

# REDEEMING THE TIME

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

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## CHRISTIANS Need Not Apply!

BY BRAD K. GSELL



Senator Bernie Sanders



Russell Vought

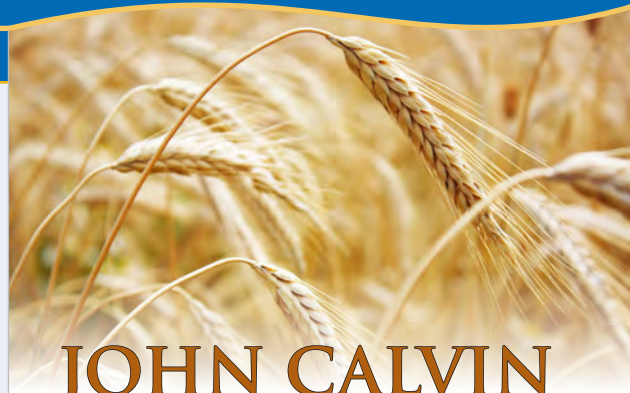
**E**erily reminiscent of things our forefathers experienced in the lands from which they fled to come to America, the so-called "progressive" left in America is increasingly attacking historic Christianity and those who are believers. This is done at the same time they hypocritically proclaim themselves to be the champions of tolerance and diversity.

Only one of the most recent examples took place at the Senate confirmation hearings for Russell Vought — the Administration's choice to serve as Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Senator Bernie Sanders began to question Mr. Vought with open hostility. Mr. Vought, a devout evangelical Christian, had written several years ago concerning an

incident which took place at Wheaton College, his alma mater: "Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ His Son, and they stand condemned." Sanders stated: "In my view, the statement made by Mr. Vought is indefensible, it is hateful, it is

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## JOHN CALVIN *and* EVANGELISM

BY MARK W. EVANS

**J**ohn Calvin's introduction to the Gospel came through his cousin Olivetan. This relative taught his kinsman the way of life as revealed in the Bible. Calvin's spiritual battle was intense, but the Word of God led him out of darkness.

Church historian, J.A. Wylie, said: "He would have shut the Book, but to what other quarter could he turn? On every side of him abysses appeared to be opening. So he continued to read, and by-and-by he thought he could discern simply and afar off what seemed a cross and One hanging upon it, and his form was like the Son of God. He looked again, and the vision was clearer, for now he thought he could read the inscription over the head of the Sufferer: 'He was wounded for our [transgressions], he was bruised for our [iniquities]; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' A ray now shone through his darkness; he thought he could see a way of escape, a shelter where the black tempest that lowered over him would no longer beat upon his head; already the great burden that pressed upon him was less

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*“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.” (Acts 4:29)*

BY BRAD K. GSELL

*The following is revised from the address delivered by Mr. Gsell at the 80th Commencement of Faith Theological Seminary, Baltimore, MD, on May 20, 2017.*

Our Scripture reading, Acts chapters 3 and 4, gives the account of the lame man sitting at the gate of the Temple begging alms. Peter and John stopped to minister to him, and the Lord graciously and miraculously healed him. This man did not just stand up and slink into the crowd, but we are told that he followed Peter and John into the Temple, “walking, and leaping, and praising God.” Peter then delivered a Gospel message to all the people who had witnessed this miracle of God.

### **They Spoke in the Name of the Christ of the Bible**

The people likewise were praising God — and none more so than Peter and John. All of the high religious leaders patted them on the

back and praised them—. Well, no, actually it says that they seized Peter and John and locked them up! It must have really infuriated the chief priest and Sadducees that, despite their opposition, a large multitude had believed on Christ for their salvation.

The next day, these leaders asked the Apostles just under whose power and under whose name did they think they had the right to preach these things. The Apostles did not “plead the Fifth,” they did not show belligerence, they didn’t shrink back and try to explain things away. Rather, they addressed these leaders with the respect due to their positions, but then immediately turned the subject to Jesus Christ in Acts 4:10-11: “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.”

They not only pointed to Christ — whom their inquisitors hated — as their message and authority, but

also pointed out that these men were responsible for torturing and killing Christ. They did not skip over the fact that this Christ rose victorious from the grave or that He was the One responsible for healing this lame man.

And if, somehow, the Jewish leaders had missed the point, the Apostles brought the message into a powerful conclusion. They declared that Christ, as Lord over all “is become the head of the corner” — the “chief cornerstone.”

### **The Exclusivity of the Gospel**

Peter and John did not stop there! They incensed the leaders even more by telling them not that Christ was merely just another way, equal to the way of these priests and Sadducees. No, they declared: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The questioners had asked under whose name they dared to speak these things. The

Apostles not only told them that it was in the name of Christ, but that there “is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” In answering the questions, they did not fail to present the Gospel to their adversaries.

### **They Spoke With Power From Above**

If Peter and John had spoken to leaders this way in our century, many evangelical leaders would tell them that they should not have “antagonized” these leaders by making these points so crystal clear, that the fewest words possible would have been more in order and *a propos*. Some might offer to send them for training in conflict resolution. Some probably would think they perceived, as did the chief priest and Saducees, that Peter and John “were unlearned and ignorant men.” After all, they had so recently been just fishermen. They did not have the rigorous scholastic credentials of these leaders. How dare they preach and persuade these people that Christ was the long-awaited Messiah?

Yet, missing in their understanding was that Peter and John had received the greatest theological training men could possibly get, sitting at the feet of Jesus. They also failed to recognize that these men were, as the Scriptures tell us, speaking under the power of the Holy Spirit. Their answers had been exactly right, because it was God’s Spirit who was leading them.

### **They Withstood Threats of Persecution**

These religious leaders did not know what to do. As happens so often today, they did not stand on principle. Their judgments were not holy nor based on God’s Word. Instead, they devised a pragmatic scheme to silence the Apostles. They acknowledged among themselves that there

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in the midst of hardship  
must be your complete  
reliance on our sovereign  
God and in Jesus Christ,  
His Son.**

was no use trying to deny this miracle, because too many people were eyewitnesses to it. Instead, verses 17-21 tell us: “But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.”

Peter and John did not mumble that they would cease their preaching and then slip into the crowd. No, they rather appealed to the Word of God. Luke tells us in this passage: “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.”

Peter and John could have gone away and said, “Boy, that was a close call. Let’s sit down and reassess things. We believe in Christ as the Saviour of the world, but can we not think of ways to present the gospel which will not offend? After all, if we keep going like we’re doing now, we

could be locked up or killed and then how would the gospel go forth?”

But these men fully realized that “the arm of flesh will fail you.” Instead of strategizing, they gathered with the people of God and told them what had occurred. Did they then sit around fretting and worrying. No, they lifted up their voice to God in acknowledgement that He is the Creator of all things and the One who controls what happens, for His own glory.

They did not just pray for their selfish desire for protection and safety, but their prayer was rooted in the Word of God. There are some Presbyterians today who are very reticent to APPLY the Word of God to specific current situations. They accept the teachings of the Word as mere principles.

Yet, here these disciples of Christ applied the words of Psalm 2 directly to their present difficulty. Their prayer continued: “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. [Here, the words of Psalm 2, “and against his anointed,” are clearly shown to be a reference from the Old Testament to Jesus Christ.]

The prayer continues: “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” They recognized that this was all in the determinant counsel of Almighty God that these things should occur.

Our Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 7 asks: “What are the decrees of God? The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, where-

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## **"AND NOW, LORD, BEHOLD THEIR THREATENINGS ..."**

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by, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

These first century Christians understood and loved this glorious truth. They were placing their trust completely in their loving Father who, in His great love, had sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross and rise from the dead. Their prayer concluded: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings" ... and help us to be more careful and to avoid ruffling any feathers.— No, they prayed: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word."

**T**his account of the work of the Apostles Peter and John in Acts 3 and 4 gives us a marvelous example of the marks all of us should have in our Christian walk and witness, as we are led by the Spirit of God.

**We must be men and women who are humble and compassionate.**

Like the good Samaritan, Peter and John stopped to present Christ to the lame man who was begging by the gate of the Temple. As will often be the case, service to the Lord may not bring great wealth and material possessions. "Silver and gold have I none" was the message of these Apostles.

The lame man may have for an instant wondered why they insulted his misery with such unhelpful news. But, what they had to give was of infinitely greater value: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

The Apostles cared for this one who was lowly, with no power or influence. While being "good soldiers of

Jesus Christ," they at the same time had genuinely tender hearts filled with love and compassion. The lame man was undoubtedly dirty and undesirable. But, **they were first and foremost "SERVANTS of Jesus Christ."**

We may have prestigious degrees from fine schools. We may have much knowledge and understanding. But, first of all, before anything else, we **MUST** be **HUMBLE SERVANTS** of Jesus Christ. We may be able to explain the fine points of Old Testament law, or the latest theological

**Have no fellowship with the apostate religious leaders in the mainline denominations, nor with compromising evangelicalism. Maintain a strong testimony for the historic Christian faith. Maintain your fellowship with other Bible-believing Christians, who refuse to compromise.**

trend, but if we do not have a heartfelt love, given to us by Christ and His Spirit, for the souls with whom we have been given the privilege to serve, our ministry will be a failure.

Some of the ministers I have known who had amazing Scriptural knowledge and insight have been those who are the most humble. They were far more concerned with ministering to needy souls and making disciples than they were of seeking to prove by their great words that **THEY** were not "ignorant and unlearned." In fact, God has chosen the foolish things to confound the wise. This is not to say that we are to **BE** fools. You have all come to study at this seminary so that you will be able to "rightly divide the word of truth." It is just that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness," and thus the world will often consider us to be fools.

**We must be men and women of prayer.**

The reason Peter and John were going to the Temple, in the first place, was to pray. We also see that after their encounter with the religious leaders, they went immediately and had a prayer meeting.

There was something about the preaching of one of my professors at Shelton College that you could always remember it. Forty years later, I can still hear him challenging us students in chapel from Psalm 127:1: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Be men and women of prayer, who join one hymnwriter in praying: "May I run the race before me, Strong and brave to face the foe, Looking only unto Jesus, As I onward go."

**We must be men and women filled with God's Spirit.**

If we are not, we will be operating from human will and energy, which will ultimately fail. In everything we do, every single day, we must make sure we are looking to the Lord to lead and to accomplish His will. In order for this to happen, we must be in submission and obedience to the will of God in our lives.

**We must be men and women of the Word.**

These disciples knew God's Word. The whole way through the New Testament, we see the Old Testament quoted repeatedly. Our passage today quoted from Psalm 2. Earlier, on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted and applied Joel 2:28-32 to those events. And, in the very last chapter of Acts, it says that the Apostle Paul preached unto them Jesus from the Law and the Prophets. He preached the Gospel from the Old Testament. Make much of Jesus. Preach Christ!

A seminary professor friend of mine in Brazil recently placed a post on Facebook. It said: "People like to talk about people. TALK ABOUT JESUS!"

The more you read and study the Scriptures, calling on God's Spirit to "lead you into all truth," the more you memorize the Scriptures, so you will have it in your heart and always available at a moment's notice, the more you compare Scripture with Scripture, the more you will have that wisdom which is from above. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Peter tells us, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Dwight Moody once wisely said: "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible." Keep yourself pure by "taking heed thereto according to [God's] Word" and maintaining daily close fellowship with Him.

### **We must be men and women who stand strong in the face of persecution.**

As we have seen throughout our text, **don't ever, ever compromise the Word of God** in order to have more opportunities, bigger crowds, less persecution, more fame and prestige, more financial gain, or to soften the "offense of the gospel" as it comes into conflict with the evil spirit of our present age. We as God's servants are not to be offensive by our abrupt actions, prideful comments, our selfish desires, or even our lack of etiquette, demeanor or decorum.

**We as God's servants are not to be offensive by our abrupt actions, prideful comments, our selfish desires, or even our lack of etiquette, demeanor or decorum. Be kind, be respectful, be courteous, be thoughtful, be helpful, always be concerned for the needs and cares of those to whom you minister. But, like the Apostles, we must never shy away from the offense which the Gospel most certainly does bring in our lost world.**

Be kind, be respectful, be courteous, be thoughtful, be helpful, always be concerned for the needs and cares of those to whom you minister. But, like the Apostles, we must never shy away from the offense which the Gospel most certainly does bring in our lost world.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote: "For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isaiah 50:7).

Dr. Francis Schaeffer, the first graduate of Faith Seminary, late in life wrote a book called *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. He documented how much of evangelicalism in the 20th century had compromised the commands of Scripture in order to have less conflict, to gain respectability and to supposedly reach more people. This is indeed a great tragedy.

Dr. Carl McIntire, one of the key founders of this seminary, wrote a book somewhat earlier entitled *The Testimony of Separation*. Do not fellowship with those who compromise

the teachings of Scripture. Have no fellowship with the apostate religious leaders in the mainline denominations, nor with compromising evangelicalism. Maintain a strong testimony for the historic Christian faith. Maintain your fellowship with other Bible-believing Christians, who refuse to compromise. Be faithful and leave the results unto God. We must keep before us the old statement that "God's work must be done in God's way in order to receive God's blessing."

### **Conclusion**

I don't have to tell you that life will not be easy. Go in with your eyes wide open. You will undoubtedly have many disappointments and pressures, and be persecuted and evil spoken of. Expect it!

The variable will be your response. Paul tells Timothy this very thing and counsels him to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Your strength in the midst of hardship must be your complete reliance on our sovereign God and in Jesus Christ, His Son. One hymn-writer correctly states: "All may fail, but Jesus never, glory to His name."

If you do these things, you will have a fruitful ministry, one of great rejoicing in the fact that we worship and serve a risen and victorious Saviour who loved us and gave Himself for us. "GO ... forth from this place ... into all the world and preach the Gospel." If you follow this example given us by Peter and John in Acts 3 and 4, no matter how difficult your trials, you will lead a life of true joy and God will give you "much fruit for your labors." •



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Islamophobic, and it is an insult to over a billion Muslims throughout the world....” Later, Sanders asked Vought if he considered his statements to be Islamophobic. Vought responded: “Absolutely not, Senator. I’m a Christian, and I believe in a Christian set of principles based on my faith.”

Interestingly enough, Sanders did not quote Vought in the fuller context. Vought also wrote in this article: “Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God who is fully divine (and became fully human).... If Christ is not God, he cannot be the necessary substitute on our behalf for the divine retribution that we deserve.” This simply is historic, Biblical Christianity. We are ALL condemned by God and salvation is by Christ alone.

Indeed Vought’s statement that those not believing in Christ are “condemned” is straight from Scripture — and there is no other way to interpret the plain language used by the Apostle John: “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). This follows closely after perhaps the most beloved verse in the entire Bible (verse 16): “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

But Sanders did not stop there: “I don’t know how many Muslims there are in America ... probably a couple million. Are you suggesting that all of those people stand condemned? What about Jews? Do they stand condemned too?”

**VOUGHT:** “Senator, I am a Christian—”

## SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS:

(during the June 7, 2017, U.S. Senate Confirmation hearings of Russell Vought to be the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget)

“And do you think your statement that you put in that publication, ‘They do not know God because they rejected Jesus Christ the son, and they stand condemned,’ do you think that’s respectful of other religions?...”

“I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that this nominee is really not someone who is what this country is supposed to be about,” Sanders said. “I will vote no.”

## GOD’S WORD, THE BIBLE:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”  
(John 3:16-18).

## THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION:

“... but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States ...” (Article VI:3).

**SANDERS:** “I understand that you are a Christian.... But there are other people who have different religions in this country and around the world. In your judgment, do you think that people who are not Christians are going to be condemned?”

**VOUGHT:** “As a Christian, I believe that all individuals are made in the image of God and are worthy of dignity and respect, regardless of their religious beliefs.... I believe that as a Christian, that’s how I should treat all individuals—”

**SANDERS:** “And do you think your statement that you put in that publication, ‘They do not know God be-

cause they rejected Jesus Christ the son, and they stand condemned,’ do you think that’s respectful of other religions?”

There was not even a “smidgen” of evidence — to quote our previous President — to suggest that Vought would mistreat people of other religions as he dealt with budgeting and management. In fact, true Christians undoubtedly treat all people more fairly and honestly than anyone else.

Nonetheless, Sanders concurred: “I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that this nominee is really not someone who is what this country is supposed to be about. I will vote no.”



Thankfully, a number of other senators and some in the media have condemned, or at least questioned, the obvious “religious test” that Sanders placed on this devout Christian nominee — because of his orthodox Christian beliefs. Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado addressed Sanders directly: “I hope that we are not questioning the faith of others, and how they interpret their faith to themselves.”

But, Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, ignoring everything Vought had stated, came to Sanders’ defense, and continued to falsely accuse Vought: “I don’t think anybody was questioning anybody’s faith here.” An editorial in the *Atlantic Monthly* by Kathy Green, June 8, 2017, stated: “Van Hollen said it’s ‘irrefutable’ that comments like Vought’s suggest to many that he’s condemning all people who aren’t Christians. And he asserted that Vought’s view of his faith is wrong: ‘I’m a Christian, but part of being a Christian, in my view, is recognizing that there are lots of ways that people can pursue their God,’ Van Hollen said. ‘No one is questioning your faith.... It’s your comments that suggest a violation of the public trust in what will be a very important position.’”

Of course Van Hollen was questioning Vought’s faith! He attempted in a public government meeting to seek to declare his “in my view” as the only acceptable one, and that those who hold to historic Christianity are not to be tolerated! No questioning of Vought’s faith? No application of a religious test? There is such a thing as reality and Sanders and Van Hollen clearly violated our Constitution.

It should not be forgotten that during the crackdown on religion in the 1920s Soviet Union, many were severely persecuted, while the government denied it and claimed the



Senator Chris Van Hollen



Senator Al Franken



Betsy DeVos

punishment was not for their faith, but for different reasons.

Apparently the only “approved” religions for Senators Sanders, Van Hollen and others are atheism, agnosticism, indifferentism and syncretism — or you must be a member of a religious group which they and the “Progressive” left have conferred their “seal of victimhood.”

Sanders doubled down, releasing a statement on June 8 repeating that such “Islamaphobia” as Vought’s is “unacceptable.” Van Hollen also released a statement again asserting that no one’s faith was being challenged. In other words, religious persecution is permissible, as long as you proclaim loudly that it isn’t

happening. Unfortunately, such dishonest devices do little to obscure the truth.

## Senator Al Franken and Betsy DeVos

This incident is just one recent occurrence of a religious test being applied. Senate Democrats and even some Republicans stood against the Administration’s choice for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. She is eminently qualified, but faced a barrage of withering insults because she is known for her stand for evangelical Christianity and school choice.

During the Senate confirmation hearings for DeVos, Senator Al Franken thought he had a knockout punch: “... you and your family have given over \$10 million to Focus on the Family, an organization that currently states on its website that, ‘homosexual strugglers can and do change their sexual behavior and identity.’”

But DeVos quickly replied: “First of all, let me say I fully embrace equality and I believe in the innate value of every single human being and that all students, no matter their age, should be able to attend a school and feel safe and be free of discrimination. So let’s start there....”

What Senator Franken was stating was that if you believe the Bible and what it teaches, or if you support a mainstream evangelical organization, you need not apply for a government position.

## The So-Called Affordable Care Act and Freedom of Religion and Conscience.

The religious freedom protections in America were greatly eroded

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## CHRISTIANS NEED NOT APPLY!

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under the Obama Administration. The so-called Affordable Care Act forced companies owned by Christians to include abortifacients in their healthcare plans. Many businesses and church-affiliated groups from various denominations had to spend their resources to defend themselves against this in the courts. Like Senator Van Hollen, a dishonest device was used to attack Christian groups and individuals.

We were told that a business is not a person, so does not have the protections of the First Amendment. That contention would most certainly be thrown out of a beginner's class in logic. But, some of our national leaders and the press used it without shame.

There is no business without people. Business is an activity engaged in by virtually every human being to fulfill his God-given calling and to provide for his or her personal and family needs. On a wider level, a well-run business, by the initiative of its owners, provides jobs and does good throughout the community, that would not be there without their diligence.

We are instructed by the Apostle Paul: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). The obedient Christian takes this command very seriously in every area of his life — including business. To say that a person who owns and operates a business is not allowed to have "free exercise of religion" in how he conducts it is to nullify any right intended by our Founders in the "Free Exercise Clause" of the First Amendment.

Fortunately, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood Specialties, and the Little Sisters of the Poor were spared the heavy hand of government bureaucrats.



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

But, Obama and many leftist politicians are dismissive and insulting to the "regular Americans" who do live out their faith each day. None will forget during his campaign in 2008 when Obama stated: "You go into these small towns in Pennsylvania and, like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for 25 years and nothing's replaced them.... And it's not surprising then they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations."

We will not attribute words or thoughts to President Obama which are not his, but it comes dangerously close to the dictum of Karl Marx: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people"<sup>1</sup>

As someone who grew up in one of those Pennsylvania towns, it is perfectly obvious that there is no comprehension of the thoughtful, intelligent people who live in those towns. The joyful community spirit in these largely Christian communities and the help to all in need is perhaps something President Obama has, sadly, never experienced. Nonetheless, his mischaracterization of the people — and of their faith — shows the spirit from which he has operated. Was he oblivious, or sim-

ply derisive and dismissive, that to many true Americans Christian faith is something that anchors them throughout bad — and good — times.

**"... Deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed."**

Hillary Clinton likewise has shown her hostility to Catholicism and evangelical Christianity. Speaking to the Women in the World Summit on April 9, 2015 — three days before she formally announced her candidacy for the 2016 Presidential Election — Clinton declared: "Laws have to be backed up with resources and political will. And deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed." Of course, she is free to try to persuade people in the free marketplace of ideas, but the government has no role in such interests. To state this immediately in the context of government, and with her intentions to run for President already known, is unacceptable. The immediate context had to do with abortion and other things which Christians and some in other religions find to be immoral and offensive.

Of course, the website Snopes, which many on the left tell us we are never allowed to challenge, declared that it was FALSE that she was telling people to change their Christian beliefs. I guess they too have Senator Van Hollen Syndrome.

Volumes of other such evidence could be produced to show the dangerous trend of subverting our Constitution to enable religious persecution.

**ACLU Knowingly Perverts the Meaning of "Religious Freedom"**

The American Civil Liberties Union, despite its deceptive name, came down on the side of DENYING civil



and religious liberties. A press release was issued by Manar Waheed, a Muslim recently hired to serve on the ACLU's Legislative and Advocacy Council. She had been sought out by the Obama Administration in 2014 to serve as his Administration's Deputy Policy Director of Immigration. However, she packed her bags the day before Donald Trump's Inauguration.

Miss Waheed states: "Religious freedom is such a fundamental liberty that the framers of our Constitution enshrined it in the First Amendment. That's why it's so disturbing that Trump continues to pack his administration with appointees like Russell Vought, whose views threaten that very freedom."

"Trump's nominee for this powerful position that helps decide how federal money is spent has claimed that 'Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ his Son, and they stand condemned....'

"As a matter of organizational policy, the ACLU does not take positions supporting or opposing cabinet nominees. The ACLU does, however, provide context on the nominees' civil liberties records for the public and Congress." So the ACLU has declared Vought, and I presume millions of other Christians, to have views which are threatening and against religious and civil liberties!

Here again, a device has been employed to turn religious liberty on its head. Our Founders would have found the ACLU's definition of "religious liberty" to be repugnant. It was not that everyone had to believe that there were different paths to "God." In fact nearly everyone living in the colonies at the time the Constitution was written would have found such a view to be offensive.

The freedom that was guaranteed came from the God of the universe, not from government. Men could hold strongly to differing religious beliefs. Each man was

## Religious Persecution: "The Vice and Pest of Former Ages"



Justice Joseph Story was one of the most consequential Supreme Court justices in American history, serving from 1811 to 1845. He is well known for his ruling in *United States vs. The Armistad* (1841), which gave freedom to Africans who had been transported illegally to the Americas on the *Armistad* to be sold into slavery. His *Commentaries on the Constitution of the*

*United States* is still considered an important work in understanding the U.S. Constitution. Concerning the adoption of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Story wrote: "It thus cut off the means of religious persecution, (the vice and pest of former ages,) and of the subversion of the rights of conscience in matters of religion, which had been trampled upon almost from the days of the Apostles to the present age."

### THE FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

responsible to God, their judge. Unlike Islam, Christianity teaches that men are to have liberty and it is God that saves or condemns, not us. I can believe that we are all condemned if we do not believe in Christ for our salvation, and at the same time treat those who differ from me MORE fairly than the "Progressive Left," which likes nothing better than to interfere in all of our lives.

What would Senator Sanders have to say if Justice Joseph Story (see box above) were appearing before the U.S. Senate today for confi-

mation hearings. I imagine he would be disqualified for having made such statements as: "Indeed, in a republic, there would seem to be a peculiar propriety in viewing the Christian religion, as the great basis, on which it must rest for its support and permanence, if it be, what it has ever been deemed by its truest friends to be, the religion of liberty." •

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx: "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," Paris: *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, February 7 & 10, 1844.

## JOHN CALVIN AND EVANGELISM

Continued from page 1

heavy, it seemed as if about to fall off, and now it rolled down as he kept gazing at the 'Crucified.' 'O Father,' he burst out — it was no longer the Judge, the Avenger — 'O Father, his sacrifice has appeased thy wrath; his blood has washed away my impurities; his cross has borne my curse; his death has atoned for me!' In the midst of the great billows his feet have touched the bottom: he found the ground to be good: he was upon a rock."<sup>1</sup>

One obstacle remained. How could such an ancient and united ecclesiastical body not be the true Church? Calvin searched the Scriptures. Wylie wrote: "'There can be no Church,' we hear Calvin saying to himself, 'where the truth is not. Here in the Roman Communion, I can find only fables, silly inventions, manifest falsehoods and idolatrous ceremonies. The society that is founded on these things cannot be the Church. If I shall come back to the truth, as contained in the Scriptures, will I not come to the Church?"



And will I not be joined to the holy company of prophets and apostles, of saints and martyrs? And as regards the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus

**In our day, many seem to think that John Calvin was a stern theologian who quenched evangelistic zeal. To the contrary, Calvin, with tender heart, sowed Gospel seeds wherever the Lord led. Once he determined to serve Christ, he turned away from the study of law, with all its promises of prominence and wealth, to preach Christ crucified.**

Christ, let me not be awed by a big word. If without warrant from the Bible, or the call of the Christian people, and lacking the holiness and humility of Christ, the Pope place himself above the Church, and surround himself with worldly pomps, and arrogate lordship over the faith and consciences of men, is he therefore entitled to homage, and must I bow down and do obeisance? The Pope,' concluded Calvin, 'is but a scarecrow, dressed out in magnificences and fulminations. I will go on my way without minding him.'"<sup>2</sup>

Calvin's struggles were not finished, but God's truth was sealed to his heart. He left his Roman Catholic teachers and determined to study law, sitting under the famous jurist, Pierre de l'Etoile. He learned from

him a startling maxim, "What! shall we hang a thief who robs us of our purse, and not burn a heretic who steals from us heaven!"<sup>3</sup> Calvin would soon see this cornerstone belief of the Inquisition in its unspeakable cruelty, yet he also saw the eternal victory of the Gospel.

In our day, many seem to think that John Calvin was a stern theologian who quenched evangelistic zeal. To the contrary, Calvin, with tender heart, sowed Gospel seeds wherever the Lord led. Once he determined to serve Christ, he turned away from the study of law, with all its promises of prominence and wealth, to preach Christ crucified. He began his evangelistic effort in the city of Bourges. Wylie wrote: "Gliding along the street might be seen a youth of slender figure and sallow features. He enters a door; he gathers round him the family and, opening the Bible, he explains to them its message. His words distil as the dew and as the tender rain on the grass. By-and-by the city becomes too narrow a sphere of labor, and the young evangelist extends his efforts to the hamlets and towns around Bourges. One tells another of the sweetness of this water, and every day the numbers increase of those who wish to drink of it. The castle of the baron is opened as well as the cottage of the peasant, and a cordial welcome is accorded the missionary in both. His doctrine is clear and beautiful, and as refreshing to the soul as light to the eye after long darkness. And then the preacher is so modest withal, so sweet in his address, so earnest in his work, and altogether so unlike any other preacher the people had ever known!"<sup>4</sup> From this foundation arose a church which was replete with faithful followers of the Lamb, willing to face Rome's fiery stake rather than forsake their Redeemer.

The death of Calvin's father required him to travel to his birthplace — Noyon, France. On the

### REDEEMING THE TIME

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way, he passed through Paris and witnessed the execution of a faithful martyr, Louis de Berquin. Wylie said: "When the martyr went up in the chariot which unseen by the crowd, waited to carry him to the sky, his mantle fell on one who was standing near, and who may be said to have seen him as he ascended. From the burning pile in the Place de Greve, the young evangelist of Bourges, whose name, destined to fill Christendom in years to come, was then all but unknown, went forth endowed with a double portion of Berquin's spirit, to take up the work of him who had just fallen, and to spread throughout France and the world that truth which lived when Berquin died."<sup>5</sup>

In time, Calvin returned to Paris. The Renaissance, with its rediscovery of Greek and Hebrew, had stirred immense interest in the Scriptures. However, it also produced furious debates among students and professors. The young Reformer, although possessing profound knowledge and devastating skills at debate, avoided the

**"While others are simply silencing opponents, Calvin is enlightening minds, and leaving traces in the hearts of men that are imperishable. In this we behold the beginnings of a great work — a work that is to endure and fill the earth when all the achievements of diplomacy, all the trophies of the battlefield, and all the honors of the school shall have passed away and been forgotten."**

J.A. Wylie



fray. Wylie said: "We see him passing along on the shady side of the street. He drops in at a door. He emerges after awhile, passes onward, enters another dwelling, where he makes another short stay and thus he goes on, his unobtrusiveness his shield, for no one follows his steps or suspects his errand. While others are simply silencing opponents, Calvin is enlightening minds, and leaving traces in the hearts of men that are imperishable. In this we behold the beginnings of a great work — a work that is to endure and fill the earth when all the achievements of diplomacy, all the trophies of the battlefield, and all the honors of the school shall have passed away and been forgotten."<sup>6</sup>

Calvin fled from Paris to avoid execution. Friends distracted his captors while he escaped through a window. He made his way to a university city, Poitiers, and once again engaged in evangelistic work. A congregation was formed that gathered in a cave outside of the city. France's systematic evangelization began in that cave. Calvin asked the little flock, "Is there any one here willing to go and give light to those whom the Pope has blinded?" Three volunteered: Jean Vernon, Philip Veron, and Albert Babinot. Veron and Babinot departed to spend their lives proclaiming God's saving truth in the south and west of France. Vernon, who was later burned at the stake, remained in Poitiers to evangelize the students. Calvin eventually left Poitiers, but a Reformed Church remained, strong and faithful to the Lord, ready to confess Christ even unto death.<sup>7</sup>

Such was the evangelism of the frail, sickly John Calvin, who gave God all the glory. We are still reaping the fruit of the Reformation. Calvin's theology came from the Bible and was sealed by the blood of martyrs. He was not "engaging the culture," he was proclaiming the Gospel of God's Word to precious souls. Our hope is for another sovereign work of God that will bring multitudes of sinners into the joys of salvation. The Lord Jesus said, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

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<sup>1</sup>J.A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Vol. II, (London: Cassell and Company n.d. [originally published in 1878]), p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 158,159.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 179,181.



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## THE DIVISION OF 1937

Between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Bible Presbyterian Church

### PART 11

# “As the Years Go By”: Conclusion

BY BRAD K. GSELL

*It is important to have read Parts 1 through 10 of this series, which have been published in successive issues since the winter 2014 issue of Redeeming the Time. They serve as the general background for understanding this segment and those to come. These may be found on our website ([www.rttpublications.org](http://www.rttpublications.org)), or we would be glad to mail copies to you. Within a few years of its founding, the Presbyterian Church of America changed its name to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Therefore, you will see these names used interchangeably in these articles.*

When I began this series, one minister asked why I was resurrecting the details of a struggle that had taken place long ago. Why not let rest something which caused such painful division? I believe these to be fair questions.

These articles certainly were not intended to build up one denomination by tearing down another. As with any church body comprised of men, neither the Orthodox Presbyterian Church nor the Bible Presbyterian Church can make any claim to having a perfect history. However, examination of our past victories and failures can be a tremendous teach-

er to aid us as we move forward through time.

The heading for this concluding article was a portion of the title of a book Carl McIntire penned in the early 1970s concerning Presbyterianism in the 20th century. If “hindsight is 20/20,” as we are told, we

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certainly can learn much from our past “as the years go by” and we are able to put things into perspective.

All of us “see through a glass darkly.” We are often shortsighted in ignoring Scriptural teaching, or taking it too far, based on the immediate

religious and cultural events taking place around us. Only the Word of God is blessedly free of these human distortions. Although the books of the Bible were written in the clear historical context of the times and places in which the authors lived, yet, as the Word of God, the Bible is just as vital and obligatory for us today as it was to the saints living thousands of years ago.

Through the long annals of Jewish and Christian history, we can see the times when the church of Jesus Christ was strong and obedient, and those times when it has been weak, lax, worldly and ineffectual. We also see the wonderful testimony of men who were faithful unto death, as well as those who fell into sin and disobedience to God. These things serve as an encouragement — as well as a warning — to those of us living in the twenty-first century.

We may desire only to record the “good things,” and the “wonderful accomplishments.” With the Bible as our guide, we can look to Hebrews 11 and other passages to see a blessed example of those who stood by faith and honored God.

However, the Scriptures also present the struggles in the church, where even the apostles had disagreements. In Galatians 2:11, Paul

“withstood Peter to the face.” In Acts 15, there was “much disputing” at the Jerusalem Council, and Paul and Barnabas parted ways over a disagreement. Such Biblical accounts as those detailing the lives of God’s servants, show us that He did

**Hopefully, the primary documentation produced in this series of articles will serve as a corrective to what has often been a one-sided story.**

not choose to hide the fact that even some of His choicest servants were very far from perfect.

Certainly, we as Christians are to do all in our power to display genuine love for our brethren, and true Christian unity is a command of Scripture. Backbiting and tale-bearing are strictly forbidden by the Scriptures, and we are never to be guilty of “corrupt communication.” Proverbs 17:9 tells us: “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”

But, recounting and analyzing public events, speeches and writings, for the purpose of seeing how we may better serve the Lord, and to correct the historical record, should not be eschewed.

In historical context, the underlying motives at the heart of the division between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Bible Presbyterian Church were proper and Biblical. Both sides were attempting to be strictly Biblical, with attention to the whole system of doctrine found in the Scriptures. Dr. Machen had strongly denounced “indifferentism” as a primary evil. He viewed Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, etc., who honestly held doctrinal differences between themselves, as not being nearly so bad as those who stated that these things were not important or did not matter.

It will never be known if Dr. Machen would have been able to keep these elements together in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had he not suddenly been taken in the prime of life. Many of the key men on both sides of this division went on to distinguish themselves in important areas of the Lord’s work. We often see their dignified portraits, taken later in life, hanging on walls or printed in books. However, it must be remembered that a number of these men were quite young when these events took place. Would the wisdom which comes with age have helped to brook these divides?

Also, the European background and traditions of some of the key players on the OPC side should not be discounted. Despite their contentions that the Bible Presbyterians deviated from “the Reformed faith,” the documentation provided in these articles proves that the Bible Presbyterians were very much in conformity with the historical Reformed beliefs and practices of American Presbyterianism. More recently, some members of the OPC have acknowledged this fact.

Our geographic or historical background does not dictate what is Scripturally correct. In fact, there is much to be learned from the accounts of God’s work among His people in every corner of the globe. Indeed, the great creeds and confessions of the church came out of the struggles of the Reformation in northern Europe. Yet, the OPC and BPC from the beginning both adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as their Standards. Although both denominations have had their divisions, the facts certainly would lead a dispassionate observer to conclude that both denominations have held to the Reformed system of doctrine.

Dr. Machen was indeed the “hero of the faith” to all of these men on both sides. Sadly, some men in the OPC sought to claim him ex-

clusively as their own. A study of Dr. Machen’s writings show that this was not warranted. We have shown that Dr. Machen loved, trusted and maintained close friendships and relationships with men who ended up on different sides.

He loved the Reformed Faith and defended it. Yet, his writings show that he had close ties with those who embraced the term “Fundamentalist,” and publicly announced his fellowship with Methodists, Lutherans and others. The OPC maintained the Reformed Faith, yet appeared to narrow its range of fellowship much more than did Dr. Machen. The Bible Presbyterians followed Dr. Machen’s example and likewise embraced having fellowship with other Christians, while strictly maintaining the Reformed Faith as the only true Biblical system of doctrine.

In no way seeking to minimize the importance of many other godly leaders, it is safe to assert that Carl McIntire was the primary leader of the Bible Presbyterian Church for many decades. He never stopped fighting the apostasy and warning against compromising evangelicalism. He applied the Scriptures to current events — much as Dr. Machen had done. Unfortunately, through the years there were a number of splits. Another volume would be needed to analyze these sad divisions, but he gained a lot of enemies along the way — in the religious world, government and the press.

This made it easy for his detractors to too quickly accept as fact charges leveled against him and the institutions which he led. Some charges may certainly have been legitimate, but many were not. Yet, these claims have been repeated and copied over and over to the point that they have become “established history” in most available historical resources.

*Continued on page 14*

## **"AS THE YEARS GO BY": CONCLUSION**

*Continued from page 13*

Hopefully, the primary documentation produced in this series of articles will serve as a corrective to what has often been a one-sided story. Well known historian George Marsden's accounts have had very wide circulation. Yet, it must be recognized that his father was heavily involved in the OPC side of this division, which undoubtedly affected his writings.

As Carl McIntire advanced in years, with his experience of having relentless and often unfair attacks leveled against him, he seemed to become less and less willing to view any criticism from his friends and supporters as constructive. Rather, he often took any such communication as a personal attack or as an attempt to soften the Biblical stand.

This caused many to leave, with heartache often trailing in the wake. With government persecution (by the Federal Communications Commission, the New Jersey Department of Education and the City of Cape May, NJ, to name a few) and a diminishing sphere of influence, the grand Christian organizations under his leadership began to falter or collapse. Thankfully, several of these institutions continue, long after McIntire's death, to the glory of God!

The OPC likewise has experienced several divisions. Paul Woolley, John Murray and others remained quite rigid, with fellow commissioners sometimes leveling sharp criticism at them on the floor of the OPC General Assembly for taking positions which they did not believe were required by Scripture. There is even evidence that by the 1960s many in the OPC did not consider their differences with the Bible Presbyterian Church to be of significant importance.

**Will we remain faithful to the Word of God, including the grand system of doctrine it contains, which we commonly call the Reformed Faith? Will we show love, compassion and humility, while remaining unmoveable in the face of increasing pressures to compromise? Will we "speak the Word of God with boldness," despite those who would seek to intimidate or harm us? Will we apply the Bible to every facet of our lives and of our churches, when this may seem strange and unacceptable to many? Will we continue to preach the gospel to every creature, when the world will declare that we should be quiet, because "religion is a private matter"?**

Despite all of the events recorded in this series of articles, each of us has much to learn from the fascinating histories of these two denominations. Many good men have served in both denominations. The theological contributions of some of the men in the OPC have been significant and quite helpful. The OPC, in many ways, has resisted the current trend of retreating to shallow sermons with worldly music. However, men such as Dr. Norman Shepherd and Elder John Kinnaird have done damage to that legacy.

The theological contributions of many in the Bible Presbyterian Church have also been of great value. The spurious charges of an in-

ferior devotion to sound Reformed doctrine, and resemblance to "New School" Presbyterianism, are unraveled by the preponderance of primary factual evidence. The Bible Presbyterian Church has been solidly in the mainstream of Biblical orthodoxy, with a love and devotion for the teachings highlighted by the Protestant Reformation and continued through the faithful stream of historic American Presbyterianism.

These articles centered on points of contention and division, yet it would be a serious omission to fail to point out that both of these denominations have had wide influence in comparison to their relatively small sizes. Both groups have been heavily involved in sending missionaries to all corners of the earth. Both have had outsized influence on theological education in America. Both have been involved in important ministries of compassion and aid. And both have labored, despite continuing differences, to establish local congregations where the gospel is preached and disciples are taught, encouraged and edified.

In the early 1990s, there was a move in the Bible Presbyterian Synod to seek to establish formal relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Although neither denomination had changed much in how it felt about the issues of contention in 1937, many no longer considered them to be so important as to preclude having a level of formal relationship. The Bible Presbyterian Church did not see this as a move toward organic union, although the Orthodox Presbyterian Church sees this as the ultimate goal of any such relationship.

A significant portion of the Synod was not in agreement. Further, these men had serious concerns regarding the OPC's dealing with the views of some of its ministers and elders on the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Norman Shepherd controversy at Westminster Seminary had flowed over into the denomina-



tion. Years later, similar teachings by Elder John Kinnaird had caused some to leave the OPC. The OPC did produce a paper on Justification. The body recommended it for study, but did not formally adopt it. However, Elder Kinnaird was permitted to remain as an officer of the church. This was not acceptable to many.

Further, the different views concerning Biblical separation were an obstacle. While the OPC had never joined the compromising National Association of Evangelicals, it did have formal fellowship with other Presbyterian bodies which were in compromise, including the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America. In fact, at the same time the OPC was courting the Bible Presbyterian Synod to establish formal ties, it was flying representatives to meet with the PCA to discuss formal union.

Despite objections, the Bible Presbyterian Synod proceeded in 2004, by a close vote, to formally establish Corresponding Relations with the OPC. Not wanting their consciences to be bound by this action, the South Atlantic Presbytery left the Synod in 2008 and changed its name to Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church. The motion of disassociation passed by the Presbytery included the express desire that the departure be amicable and temporary.

It is worth noting that even those in the Bible Presbyterian Church who stood the strongest against commencing formal relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were careful to recognize the OPC as “a true church of Jesus Christ.”

As the 21st century progresses, we are in a far different world than was found in the middle of the 20th century. Whereas, the church and the clergy were highly honored in nearly every community, there is bold and public hatred against them today. Christians are finding themselves in the place of being in danger of los-

ing their precious freedoms, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution notwithstanding.

Will we remain faithful to the Word of God, including the grand system of doctrine it contains, which we commonly call the Reformed Faith? Will we show love, compassion and humility, while remaining unmoveable in the face of increasing pressures to compromise? Will we “speak the Word of God with boldness,” despite those who would seek to intimidate or harm us? Will we apply the Bible to every facet of our lives and of our churches, when this may seem strange and unaccept-

able to many? Will we continue to preach the gospel to every creature, when the world will declare that we should be quiet, because “religion is a private matter”?

The church of Jesus Christ has continued true through all ages, despite periods of severe persecution and in spite of great ecclesiastical apostasy and corruption. Jesus Christ promises us that He “will build [His] church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” Let us rejoice in the Lord and be faithful, placing our complete trust in Him who promises us: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” •

## Evangelical “Heretics”

**W**ith the relativism, universalism and syncretism evidenced throughout our society, many today seek to customize their own religious beliefs. In keeping with the tolerance and diversity theme that has permeated our culture, the idea that all roads lead to heaven has been adopted by those who are not Biblically grounded. The age-old problem of man seeking to be in control is not absent from many who claim to be Christians.

A study at the end of 2016, conducted by LifeWay Research and commissioned by Ligonier Ministries, shows an alarming rate of error in the beliefs of those who identify as “Christian.” Truly alarming is that “evangelicals” did even worse in some areas than the “Christian” public at large. Evangelicals were defined as “participants who called the Bible their highest authority, said personal evangelism is important, and indicated that trusting in Jesus’ death on the cross is the only way of salvation.” Following are just a few statistics from the study of these “evangelicals” who were polled.

- God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam. **46%**
- By the good deeds that I do, I partly contribute to earning my place in heaven. **36%**
- Even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation. **54%** disagree.
- The Holy Spirit is a divine force but not a personal being. **56%**
- The Third Person of the Trinity is not equal with God the Father or Jesus. **28%**
- Jesus was the first being God created. **70%**
- Heaven is a place where all people will ultimately be reunited with their loved ones. **66%**

It is also of concern that apparent contradictions were seen. For instance, although this group agreed that salvation was only through Christ, they had no problem saying that “all” would go to heaven.

Our homes and churches must once again teach the Bible and sound doctrine. To see supposed “evangelicals” in agreement with some of the great heresies confronted by the church through the centuries is alarming. •





Spring Meeting of  
**Faith Presbytery,  
Bible Presbyterian Church**  
Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania • March 31, 2017

