word to the issues of our day.

Individual copies are distributed free of charge, but the generous donations of God's people are necessary for this ministry to continue. Checks may be made payable to "**Redeeming the Time**," and mailed to: **P.O. Box 26281, Charlotte, NC 28221-6281**. All donations are tax deductible.