

Christian Reconstruction

Isaiah 61:4

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CRITICAL MASS Part 21: Milk and Meat

by Gary North

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

This metaphor refers to theological knowledge in the widest sense: **biblical wisdom** – the ability to discern good and evil and act accordingly. There is always a shortage of meat eaters. Every church is required by God to have a method of moving milk drinkers from milk to meat, but no church has ever done this well. Some churches define meat as formal theology. These are catechetical churches. They are marked by slow growth and shrinking influence. Some churches define meat as evangelism. They are marked by faster growth and large milk bills. Most churches are somewhere in between.

One Man, One Vote

Church elders should be meat eaters, yet we all know of milk drinkers who have wound up as elders. There are even bottle-fed elders whose wailing can sometimes be silenced with pacifiers. How do they get elected? As representatives of milk drinkers who recognize their own.

The problem that every congregation faces is that the milk drinkers always outnumber meat eaters. Yet in most Protestant congregations – and all independent congregations – the milk drinkers have the controlling votes. Churches give the vote to every baptized adult member. Some Presbyterian churches even give the vote to children who are eligible for communion. There is no acceptance of two-tiered church membership: communing members and voting members. There is no church that limits the vote to tithers. If only the tithers could vote, meat eaters would be more likely to be in control.

The structure of authority in the modern church is socialistic. The Protestant church provided the operational model for socialism's graduated income tax. Everyone votes, and those who do not tithe have more votes than those who do tithe. The church set the standard for politics. The Protestant church adopted democratic socialism as a government ideal long before the modern State did.

So, final church sanctions are in the hands of milk drinkers. When voting membership is by simple profession of faith, the spiritual wisdom of the lowest common denominator is low indeed. This is the dilemma of every church that allows all

communing members to vote.

Gumming Up the Works

Meat eaters therefore have a problem: how to gain and retain the support of milk drinkers. This poses a secondary problem: how to make meat eaters out of at least a sizable minority of milk drinkers. In the words of one pastor I know: "When I came here, I expected to oversee an armory. What I found was a nursery."

Those whose spiritual teeth have not come in have trouble with meat. Unlike physical teeth, spiritual teeth come as a result of instruction and experience. Those who gum everything they eat must be willing to chew. But this hurts. At best, it isn't comfortable. Milk-sellers always have an advantage: a broader market. In this case, the broader market has the votes.

So, meat eaters must learn to work patiently with milk drinkers. "Let's try this, shall we? Take just a little bite. Chew. Isn't that good? I'm so proud of you!" And so forth, year after year. It takes a lot of patience and a lot of time.

Controlled Growth, Restrained Evangelism

In such situations, evangelism is a net liability. The newcomers rarely tithe. But church membership being what it is, they soon vote. Every wave of immigrant milk drinkers poses a problem for meat eaters: a setback for the spiritual maturity of the church.

Like today's growing resistance to large families, and like today's growing resistance to poverty-stricken immigrants, so is the typical congregation. It is a lot easier to sit tight and not invite immature newcomers. Men talk about church growth, but this growth must be planned, even screened, by those in authority; otherwise, who knows what would happen? Members like the way things are. They want church growth, but without the disruption of the status quo. They are like the drunkards in Isaiah 56:12: "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."

When newcomers are a liability at the beginning, they are like extra letters at Christmas. The letter carrier gets no bonus for each extra letter, and each one adds to his burden. "How was your day?" a man I know once asked a letter carrier on December 24. "The worst day of the year." Then he met a friend in retail sales. "How was your day?" he asked. "The best I've had all year!" was the reply. The church is more like that letter carrier than the store owner.

A lot of pastors talk revival; I have yet to meet one whose church is even remotely prepared for it. How about a really big

revival, with a ten-fold increase of every congregation in three months? Single mothers by the hundreds, welfare clients by the dozens, homeless drug addicts trying to get off heroin but not succeeding, and every one of them asking for help, every one in need of counseling. Sorry; this is not what the revivalists have in mind. What the modern church has in mind is this: **a million more in '94, and every one a tither!** But this is not how great revivals work.

The sad fact is: talk about the need for a great revival is either bogus or pathetically naive. It is the equivalent of the socialist's quest for something for nothing or the child's quest for a diet of cake and ice cream. The church does not want mass revival. The church wants the status quo with controlled growth.

The church wants milk.

Meanwhile, some six billion souls are now in this world, most of them under age 25, and most of them in need of salvation. We have about 50 years to bring in this harvest. If we fail, hell will begin to fill up as never before.

All that Satan has to do to reap this enormous harvest of souls is to maintain the status quo. He has the modern church rooting for this. Satan's task is essentially passive. He would prefer zero growth for the church, but he is surely willing to settle for controlled growth. Controlled growth for the church means historically unprecedented compound growth for Satan. If a huge revival does not come, Satan will howl in derisive glee at God: "They were fruitful and multiplied as never before, but I reaped the harvest!"

God knows that the modern church's prayers for revival - and how often have you heard one? - are the prayers of children: ice cream and cake prayers. If God honors such prayers, He will blow the circuits of the modern church: the ultimate overload. But if He ignores such prayers, the blood of billions is on our hands.

Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me (Ezek. 33:2-7).

Mass revival or bloody hands, short-circuits or controlled growth? Here is the key question for the church today. There is no greater dilemma facing it. Yet the grim fact is this: no one in a position of authority in any church is publicly addressing this dilemma. All of them are concerned with other dilemmas - dilemmas of the status quo.

The Controlled Church Growth Movement

All churches today are committed to the status quo. The status quo is the controlled-growth model. Immigrant ghetto churches want growth determined by the biological reproduction rates of today's members. They have substituted marital sex for a board of home missions. Church growth is controlled in the bedroom. These churches are always amillennial in eschatology. You can find them in places such as rural Michigan and urban Chicago. True saints are seen as members of **the volk**.

Cultural ghetto churches want controlled growth based on some modern version of tract-passing. These churches are generally dispensational. Growth is controlled mainly by door-to-door evangelism: how many members participate and how often.

Yuppie churches want controlled growth based on Rotary Club techniques. These churches avoid eschatology, since eschatology is part of theology, and they steadfastly avoid theology. Growth is controlled mainly by the size of the parking lot. (There is even a formula: one acre for every 100 attendees.)

Charismatic churches want controlled growth through rock concert techniques. The key to the charismatic movement is not its doctrine of tongues-speaking. The key is its music. Take away the drums, guitars, and keyboards - I don't mean organs and pianos - and urban charismatic churches would shrink back to the size and income per capita of Pentecostal country churches. Take away the overhead projectors and the simple, repetitive songs, and they would be little more than Baptists without hymnals.

Mainline churches have given up hope for growth. They just want to stop the shrinking.

Conclusion

There are always problems facing the church. Is there any problem that could not be solved by the conversion of the entire world to saving faith in Jesus Christ? The "milk problems" of mass conversion would undoubtedly blow apart the structure of every denomination and church tradition (yes, even yours), but consider the long-run implications of mass revival for the development of meat eaters. With the whole world crying out to God for wisdom, what problem could not be solved?

"The Bible has the answers for every problem." How often have you heard smily-face Christians chant that fundamentalist mantra to you? But repeating this mantra has become a substitute for doing the hard exegetical work of searching the Scriptures for answers to difficult questions. The same smily-faced person, when asked to provide one or two specific answers for modern social problems, has two other mantras in reserve: (1) "We're under grace, not law"; (2) "The Bible isn't a textbook for [the problem]."

Evangelical Christians have survived on a diet of milk for so long that they are suffering from lactose poisoning.

The need of the hour is a solution to the milk consumption problem. Until churches find a way to overcome the judicial dominance of milk drinkers, they will remain institutionally unprepared for the equivalent of nuclear fusion: where the critical mass of fissionable material produces an even greater explosion.

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