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An Open Letter to Morton Smith

from JAMES B. JORDAN

Dear Dr. Smith,

I have been reading recently the fine volume edited by David F. Wells, *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development* (Eerdmans, 1985). Noting that you had an essay in this book on "The Southern Tradition," I was reminded of my time at Reformed Theological Seminary, and also of the period I spent working in the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America. I always benefitted from our conversations, and both profited and enjoyed the courses I took from you.

I was very surprised and interested to read in your essay that "two groups of theologians have left the P-CA in order to have what they consider greater freedom in the propagation of their views. The first of these is the Westminster Presbyterian Church of **Tyler**, Texas. This Church operates a small theological school called Geneva, and produces a number of publications" (p. 204).

If I might make one correction to this, I should

like to say that while we have indeed found greater freedom outside the PCA for promoting "**reconstructionist**" views, the actual occasion of our leaving was this: Several powerful men in the Texas Presbytery announced on the floor of presbytery that they intended to "close down that church," referring to us, because of our "**theonomic**" views. We should have remained in the PCA indefinitely, except that an attempt was being made by powerful men to destroy the entire church in Tyler. We believed that this would involve us in a protracted and damaging struggle, and be brutal to the life of the members of our congregation. Thus, we left in peace rather than put our people through this ordeal. Our elders were lawfully dismissed to the Association of Reformation Churches.

In summary, I think it would be better to say we were hounded out of the PCA, not that we left to find greater freedom. We continue to have warm and cordial relations with many in the PCA, and we have always recognized the governmental decisions of the courts of the PCA.

I was surprised and dismayed, however, to read your next sentence: "Some of this **Tyler** group have **renounced** [italics mine] the time-honored 'regulative principle' of worship of the Westminster Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, which states that we are to include in worship only what the Bible teaches." I was sorry to read this, because nobody here has **ever** renounced or attacked the "regulative principle." I have not, and I know of no one who has. It is true that we have called attention to what we see as errors in the **application** of that principle, but we have never attacked the principle itself. There is quite a lot of difference between the two.

Yes, we do use musical instruments in worship, we sing hymns as well as psalms, we wear "Genevan gowns," we use a formal worship "liturgy," and we have a Christmas Eve service. Everything **we** do, however, we believe is **taught** in Scripture. You may differ with us on some particulars, but we hold to the same principle. I hope that in future editions of this book, you will see fit to rephrase that sentence.

As a **Vantillian presuppositionalist**, I cannot hold to the "nature/grace dichotomy" that is so

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often worked into discussions of the “regulative principle” by certain theologians. And, as a **theonomist**, I believe that there are worship insights in the Old Testament that have sometimes been overlooked by *some* Reformed worship traditions. But I am thoroughly committed to the principle that we are to worship God only in the ways He has set

forth. We share that commitment.

May our common Lord continue to bless your labors in the PCA, and bring reformation to His whole church, and to our land.

Yours as ever,

James B. Jordan

Who's Afraid of the New Age?

by GARY DEMAR

The “New Age” is upon us. So say a good number of contemporary social-thinkers. Many of the New **Agers** are saying some good things but the philosophy behind what they’re saying is all wrong. They’re talking about “decentralization,” “building from the bottom up,” networking, and the importance of the individual and his involvement in the corporate and political process. The emphasis on changing the individual, which results in the metamorphosis of peripheral institutions like the family, church, business, and civil governments at the local, state, and national level, is also a prominent feature of the New Age Movement (NAM).

So why are Christians so **afraid** of the NAM? The answer is obvious: Theirs is a utopian dream built on their flawed understanding of man’s nature and their devotion to a westernized Eastern philosophy where God is nothing more than a cosmic idea. Man in essence **is** a god (**Gen. 3:4, 5**). With all their seemingly “good” emphases, however, the New Age Movement (NAM) is at heart humanistic, materialistic, and anti-God (in the biblical, Trinitarian sense).

When we as Christians advocate a Christian civilization, much of what we say and write seems to be similar to what advocates of the NAM are espousing (see Gary DeMar, “Building a Christian Civilization,” *The Biblical World View*, Vol. 2., No. 1, Winter 1986). Postmillennialist are the authentic New **Agers** (in the biblical sense). Postmillennialism was the prevalent **eschatological** view of the 16th century Reformers who spread the gospel throughout Europe, and of the Puritans who came to these shores to establish “a city on a hill.”

Christians should not be fooled by the NAM. We understand human nature (man is not inherently good), God’s program for history (God works in history to accomplish His purposes), the importance of this “age” (God’s kingdom is now), the biblical emphasis on decentralization (no one earthly institution has **all** power and authority), and an optimistic vision of the future (God’s enemies cannot win). The confusion occurs when we fail to understand who is copying whom. Scripture tells us that there are counterfeit Christs (**Matt. 24:5**; **Acts 5:36, 37**), counterfeit prophets (**Matt. 7:15**; **24:11**), counterfeit miracles (**Ex. 7:8-13**), counterfeit angels (**2 Cor. 11:14**), counterfeit gods (**Gal. 4:8**), counter-

feit “good” works (**Matt. 7:15-23**), and counterfeit gospels (**Gal. 1:6-10**). Why should we be surprised if there is a counterfeit kingdom (**Matt. 4:8-11**) and a counterfeit new age (**Rev. 13:11-18**)? The NAM is a counterfeit. It wants the **fruit** of Christianity without the **root**.

What should this tell us? When Jesus came on the scene to do the work of His Father, there was heightened demonic activity. Satan’s purpose was to dilute the work of Christ, to confuse the people. The devil knew his time was short. He was making a last-ditch effort to subvert the work of the kingdom. At one point, Jesus was even accused of being in league with the devil (**Luke 11:14-28**). As Jesus moved closer to establishing peace with God for us through His death and resurrection, the work of the devil **was** grounded (**Luke 10:18**) and through Jesus’ disciples the “world was turned upside down” (**Acts 17:6**). Satan’s kingdom was spoiled and left desolate (**Luke 11:20**; **Acts 19: 11-20**).

We are seeing the battle lines being drawn once again because the church is steadily advancing. It seems that nearly everybody is talking about victory. But the secularist’s version of the New Age cannot last. There is nothing original in it. Anything it has that’s of any use has been stolen from Christ’s garden. As soon as we Christians realize that the theft has taken place, we will demand restitution. The New **Agers** are just a testimony to these words: “The sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own generation than the sons of light” (**Luke 16:8**). For too long, what Christians had to offer concerning the future was bleak. The world was despised and rejected. The secularists did what we should have been doing. Although they have done a terrible job, they are in control.

It’s time for Christians to present alternatives to the bankrupt New **Age** philosophy without jettisoning the realities of a Christian civilization. We can either react in despair or compete head to head and win the battle through excellent kingdom work (**Zech. 1:18-21**).

(Gary DeMar is Executive Vice President of American Vision and is the author of the three volume *God and Government* series. If you would like to receive American Vision’s monthly publication, *The Biblical World View*, write: American Vision, P.O. Box 720515, Atlanta, GA 30328).

Pentecost and the Prophetic Church

by DAVID CHILTON

The past several articles have focused a great deal on the "Holocaust" aspect of the Last Days – the destruction of Jerusalem as the sign both of Israel's excommunication from the covenant and of the Church's establishment as the new Temple of the Holy Spirit. The next few articles in this series will examine the other major theme of the Last Days: Pentecost.

The outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost marked a new era in the history of redemption. As He had filled the Tabernacle and the Temple when they were formally dedicated (Ex. 40:34-38; 2 Chron. 7:1-3), so now the Spirit came to indwell the Church, the Temple of the New Covenant. Israel had been the provisional "new creation" of the Old Covenant, and thus the terminology of the original creation had been applied to God's redemption of her in the Exodus. For example, the Hebrew word for the Spirit's "hovering" over the waters (Gen. 1:2) is used for God's "hovering" in the Cloud over Israel in the wilderness (Deut. 32:11). Similarly, the story of the "birth of the Church" at Pentecost tells us that when the Spirit came upon the Church to bring about the definitive New Creation, "there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house" (Acts 2:2). The word *rushing* is the same word used in the **Septuagint** (the Greek Old Testament) for the Spirit's moving ("hovering") over the waters!

There are many such parallels between the Spirit's work in the Old Covenant and His work in the New. But it is important to note that His New Covenant administration far transcends His work in what St. Paul calls the "fading glory" of the Old Covenant (2 Cor. 3). Moses himself keenly recognized the provisional nature of the Old Testament administration, as evidenced by his reaction to a special outpouring of the Spirit at the ordination of the seventy elders. As they were gathered together at the Tabernacle, the Spirit rested upon each of them, marking their inauguration into office by enabling them to prophesy. [It was discovered, however, that two elders had not been able to attend the ceremony and had remained in the camp — yet they were prophesying as well. Moses' deacon, Joshua, became alarmed at this and tried to have **Moses** restrain them. Moses answered: "Would that all the **LORD's** people were prophets, that the **LORD** would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29).

Throughout the period of "fading glory" hope increased that God would someday grant to all his people the privilege of prophetic status (cf. Joel 2:28-32). What was so special about being a prophet? In his study of the prophets, the Jewish

scholar Abraham **Heschel** put it this way: "The prophet claims to be far more than a messenger. He is a person who stands in the presence of God (Jer. 15: 19), who stands 'in the council of the **LORD**' (Jer. 23:18), who is a participant, as it were, in the council of God, not a bearer of dispatches whose function is limited to being sent on errands. He is a counselor as well as a messenger."

That is precisely the point of the prophetic role. The prophet is not just a messenger-boy. Like the prophet Abraham (Gen. 20:7), he is God's friend (James 2:23), His confidant, with special privileges (Ex. 33:11). He has knowledge of God's secrets (Amos 3:7). **He does not** merely receive orders from God; he actually confers with Him, offering counsel and advice, even at times (and with proper reverence) arguing with Him, seeking to change His mind — and occasionally succeeding (Gen. 18:22-33; Ex. 32:7-14; Num. 16:20-24; Amos 7:1-6). As a member of the heavenly "cabinet" (cf. 1 Kings 22: 19; Isa. 6; Ezek. 1) the prophet has a governmental office; he is a junior, but nevertheless authoritative, partner of God in the administration of the covenant.

This was the significance of Pentecost. When God's Spirit came upon the Church, He brought the Church into the Glory-Cloud, the "Oval Office" of heaven. Christians became "saints" (as James B. Jordan has explained in a series of lectures on the Book of **Ephesians**, saints are *people with sanctuary privileges*). The Old Testament longing for all the covenant people to be invested with prophetic office was fulfilled, as St. Peter declared to the multitude in Jerusalem:

This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:
And it shall be in the Last Days, God says,
That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh;
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old man shall dream dreams.
Even upon My **bondslaves**, both men and women,
I will in those days pour forth of **My Spirit**
And they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:16-18)

The office of prophet was conferred upon the Church as a whole on Pentecost. In his study of "The Gift of Prophecy and the Prophetic Church" (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1984), George Vandervelde says: "All believers are in the position of prophets, for they are participants in and agents of the public secret of decisive and total salvation in the crucified but living Christ now manifest through the Spirit. . . . They know that the restoration of the new creation that they experience in Christ is the beginning of the reconcilia-

tion of all things, the beginning of the restoration of the entire creation as the **theatre** of God's glory. They are friends of God because they **know** what the Father is doing (John 15:14). They are called to be agents of that restoration. Whenever they speak as agents of restoration they are prophets of the Most High. In Christ they know the beginning and the consummation, the radical depth and the breath-taking scope of salvation. Hence all Christians are called to a prophetic ministry that is the envy of Old Testament prophets (1 Pet. 1:10-12). . . .

"In other words, the heavenly council of God in which the prophets stood and which was **momen-**

tarily convened on earth in order to include Abraham in God's plans regarding a single city, has now come to earth and embraces the earth in the Son. He has made God and His plans known. Through the Spirit every believer is taken into God's confidence. God's basic plans regarding the world and His means of accomplishing those plans are disclosed in Christ through the Spirit. We are far more privileged 'friends of God' than Abraham ever was, for we know what the Father is doing."

(James B. Jordan's eleven-tape series on **Ephe-sians**, mentioned above, is available from Geneva Ministries for \$36.75, postpaid.)

Around the World to Geneva

by **GEORGE GRANT**

Amidst **all** the media hoopla surrounding the renewal of serious peace talks between the world's two great superpowers, a number of important news stories were lost, ignobly kept just beyond the public eye by the glitter and **glitz** of Geneva.

In London, Gerard **Hoareau**, exiled opposition leader from the African **island** nation of the Seychelles, was assassinated by Soviet-backed terrorists on the doorstep of his English home.

In Warsaw, the Soviet-controlled Polish regime fired at least thirty-seven professors with "unacceptable political views" from top university jobs under a new law that cancels education reforms won in the Solidarity era. Most of those dismissed had been elected by their colleagues and students, but the Moscow-ordered purge overrode all other considerations.

In Washington, Secretary of Defense **Caspar Weinberger** presented evidence that the Soviet Union has flagrantly violated the 1979 SALT II treaty by deploying a new intercontinental missile, known as the SS-25. Calling it a "very versatile and very dangerous weapon" of high accuracy and extreme mobility, **Weinberger** unveiled intelligence photos that showed in deployment throughout the Soviet-occupied territories of Eastern Europe and Afghanistan.

In New York, an international group of legislators and parliamentarians from 16 countries charged the Marxist dictatorship of the Soviet Union with a startlingly blatant increase in human rights abuses during the past decade. They asserted that the stance of the regime has "deteriorated to a level of repression not seen since the Stalin era" when nearly 20 million Russians and Europeans perished under the government's tortuous hand.

[n Zimbabwe, Douglas **Lilford** was assassinated at his farm home outside Horare. **Lilford** was a conservative political leader in Rhodesia's govern-

ment who fell into official disfavor when the plan of a peaceful transfer of power to majority blacks was hijacked by the present Soviet-controlled regime. The terrorists who executed Moscow's assassination orders bound the 77-year-old statesman's hands with wire and beat him for several hours before finally shooting him, before his family's eyes.

In Bogota, over 100 people were killed when Soviet-backed terrorists seized the Colombian Supreme Court building. The communist agents led by several KGB operatives took at least 70 court members and employees hostage in the 5-story building. The situation was diffused only after the Colombian government stormed the besieged complex with automatic weapons, armored cars, and explosives.

In Baghdad, Yasir **Arafat**, sporting new support from the Soviet bosses in Moscow, pledged to stage attacks on U.S. interests in the Middle East in retaliation for the Israeli bombing of his **Tunisian** headquarters recently.

The short of all this is that while Gorbachev and Reagan wooed one another in Geneva, and while the press, enamored and bedazzled by the awe of it all, fixated on the glories and potentialities of it all, the Soviets were ruthlessly pursuing their internationalist and colonialist enterprises the world over.

That very week ! And we want to trust them with a new treaty?

(George Grant is one of the pastors of Believers Fellowship: Reformed Bible Church, Humble, Texas. This essay is a transcript from Rev. Grant's daily radio broadcast, "The Christian Worldview." For information concerning this program and how you might get it broadcast in your area write to The Christian **Worldview**, 410 South Ave. D, Humble, TX 77338.)

Re-Thinking Discipleship (II)

by RAY R. SUTTON

This is the second of a two-part series on “discipleship.” The first essay discussed the “Homosexual” model, clearing away a lot of debris so that we can move to the correct paradigm for discipleship. I am calling the Biblical approach of discipleship the *Trinitarian Model*.

The Trinitarian Model

1. *Group Discipleship*. The God of the Bible is one and many. This is a great mystery which the human mind will never be able fully to comprehend. Nevertheless, we need to use what we do know about God to organize our behavior, particularly discipleship. **Trinitarianism** means that it is just as important for the *group*, as it is for the *individual*, to disciple people. *Corporate worship* and other types of group activity shape the individual as much as, if not more than, one-on-one discipleship. Of course, with **Trinitarianism** we don’t have to embroil ourselves in endless comparisons of “which is most important,” or “either/or” debates. In the case of discipleship, one-on-one and group influence are equally important.

Since, however, we live in a society where “individualism” is “god,” I want to emphasize some of the problems connected with a purely “one-on-one” method, and a failure to see the significance of corporate discipleship. I was once **discipling** a man who never liked to get involved with the social life of the church. “It does nothing for me because I’m a loner,” so he said. In my innocence, I tried to do more with him to bring him along. We met weekly for Bible study and prayer. One day it occurred to me that perhaps I was only feeding his problem. So, I confronted him. I told him that I would no longer spend time with him if he did not worship regularly and engage himself in the social functions of the church. It changed his life and it was only then that I began to see real progress.

I have observed that the people who respond the best to personal, one-on-one discipleship are sometimes the ones who need group discipleship more. More specifically, they need to learn to *give of themselves to the body of Christ*. Too often, the “red-hot” one-on-one disciples are just selfish for *personal attention*. They could not care less what they give; they only want to get. Personal discipleship programs need to **re-think** this reality. As a pastor, I have observed this as a very serious problem in a society that has been called the “me generation.” Could it be that personal discipleship programs are appealing **because we** live in a very selfish society?

What’s the solution? [**will not** disciple a person who **does not** involve himself, unselfishly, in the life

of the church. [’ll be his friend, but he gets none of my “discipleship” time. Until he is willing to give to the Body of Christ as a whole, he needs anything but a lot of personal attention. Increasing the personal attention tends to pander to his main problem. It’s like trying to cure hypoglycemia with sugar. **The “private person”** needs group discipleship and involvement more than a “**super-duper**, heavy-duty discipleship manual.”

Until I understood this, I could never understand why some of the people I was counseling or discipline were the biggest headaches. Most pastors will recognize this phenomenon. So often, the folks who demand the least are ones who are the most faithful. On the other hand, the person who is being counseled a lot and receiving the most amount of attention is many times a real source, even the greatest source, of irritation in the Church. This person probably needs less personal attention, and should be told to focus more on allowing the group as a whole to shape him. This means conformity to the group, servitude to the congregation, and healthy involvement in the group activities.

Remember, the fundamental prerequisite for discipleship is **service**. Submission to the group is a primary expression of being a “servant.” The “servant model” is best expressed in the metaphor of *g/caning*, starting at the edge of God’s field and gradually working toward the center. Disciples are often drawn too close too soon into the leadership of the church, and hence too quickly placed in positions they shouldn’t be, too quickly exposed to the inner problems of the Church, and consequently too quickly allowed to pass judgments on people and situations that are way above their head.

I have spent more time on this first principle because it is the heart of the “Trinitarian Model.” Now, let’s move on to a couple of other aspects of this model.

2. *Family Realities*. The Apostle Paul argues that virgins should, if called to it, stay single and devote themselves entirely to the work of the Church. Why? Very simply, **married people cannot do the same kinds of things and take the same kinds risks**. So, married people have to take into consideration their status and realize that there are certain ministries and activities that they cannot participate in. This affects the whole concept of discipleship.

Families need to be **discipled by families**. Why? When families are doing the discipling, they will take into consideration obvious things that a single person would miss. For example, I knew a **middle-aged man with five children who became a Christian**. He had all of the zeal of a new Christian and was instantly placed in a “high-powered” disciple-

ship program. For months, all of his spare time was spent studying and evangelizing. **Needless** to say, serious problems developed in his home. I ended up being the marriage counselor who was called upon to try and put this “humpty dumpty” marriage back together. The first thing I told him to do was quit the discipleship program. The **thirty-year-old** man who was doing the discipline thought I was very unspiritual. Maybe, but the man who was about to lose his family recovered and preserved his *long-term spirituality*. He didn’t win the world to Christ, but he did win his children. I think God is more pleased.

3. *Special times of discipleship.* The third consideration I should like to raise is that there are certain times when intense one-on-one discipleship is desirable and more effective. As already mentioned, I think the early years when one is single, in college, etc. are much more conducive to standard discipleship courses. Also, “down and out” people

– drug addicts and alcoholics, etc. – seem to need this kind of program. As a matter of fact, I think these kinds of people should take temporary personal **vows** (Nu. 30) to abide by the directions of the person doing the discipline. **Notice** that I said, “temporary,” because of fallen man’s “homosexual” tendencies that I described in part I of this series. Also, something could be said for the elderly because they are all alone and respond well to personal attention.

Conclusion: In this series I have tried to raise the need to “**re-think** discipleship.” I really do believe it has a special place in the life of the Church. Historically, monastic orders arose to meet these needs. And, the Methodist Church changed England through them. They are essential, I think I can safely say. But the final word has not been said, and what I have said is certainly not the last word. I do hope, however, that the points I have made can in some way help the Church to dominate the earth!

CREATION SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES SOCIETY

The Creation Social Science and Humanities Society (CSSHS) has been in existence for about eight years. It publishes a quarterly journal that includes articles much like those included in *The Geneva Review*. Recent essays include such topics as “The Original World Monotheism,” “Creation Science and Biblical Creation,” “Priest and King of Creation,” “God’s Sabbath Rest – Man’s Created Destiny,” “Mythology, the Bible, and the Post-Flood Origins of Greek History,” “Creation in the Writings of George MacDonald: and “Christian Apologetics and its Application in Asia.” One of the earliest issues of the *CSSHS Quarterly* contained my (James B. Jordan’s) study of Biblical Chronology.

The *CSSHS Quarterly* also publishes poetry, book reviews, art, and even music. I have been a subscriber from the beginning, and a voting member of CSSHS for several years. Let me encourage you to join. The membership/subscription price is most reasonable. Those who affirm the CSSHS Statement of Belief, reproduced below, may subscribe to the next four issues for \$12.00 (\$13.00 outside U.S.). If you cannot **agree** with the Statement of Belief, subscription is \$14.00 (\$15.00 outside **U.S.**).

CSSHS Statement of Belief

Creation Social Science and Humanities Society
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1. The Bible is the written Word of God. It is inspired and inerrant throughout. Its assertions are historically and scientifically true in all the original autographs. To the student of the social sciences and humanities this means that the account of origins in Genesis is a factual presentation of **simple** historical truths.

2. All basic types of living things, including man, were made **by** direct creative acts of God during the creation Week described in Genesis.

Whatever biological changes have occurred since Creation Week have accomplished only changes within the original created kinds.

3. The **great** Flood described in Genesis, commonly referred to as the **Noachian Flood**, **was an** historic event worldwide is its extent and effect.

4. We are an organization of Christian men **and women who accept** Jesus Christ as our Lord and **Saviour**. The account of the special creation of Adam and Eve as one man and woman in the **image** of God and their subsequent fall into sin is the basis for our belief in the necessity of a **Saviour** for all mankind. Therefore, salvation can come only through accepting Jesus Christ as our **Saviour**.

Studies in Genesis One: Formless and Empty

by JAMES B. JORDAN

"And the earth was without form and void . . ."
(Gen. 1:2a)

When God created the heavens and the earth, He made heaven complete and orderly in one stroke. Heaven was not formless, but structured: a model for the earth, as we have seen. Similarly, heaven was not empty. God chose to dwell there. Also, angels were created to live there. Finally, it was not dark, for the glory of the Lord lit the heavens. By way of contrast, the earth was created a shapeless, empty, and dark mass. As we have noted earlier in this series, God labored to shape, fill, and enlighten the earth over six working days as a model for His image, man.

Looking at the world in general, it was the work of six days for God to give light, form, and content to the earth. When man sinned, however, as captain of the earthly half of creation, he brought ruin to the world. Thus, at certain crucial points in salvation history, God is said to reduce the **world** back to its state of formlessness and emptiness, and re-make it, starting from scratch as it were. This is a figure of speech, of course, because except for the Flood, God never returned the physical earth to its primordial condition. Thus, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt is spoken of in terms derived from Genesis 1:2, particularly in Deuteronomy 32:10 and 11, where the wilderness is called "formless" and God is pictured as "hovering" over His people, making them a new creation. Similarly, the judgment of Israel for her apostasy is described in Jeremiah 4:23 as a return to "formless and void." (For a discussion of the recreation of the earth during the Flood, see my essay on "The Calendar Before Sinai, Part 2," in *The Geneva Papers*, vol. 1, no. 18.)

God did not complete the work of formation, filling, and enlightenment (establishing rulers) during the first week. Rather, He acted to get man started. It is the work of man, God's created son and viceroy, to complete that labor. In Christ, re-created humanity is **placed** back on track. At the last day, when that labor is finally completed, earth will be like heaven, and heaven and earth will be one.

Christian philosophers have sometimes noted that "the beginnings of things tend to be out of view." This observation is grounded in earthly fact, and is integral to our earthly faith. Men were not present to watch the birth of the earth from the womb of darkness, formlessness, and emptiness. We must understand it by faith. Similarly, it is not apparent to *sight* that the **foetus** in the womb is a human being, because the emergence of the new person "tends to be out of view." We hold by faith

that from the moment of conception, the **foetus** is the image of God, and that to kill is murder. **Finally**, revivals and reformations of the faith and the church tend to begin "out of view." Yet even today, in a day of ecclesiastical and cultural formlessness, in a society largely empty of self-conscious and committed Christians, and in a time of darkness for Western culture, here and there reformation has begun.

If you are reading this essay, you are part of that reformation. We must walk by faith, and not "despise the day of small things" (**Zech. 4:10**). The big salaries, the glory, the glamorous but superficial conquests – these do not go to pastors of small churches who labor daily to give birth to the new creation, but their reward is sure. Those who are present at the birth are, after all, the "sons of God," and they will indeed "shout for joy" (Job 38:4-8).

1986 CONFERENCES SCHEDULED

Geneva Ministries will host two conferences this year. The first, from June 30 to July 5, will be our annual Worldview Institute. The Institute is **open to any adult, or any college student who has had at least one year. The Institute is an intensive training session designed to give the student a Biblical worldview perspective on all areas of life. If you are interested in more details, write Geneva Worldview Institute, 708 Hamvasy Lane, Tyler, TX 75701.**

The 4th Annual Geneva Reconstruction Conference is a "Workshop on Church Law and Discipline." The dates are July 15-18. Like last year, we shall run Vacation Bible School this week, so that if you wish to come **as a family**, activities will be provided for your children. A prospectus for the Conference is included with this newsletter mailing. *If you did not get a Conference prospectus*, please write for one, using the address given in the paragraph above.

The Doctrine of the Word of God

(No. 9)

by JOHN M. FRAME

(Professor Frame teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. These outlines are from his course on the Doctrine of the Word of God. Prof. Frame has graciously consented to our making these notes available to a wider audience through *The Geneva Review*. They are not to be regarded as a published work, but as notes on a "work in progress.")

(II. *The Functions of the Word in and for Creation*)

A. *The Word as God's Decree*

B. *The Word as God's Address*

C. *The Word as God's Presence*

1. God's name is placed upon his people: Gen. 17:5, Num. 6:27, Deut. 12:5, etc. (crf. above, A, 2, a), I Sam. 12:22, Isa. 43:1, 7, 45:3f, 62:2, Amos 9:12, Matt. 28:19f, Rev. 2:17, 22:4.
2. The word is written on their heart: Deut. 6:6, Prov. 3:3, 7:3, Ps. 119:11, Ezek. 11:19f, 18:31, 36:26, 37:23, 27, Isa. 11:9, 51:7, 54:13, Hab. 2:14, Ps. 37:31, 40:8, Jer. 24:7, 32:40, John 6:45, II Cor. 3:2f, I Thess. 4:9, Heb. 8:8-12, I John 2:27, Jer. 31:31-34 (key text).
3. "Revelation" as the knowledge of God given to all believers: Matt. 11:25, Eph. 1:17, Isa. 53:1, John, 3:3, Rem. 1:17, II Cor. 4:6, Eph. 5:8, Phil. 3:15, Gal. 1:15f, Isa. 54:13, I John 2:27.
4. Christ as the present word: John 1:14, Matt. 28:20, Acts 1:1f, John 15:1-14, Rem. 10:6-10 (cf. Deut. 30:12ff).
5. The Spirit empowers, illumines, demonstrates, arouses response: I Thess. 1:5, Rem. 15:18f, I Cor. 2:4, 14. Cf. John Murray on the "internal testimony of the Holy Spirit;" cf. also below VIII, B.
6. Formulation:
 - a. not a new address in addition to 2 above.
 - b. the taking root of God's address in our heart so as to determine our

whole-souled response.

- c. In Scripture, those who have the word written on their heart are obedient to God. (Rem. 2:14f guardedly uses different language in reference to unbelievers.)
- d. But other Scripture suggests that God is present in his word to harden hearts and hasten judgment: Isa. 6:9ff, parallels.
- e. Though the word in this sense gives us no new content, it is most helpful in enabling us to make new applications of that content already revealed.

D. *Mutual Involvement of the Three Functions* (each united with the others so as to form a "perspective" on the whole.)

1. Decree includes address and presence. His addresses and his indwelling are part of his eternal plan.
2. Address presupposes decree, needs presence to be rightly understood.
3. All we know of decree and presence, we learn through address.
4. The word of God's address *is* a decree; it is powerful to achieve its purposes (Rem. 1:16, etc.), even when disobeyed.
5. The word of presence is also a decree in that its purposes are achieved.
6. The decree is an address to the cosmos (Ps. 147:15, 148:5, 8, etc.).
7. Presence is ~~the~~ powerful working of address in changing lives.
8. Presence operates in bounds established by decree and address.
9. The decree is efficacious because God's power is *omnipresent* in the cosmos. The decree expresses that presence.
10. The address is a presence of God within a particular place and to particular hearers and readers.
11. Presence is a secondary address (but not a new address, a new content — see above, C, 6, a) by which the full implications and applications of the address become known to us and experienced by us.

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