Foundations of the World Christian Movement

Lectures 1 – 20

by Ralph D. Winter

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Lecture 1

Introduction

Ralph Winter has proposed a story about the origins of evil on this planet that firmly attributes the source of this evil to spirit beings (Satan in particular and his many demonic followers), who chose to use their God-given gift of free will to rebel against God. The story places responsibility for overcoming that evil on the shoulders of humans—specifically those who are followers of Christ—who were created in the expectation that they would choose to use their gift of free will to say, "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done" and to participate with God in defeating the evil one and restoring creation to its intended state of displaying the glory of God. Under a burden of evil that God did not intend for it, creation groans as it waits for the Body of Christ to fulfill its mandate to work with God to defeat evil and demonstrate God's character through participation with God in His mission in this world.

Ralph Winter introduces each of the lessons in this course with thought-provoking comments and stories intended to prompt the reader/listener to search for answers to difficult issues.

While the Jewish people were in captivity in Babylon, Isaiah 49:6 was written to tell them "it is a light thing that I shall raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel, I want my salvation to go to the ends of the earth."

I have preached on that verse for many years as a marvelous example of an Old Testament statement of the Great Commission. Eventually I found out that people in those days didn't know there was a planet, and they were thus probably not referring to the ends of the planet. They used the word earth to refer to the flat earthen plane of the Fertile Crescent. And at the end of that earthen plain were the mountains of Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey. To them, that was "the ends of the earth." All of a sudden it seems clear—something I never realized before—that the Bible was really saying to these captives in Babylon (who were then literally at "the ends of the earth") "I want my salvation to go to your captors." Wow, that's a bitter pill—a commission a lot more difficult than going as missionaries to the ends of the planet.

Let me explain why that mandate is so much more difficult. I'll never forget being in Pakistan years ago. I found that the faculty members of this seminary to whom I was speaking for an extended period were getting more and more unhappy about my obvious concern that the 97% population of Pakistan, being Muslim, were not in their sights. They were clearly not terribly concerned about those people, that is, the Muslims, and I was. Finally one of the faculty members waved a finger in my face and said, "If you send missionaries to Pakistan to reach the Muslims we'll go to the government and get them

thrown out of the country." You can easily understand that if anyone were to say to them, "Look, I want you to be my salvation to your captors"—that would be a very bitter pill. If the Bible is saying that, why should we cover it up, by interpreting it to mean "I want you to send missionaries to the ends of the earth (planet)"? As much as I might like the Bible to say that, nevertheless, in the biblical context that phrase probably doesn't have that meaning that's all. Would it be fair to the Bible if we forced it to our current concept of global mission if in fact in these verses it meant something very different?

This verse is vital for Pakistani Christians today! Both in Pakistan and in Bangladesh there are Christians who not only don't want to reach out to the majority Muslim populations but will denounce and oppose those who do.

The Bible does speak to us today. Let's take a look briefly at one of the passages of the New Testament that does in fact talk in expansive terms. I think for example of Paul the apostle. Even he may not have known he was living on a planet. Thus, he wasn't generally talking in anything other than first century cosmological terms. But, he was announcing things that did indeed have significance for the entire earth.

Let's look at Acts 26. This is the chapter where he comes before Agrippa and where Agrippa allows Paul to tell him his story. Paul then explains how he was struck down in the middle of the day by an incredible light and a voice from the heavens said,

Rise, get up on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

That last sentence uses three metaphors—blindness, dark- ness, captivity— that in one sense say that same thing. But then, further on he says to King Agrippa "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, I preached that they should repent, turn to God, and prove their repentance by their deeds." Here he goes much further than the Reformation emphasis about giving people a ticket to heaven.

Interestingly enough, Evangelicals today in the opposite sense have also gone further than the Reformation: we can now *promise* people they can get to heaven. The Reformation could not assure people that they could get to heaven, they just gave them a potentially better method of getting there. And even two centuries later, there were lots of Christians who couldn't possibly simply "accept Christ" and be sure to get to heaven. Why? Because there was no doctrine of the assurance of salvation. They were in the original Reformation tradition. In one of those traditions you waited until God selected you. You hoped that God would save you. You read your Bible. You went to church. But there was no teaching on assurance. Paul's words to Agrippa don't emphasize so much what you are going to get out of this but what you have to put into it—repentance, obedience.

Turning from darkness to light means repenting. When Paul said in 2 Corinthians, "He died for all, that they who live should not longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again," he was not talking merely about people doing self-centered things although that would be included. He was talking about a totally new life.

What did that mean? What did Paul understand that to mean? Obviously, we should be able to see further than he did, as to what God is up to. We've seen much more. Think for example of the lives of people who had only travelled 12 miles from where they were born, or only lived 12 years or 20 years or 30 years. People only knew a bit of

space or time. Obviously they couldn't have extrapolated into all the different possibilities of what turning to God would mean. Nevertheless, Paul interpreted all of human experience as the arena in which God's will was being unfolded and fulfilled. And he meant clearly that everyone who follows Christ would potentially be caught up in that larger picture in that larger vision.

But, two things come out in this story that we usually overlook. Why did God have to say to him "I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles"? And why a little bit later on does he say "that is why the Jews seized me at the temple and tried to kill me"? What was the reason? Why would a man who wants to rescue people from blindness, darkness and captivity be pounced on?

Well, for one thing, remember that the first recorded sermon of Jesus Christ led to an attempt on his death. In Luke 4 He was at first saying things everyone was very happy about. It's as if they were poking each other saying "Ain't he great." And then all of a sudden he talked about certain Gentiles on whom God smiled. That jerked the people into alertness about what he was going to say next. He went on to say one more thing about another group of Gentiles to whom the grace of God had been extended. And that did it. They surged forward and seized him and tried to throw him off a cliff. Now why was that? They simply were repulsed by the thought that God also loved the Gen- tiles! They were being tested by a unique insight which of course was there in the Bible all along.

Or take the first recorded sermon of the apostle Paul. There were two Antiochs—the place he was sent from and his new Antioch where he went to give his first sermon recorded in the book of Acts. And he was invited to speak for two Sabbaths—that was a courteous thing for a person with rabbinical training which he had. But apparently they had no idea what he was going to say, because the very first time he spoke the elders who always sat in the front row became more and more disturbed. He seemed to be talking to people in the back rows—people who were Gentiles, just sitting in.

These back-row Gentiles were not proselytes. They hadn't converted over to Judaism as a *culture*. But they were very interested in the Bible that was being read every Sabbath and they may have been listening for years. In the Book of Acts they are called *God-fearers* or *devout persons*. Paul was seemingly talking to them and releasing them from their assumption that they would have to become proselytes—culturally Jews—to be acceptable to God.

Thus, the elders in the front row were really furious. And of course, when Paul came back the second Sabbath they were prepared for him. It was common for elders to stand up and reinforce a point or give an illustration, or, you might say, assist the person who was speaking. That was a courteous and typical thing in a synagogue. But in this case they did not support him. They contradicted him. They stood up and they defied him and hassled him. Thus, finally he picked up his NIV Bible and just walked right straight out down the red carpet—and the whole crew in the back rows went with him.

You can see this was a serious problem for the synagogue elders. What did they do? It says the Jews followed him and tried to kill him. In fact, they actually thought they killed him. They dragged his body outside the city (that was the law-abiding thing to do). These were upright people. But, of course, they failed, because stoning is not a very secure way to kill people. You may just stun them, and they look like they're dead but they may not be dead. In any case, whether he was raised from the dead or wasn't quite killed, we have to give them credit for trying. But obviously, when the will of God

impinges on the will of man, sparks fly. And what Paul is talking about is not going through a little ritual of theology and getting an assurance of heaven and getting a ticket to heaven put in your pocket. He is talking about a totally new way of life—which has to do with the whole sweep of history.

But, the contrary element is very important here. Because it isn't just in this particular passage we find a contrary element to the will of God. Paul was of course, under pressure and difficulty and danger many times and was one of the most beat-up missionaries that ever lived. But, think for example of the Cross. I really am confused and stunned by all of these books that are so happy for the event of the Cross, and the blood of Christ was shed and we've got what we need now. What else does the Cross mean? It means that there is a very cruel and powerful force in this world contrary to God. It means many things. John Piper, my good friend with whom I had lunch a few weeks ago, wrote a whole book with 50 chapters talking about the purposes of God revealed in the Cross. And on the back cover of the book he says "Now, I'm not speaking about causes, I'm talking about purposes of God." So, when I ate lunch with him, I said, "John, don't you think the Cross had a very significant meaning in revealing the power and the cruelty of our enemy?" I think it does mean that. But it wasn't just the Cross. Even if you go back into Genesis 12, where we take so happily that verse, "I will bless you and you will be a blessing to all peoples of the world," the word "blessing" doesn't mean blessing in the modern English sense, it means "I will re-inherit you," like the blessing Jacob got instead of Esau. It wasn't a box of chocolates or a piece of land, it was a responsibility, a permanent responsibility. Well, in any case, right in those verses, it says "those who mistreat you, I will curse." Why would they mistreat them? There is this contrary principle.

But you go further back to Noah. In his day, it says in the King James, everyone was only doing evil continually. There was evil in the world, so much so, that Noah was practically the only person whom God could select. Go back further and you get to Lamech, who, if somebody was going to avenge somebody else 7 times, he would avenge them 77 times. Or Cain. Where did that evil come from? And then of course you see the serpent in the garden of Eden. In the garden of Eden, there was this often referred to cultural mandate of man being created to take care of the animals. But no- tice, when that happened there was no evil for them to contend with. The animals were not even carnivorous animals. And even the human beings were not carnivorous. There was no emergency or problem. And that cultural mandate to take care of the animals, after the fall of Adam, was obviously drastically modified. Why would it continue unchanged?

Now, you would think there would be some sort of a military mandate. And a military mandate, if you want to use the phrase, would include the cultural mandate. In a war, like I was in, the Second World War, war engulfed every single person in the United States, not just the service men. Every single person had to justify what they were doing. If you went on a Sunday drive with no purpose other than family happiness, you could be fined 50 dollars. You had to justify every drop of gasoline you used. You couldn't buy nylon stockings. That nylon was needed for parachute cords, and on and on and on. The entire citizenry is engulfed in a global war. And all of the functions of the cultural mandate still go on, except the trivialities. (I don't know that the cultural mandate in the first chapter of Genesis is sup- posed to refer to trivialities anyway.) In addition, there are other strident demands upon the populace that take some thousands and thousands to

their death, and many more into casualties. And you don't have to write a book about the peculiar nature of suffering during a war, and so why is it that our theologians are writing books about suffering—*because we don't think there is a war*! We don't realize there is a war. There is a continuing constant evil power to fight against.

And so, it is very significant that in the first chapter of Genesis, again and again it says, "and it was good." It was good. This kind of creation in Genesis isn't dinosaurs which you couldn't call good. It isn't the tremendously violent clash of all forms of life which we witness in the bones we've been digging up for the last 200 years. In 1812 they first dug up the bones of a very large and vicious crocodile-like creature that they could easily see had no comparison to anything alive right now. In fact, from that time to this they now have dug up so many other kinds of animal life which is no longer in existence on this earth that rough calculations are that the diversity of animal life right now is only one-thousandth of the diversity of all the extinct diversity that has been dug up.

So, those bones don't really fit into chapter one of Genesis. And the question that we are going to be taking up very seriously in the next lesson is the question of whether Genesis is supposed to be describing those bones or not. This is a very intriguing question for me because all of my life I have been trying to understand the Bible better. And one of the constant things that has happened, not every day but certainly every year, is there is this verse or that verse which I thought meant one thing but actually meant something else. In those cases I have had to give up something that was maybe very precious, like the Great Commission in Isaiah 49—now I know that verse means something very much more ominous and serious than the Great Commission, as serious as that is.

Thus, this larger story brings into focus many of the smaller elements in the story, and I hope we won't just be episodic in our approach to this whole story. We'll try to get some fairly good ideas about what the overall story means.

Now, believe me, we're not going to come to absolute conclusions. I, at least, am not long on absolute conclusions about most of these things. I'm simply trying my best to figure them out. And I hope that you'll be able to help me do that. But in any case this is a preview of coming attractions in this course.

Lecture 2

Origins of Life, Mysteries and Certainties

By now you know that this course is attempting what may seem impossible. You may have never in your life been confronted with anything as presumptuous as the idea of finding overall meaning in the latest scientific information about our planet and finding that it does not clash with the Bible.

Of course, this is all in the realm not of absolute faith but of sanctified interpretation. But the exciting thing is that it just might be true. Meanwhile, if we are interpreting the Bible wrongly there is no value in defending that misunderstanding. Suppose the Bible does not really say a certain thing. But we think it does. To defend the Bible well, are we being fair to it, if we insist that it says things which are contrary to what would appear to be scientific fact? If, say, there are two possible meanings and one accords with widely accepted science, why choose to defend the one that clashes?

The most recent estimate I have heard—rehearsing what was said in the last lesson—is that the universe burst into existence 13.6 billion years ago, and that after expanding for 9.1 billion years, the planet earth came into existence 4.5 billion years ago. Less certain is the idea that the first glimmers of life appeared on earth exactly 4 billion years ago, since tiny forms of life do not leave behind bones or shells.

Mystery 1: Matter

In any case, science presents us with a deep mystery: how did the universe, our galaxy (one of billions of others), our solar system, and our planet come into existence? All of this, which existed previous to the appearance of life, is a huge mysterious bundle of fathomless complexity that includes matter, forces, and radiation.

What has been called *matter* is made up of what are called *molecules* which in turn are structured composites of smaller entities called atoms, which in turn appear to be something like tiny little solar systems, that is, each with a nucleus whirled about by a number of electrons corresponding to the number of protons in the nucleus. But even the nucleus of an atom contains almost unimaginably complex realities with protons and neutrons passing quarks between them, etc. These atoms themselves have been arranged in a number of different ways, each called a Periodic Table of the Elements, in an orderly manner from the very smallest, hydrogen with one whirling electron, Helium with two, Lithium with three, Aluminum with 13, Oxygen, for example, has 16 in now more than one orbit layer, Lead has 82, Uranium has 92, etc.

Most of these atoms don't exist in isolation but, as I say, in structured clusters, thousands of them forming rocks, crystals, snow flakes, water, air, etc. This entire reality

is called the inorganic universe. It is astoundingly intricate. Its tiny structures constitute Mystery Number One.

Mystery 2: Life

Even more puzzling is a second mysterious reality called life, which has thus far been discovered only on our planet. This entire equally complex phenomenon is actually a play on a single atom, carbon. That is, all forms of life consist of elaborations and combinations which include the atom carbon.

Size is important. If a virus were the size of a baseball, a bacterium would be the size of the pitcher's mound, a cell would be the size of the entire baseball diamond and a parasite might be as large as the entire city. However, even the smallest of these four, the virus, is sometimes built out of as many as ten million atoms.

The comparatively large and enormously more complex *cell* is still so small that you could put 200,000 cells on top of the period at the end of a sentence and still not quite cover it up.

As small as cells are (200,000 on top of a period), each contains in its nucleus a DNA molecule that consists of a double helix structure that is both complex and beautiful and both long and thin. Every cell on top of that period contains deep down in its nucleus a DNA molecule that if stretched out would be five feet long, and yet is so slender that it can be folded, coiled up and compacted into the nucleus of a cell. Yet even a very small virus still may contain strands of DNA which it injects after attacking a cell.

Viruses, note, are cleverly destructive. They are something like bombs which attach themselves to cells, jamming pieces of DNA inside which mass produce more viruses of the same type until the cell bursts and dies. As for the much larger bacteria, some are destructive but most are not. Parasites are by definition destructive and are so large that by comparison their intelligence is enormous. The Hair Worm, for example, burrows into a grasshopper, devours everything but the minimum necessary ability to hop. At the end it creates proteins that mimic the grasshopper s brain cells, which in turn induce the grasshopper to jump into water where it dies and the Hair Worm swims away to breed. It is very hard to believe anything as intelligent as this could have fallen together as the result of random mutations. It is equally clear that we are dealing with intelligence that is evil not just good intelligence.

Mystery 3: Human Life

While life is thought to have been under development for a total of four billion years, the vast majority of all fossil discoveries, as mentioned, derive from just the last 500 million years, following the Cambrian Explosion. Note that if the whole 4 billion-year period of the development of life is compared to a 24-hour day, the last 500 million years since the Cambrian Explosion is one eighth, or a three-hour period beginning at 9 PM, while the human period is roughly the last quarter of a second. Even if the last 500 million years is compared to 24 hours, the human period is still only the last 2 seconds.

Interestingly, far more bones and shells have been uncovered in the past 20 years than perhaps in all previous history. In fact, digging up bones and ancient artifacts has become a global activity of thousands of scholars, accompanied by looters and falsifiers.

Cave drawings and arrowheads tell us a great deal about how very intelligent some earlier forms of life were. We are well acquainted, for example, with the

capabilities of the Neanderthals, who are nevertheless today confirmed as pre-human due to recent DNA testing.

The Appearance of Humans

However, nothing accomplished by earlier forms of life is as impressive as evidences beginning about 11,000 years ago of deliberate, determined, patient, intelligent selective breeding of both plants and animals.

Worldwide, today, what we usually eat without appropriate gratitude—rice, corn, wheat, potatoes, etc.—are plants which give mute witness to the fact that thousands of years ago some highly intelligent forms of life—apparently of unique intelligence—worked for lengthy periods of time to achieve very extensive genetic modification of plants that were virtually inedible to begin with, but which are now quite friendly to humans.

Also about 11,000 years ago, these same uniquely intelligent forms of life began carefully and skillfully breeding wolves into the 235 different species of dogs which today in multiple ways are close friends and benefactors of human beings.

It must be added that all of the most ancient evidences of human-like creatures are, along with the rest of nature, shockingly violent and vicious—in fact, cannibals.

Some paleo-historians today feel that the appearance of this kind of radically superior *intelligence* even if violent and carnivorous is more significant in determining the first appearance of true humans than the study of fossil *bones*. Thus, I want to suggest for discussion two ideas: 1) that the time when humans first appeared can be detected from the first evidence of the intelligence necessary for the genetic alteration of plants and animals, and 2) that all of this may all have occurred before Adam.

Adam, we are told, is a human distinctively created in the image of God which could at least mean as God intended, that is, for example, non-carnivorous. It is not until later in Genesis that Adam's lineage is described as reverting to carnivorous behavior, following his fall and the breakdown of the Edenic New Beginning.

In any case, the clear implication is that the rampant, destructive violence observable all throughout nature was a perversion of God s original intent and design. Eden, in that light, would then have been a New Beginning which was a re-creation of that revealed original intent, just as Isaiah 11 describes the lion lying down with the lamb in the ultimate triumph of God's intent—once again in the form of non-carnivorous and non-violent life.

Mystery 4: An Intelligent Counterforce

It is important to recognize the full extent of the distortion of nature by an active, intelligent counterforce, and the need for those defending God's glory today to deal seriously with the continuous and now contemporary worldwide assault by the microbiological world on both animal and human life.

This kind of recognition, this apparently belated insight, would seem to be essential to any truly serious mobilization of believers to fight back against the origins of disease. This defines a larger concept of mission and is my primary concern.

Unless and until that recognition is more widespread, we are confined and restricted to a gospel which concentrates almost solely on individuals gaining assurance about getting into the next world and merely staying out of trouble until then. In this

common understanding of the Christian life there is no war going on. Worse still, many thinking people are honestly wondering how a loving and all-powerful God can both create, and put up with or condone the pervasive violence and suffering and sickness in this world. Is God expecting our help?

In any case, the puzzle which both theologians and scientists face regarding the specific process of the creation of life is made drastically more complicated, as I say, by this additional and strange factor, namely, the evidence of a counterforce to whatever might seem to be beautiful and good. One of the least mentioned and yet unavoidable characteristics of nature is the absolutely pervasive evidence of a counterforce distorting, degrading, and destroying all that is good, pitting animal against animal and human against human, and in addition pulling down all forms of animal and human life by means of deadly viruses, bacteria, and ominously clever parasites.

Curiously, those who commendably urge the recognition of Intelligent Design in nature do not seem to notice that such recognition creates a new problem: that of people assuming that violence in nature is due to the work of God rather than Satan. By contrast, Darwin pondered the strangeness of an omnipotent God of love and the apparently gratuitous death of his little niece, the premature death of his father, and the rampant violence and suffering throughout nature. God's resulting proposal of a purely natural, and random evolution was in one sense his method of absolving God of blame for the evident evil in nature. It might have been easier had he seriously considered the existence of the factor of intelligent evil opposition to God. Intelligent Design people need to recognize the existence of both good and evil design, or they malign God the Creator.

We can plainly see this virulent evil in the earliest remains of hominids, humanoids, or modern humans who perversely and pervasively portray homicidal behavior—the sort of thing bluntly described in Genesis. We also see evil in the omnipresent evidence of destructive disease. If divine intent is reflected in the re-creation that may be described in Genesis, as well as the final situation described in Isa. 6 and 11 (in which the lion will lie down with the lamb), we can readily recognize that nature-as-we-know-it is clearly not the way a loving, powerful divine being would have intended it.

However, if dangerous wolves can be altered genetically through selective breeding over a lengthy period of time, so, you would think, could man-eating tigers. That procedure would seem to be better than either of the two main alternatives we have at present—either to kill or cage. I have read that there are only 5,000 tigers remaining in the wild, while in the U.S. as temporary pets there are another 10,000. I say *temporary* because treating wolves or tigers in a friendly way does not change their DNA. Nor, apparently, can either animals or humans become herbivorous just by being fed plant life.

The often overlooked genetic distortion that has already happened would seem clearly to be a more serious problem than can be coped with either through behavioral or nutritional modification. Patient, multi-generational selective breeding can make a difference but is a process which is clumsy compared to gene splicing. Original sin in this light could be what resulted from genetic distortion. This may be why despite the power of the Gospel to transform lives humans still have seemingly indelible inclinations to sin, as Paul testifies in Romans 7.

Mysteries 5 and 6

In later lessons we will take up the curious emergence of high civilizations which seem to be succeeded by less sophisticated civilizations, which is Mystery 5, and the most significant mystery of all, Mystery 6, which is what Paul called a mystery, the Abrahamic plan for the re-conquest of all creation. That is essentially the story of the rest of the Bible and history beyond the Bible.

Lecture 3

The Biblical Plan, Announcement of the Great Commission

In the previous two lessons we mentioned six different mysteries,
1—Matter
2—Life
3—Humans
4—An intelligent counterforce
5—the consequent declining of ancient high civilizations
6—The Abrahamic New Beginning.
But we hardly touched on the last mystery.

Mystery 6

In terms of God's strategy, we see selectivity as He selects Noah for survival in his part of the world, whose offspring re-inhabit the whole Middle East. Later, God selects Abraham to be the carrier of faith and blessing to the rest of the world.

We read of Isaac being selected instead of Ishmael, and Jacob instead of Esau. We see Moses being selected and then Joshua. We see the Southern Kingdom emerging instead of "all Israel." We see the small remnant returning from Babylon, two thirds remaining in Babylon—by Jesus' day only one third had returned to the land of their fathers. We see selectivity, of course, in the case of Galilee-of-the-Gentiles rather than Jerusalem, Nazareth, of all places, and the selection of Mary.

Such selectivity has often been interpreted as exclusivity. Thus, we are surprised when Abraham is judged immoral by Abimelech, a man who was completely outside of the Abrahamic Covenant. It would seem that the Bible reports accurately and critically on a nation and its story, a story which is not altogether admirable. For example, much of the Bible describes almost exaggeratedly-objectionable behavior. Thus, the British historian, Herbert Butterfield, remarked that the uniqueness of the story of the Jewish people is not their history but their historiography. Apparently, selection has had as much or more to do with the goal of reporting to posterity and other nations as it has been a matter of gaining exclusive favors.

Furthermore, the Bible obviously does not contain all the things God has said and done among all of the nations of the world. We don't always remember that fact. It is common for Christians to assume that God's selectivity has really been intended to be exclusivity: that God spoke to and through the Jewish tradition and to and through none other. Thus, again, echoing Butterfield, we can, in the case of the Jewish people, and their

Bible, understand that it is the perspective of the record, not the content of the record, that is the most unique.

In other words, the amazing and unique literary record we have in the Bible, despite its admirable honesty and self-criticism, does not on merely talk about human events that were unique or universal. With surprising accuracy it does describe people and their experiences and their understanding of things in the situation in which they found themselves, and in this we find many unique perspectives.

The Bible—What Kind of a Book?

It is important to remind ourselves that there is a big difference between believing in an inerrant Bible and in believing in inerrant interpretations of the Bible. In regard to our interpretation of Genesis (or any part of the Bible for that matter), there are at least three possibilities:

First, that what is said was meaningful to both the human author and his hearers or readers. This is the usual situation throughout the Bible.

Second, that what was said had a double meaning: it was meaningful at the time and also described something that was going to happen in the future. This is much rarer, but we do see it, for example, in some of the references in the Old Testament to Christ in the New Testament.

Thirdly, it is even more rarely possible that what was said was confusing and meaningless to the human author and audience at the time, and only described something in the future that was unknown at the time.

In the particular case of Genesis chapter 1, we can begin, as usual, by assuming that what was said was meaningful to the ancients producing it, that it did not miraculously represent insight into the entire universe, unknown at the time, and that it most likely meant something else. Is it not much more likely that we moderns have anachronistically read our current cosmological knowledge back into the text? Have we been guilty of wanting to put scientific discoveries into the text? If so, that would be quite understandable and forgivable, but it would obscure what the Bible meant at the time it was written.

Whenever we misinterpret a verse we not only risk error in our interpretation; we cover up what the Bible is really saying about something else.

This sort of thinking, however, does not require us to insist that the Abrahamic Covenant has only a local meaning, since—unlike Genesis 1—we do not in Genesis 12 have to choose between an ancient meaning of one set of events and a modern understanding to refer to a completely different set of events.

As for the detailed meaning of the Abrahamic Covenant, the idea that this is the first case of the Great Commission has been explained in the Perspectives course. Here it may be well to look at two aspects of it more closely.

The Link to the New Testament

The commission is mentioned in regard to to Abraham three times and once to each Isaac and Jacob—in Genesis 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18, to Abraham, to Isaac in Genesis 26:4-5, and to Jacob in Genesis 28:14-15. It is interesting that Genesis 28:15 is closely similar to Matthew 28:20. This similarity does not appear clearly in English translations since our Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew. But in the Bible of the early

church—the Greek Old Testament—the New Testament phrase, "I will be with you until the end" is almost verbatim in Genesis 28:20.

This close similarity gives rise to the thought that Jesus in Matthew 28 was consciously paraphrasing the Old Testament Great Commission in the form that it was given to Jacob. Jacob was also called Israel, and Jesus was talking specifically to the children of Israel, not all the children of Abraham, so that would make sense. But, in any case, the key point here is that the Great Commission was not something invented in New Testament times.

Furthermore, it is not just Jesus who alludes to these Old Testament Great Commission passages. Peter in Acts 3 quotes the phrase "in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed." Paul in Galatians 3 says, seeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, "all the nations shall be blessed in you" (Gal. 3:8).

While we are on this verse let's be sure to note that the faith Paul is talking about that Abraham had was not what we often glibly call "saving knowledge of Christ," if that phrase means head knowledge. In the Bible faith is indissolubly related to obedience. Indeed in Romans 1:5 Paul talks about bringing about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles. Abraham's "saving faith" did not involve any very detailed knowledge about Christ at all. And the Gospel preached to him Paul summarizes as the simple fact that it is good news that all nations will be included. That is, the basis of the Gospel is the blood of Christ, the one name under heaven whereby we must be saved. But the message of the Gospel is indeed the good news that Gentiles, not just Israel, are and always have been welcome by God.

The "Blessing"

We must also note that the common English translation "I will bless you ... and you will be a blessing to all of the families of the earth," seems to fit in perfectly with our modern prosperity gospel. Again, we usually read into the text what we like it to mean. In this case the misleading word is the word, "blessing." This is, in the Hebrew, the same word used again and again in the book of Genesis with a different meaning. Jacob was "blessed" not Esau, for example. This did not mean simply that he was to inherit land. It meant he was to shoulder many of the heavy responsibilities of a father now too old to carry them further. It made him the principal carrier of the family name. He was now more officially rooted in the bloodstream of his father than ever before.

For us today the difference between these two meanings of the word "blessing" is the difference between getting a ticket to heaven, which you can walk off with, and inheriting a permanent relationship to a heavenly family with all of the rights and privileges that are involved. This long-term family relationship illuminates the rationale for Jesus saying, "As my Father sent me, so send I you." As we have seen earlier, this "blessing," this new birth inducts us into a kingdom at war, not just to a safe holding tank awaiting heaven. Believers in poverty, oppression, and even semi-starvation tend to sing about the next world. Even Evangelicals in years gone by, in their less up-scale days, used to sing,

This world is not my home,
I'm just a-passing through
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue

The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

No hint of a war to fight while waiting for Him to welcome me from heaven's open door.

This type of otherworldly fixation is less defensible the more secure we become and the more knowledge we gain of what it takes to be loyal to a family, a kingdom, which is at war here and now, striving to set the record straight as to who God is and what He is like and to re-glorify His Name.

In other words, Adam and his lineage became survivors but, unless reborn spiritually, not soldiers in a war against Satan. Once "saved" or "reborn" we become "listed" in heaven in "the lamb's book of life," but we may not be aware of the fact that we are also soldiers "enlisted" on earth to fight, as Paul says, not against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, against the rulers of darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Thus, it is not merely a matter of getting humans into heaven but getting heaven into humans. Those who are enlisted but don't report for duty are classified as "Absent With Out Leave" or "AWOL." When Jesus appears on the scene and tells us we should pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," when He assures us "the gates of Hell will not prevail against the onslaught of the church," that is, the fortifications of Hell will not be able to resist the destruction of the works of the devil, our response may merely be "Huh? I thought the purpose of church was to meet my needs and the needs of my family." In a war, of course, soldiers need to eat and sleep and have their basic needs met. But they are also committed to an enterprise in which they may be injured or killed. Now that sounds like Jesus saying "He who seeks to save himself will lose his life but he who will lose his life for my sake and the Gospel will save it." From this we realize that going AWOL is not necessarily as safe as staying with the troops and fighting the good fight.

Lecture 4

The Unfolding Story of Scripture: Part 1

When I was growing up I was constantly bombarded in Sunday School and in sermons in church with an endless stream of stories coming out of the Bible. I became familiar with key figures like the Good Samaritan, Moses, Peter, David, Abraham, but I never knew that they are all part of one unfolding drama. I did not know if Isaiah came before Moses, after David, before Job, etc. It just never occurred to me that the Bible was one big story.

Gradually it became clear to me that the life of Christ was a story told over and over again in the gospels. Then I realized Paul the apostle came into the picture and wrote lots of letters, but I never got it straight which letter came first. Finally, I got interested in John and the Book of Revelation and I assumed John came last.

But the Old Testament was still a massive confusion. I guess I knew that Genesis started things off but the rest was a trackless wilderness.

In my twenties while at Princeton Theological Seminary, I was assisting in a local church where I taught an adult class. For the first time I got it in my head that it ought to be possible to tell the story of the entire Old Testament in sixty seconds!

Everybody in the class learned how to do it. I'm really not sure what this accomplished for the people in the class, but I know that for me it was very helpful. I began the story with Abraham leaving Ur and going to the promised land; then later being forced down into Egypt due to a drought; after 400 years then Moses came out of Egypt with the children of Israel; 40 years wandering in the wilderness; Joshua taking the people into the promised land once again; ushering in a period of 400 years of confusion called the judges; the prophet Samuel reluctantly choosing a king; David and all that; the northern tribes break away and get captured by the Assyrians; finally, after 400 years of kings, the southern kingdom is taken off to Babylon and after 70 years about one third dribbled back right up to the date of Jesus' birth, completing 400 years from the end of the southern kingdom.

That's about sixty seconds. In addition, over the years, growing up in a missions-minded church, I gained the idea that there were some significant verses in the Old Testament that talked about missions so that it was plain in a vague sense that God always had missions in mind but was apparently waiting for the ascension of Christ to set things in motion.

For example, I actually preached sermons here and there on Isaiah 49:6. The verse seemed plain to me that it was a secondary matter that the children of Israel in bondage in Babylon would get back to their land compared to the importance of sending missionaries to the ends of the earth. Little did I realize for many years that the phrase "ends of the

earth" actually referred to the area where they were captives. "It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth." That sounds like a missionary verse, doesn't it? But actually God wants them to witness to their captors— which was probably much more difficult for them than sending missionaries at a distance. In other words, earth was the flat plain, and where the plain ended in the mountains of Iran or Turkey was the ends of the earth.

This radically altered my understanding.

Psalm 67 was another Old Testament reference possibly to missions where in the 7th verse it speaks of "all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

However, the biggest sea change in my thinking came from Genesis chapter 12 where, as we saw in the previous lesson, the concept of missions is reiterated five times. All the families of the earth are to be brought into the family of God.

Thus now we have a continuous story running from Abraham to Christ. In the earliest period of the patriarchs, according to Martin Luther's commentary on Genesis, Abraham was a witness to seven other surrounding peoples.

Then in the period of the Egyptian captivity, God had a mission purpose of reaching out to the Egyptians. Who knows what actually happened. Some of the documents discovered in the tomb of King Tut apparently can be found in the Psalms, though that would have been quite a bit later.

The period of the judges was more like the Crusades than it was a witness to the surrounding nations, although there is no question that many of the nations gained a real fear of the God of Israel.

In the period of the kings we see the Queen of Sheba coming to learn from Solomon. We read of the Syrian Naaman coming to Israel to seek the healing power of the God of Israel. We read of Jonah being sent to Nineveh.

Then once again as a result of the Babylonian captivity they are, as we have seen in Isaiah, expected to be salvation to their very captors.

One missing element in this story is what happened to the northern tribes. We don't know for sure but we do know that in Jesus' day (as Peter put it in the book of Acts) Moses was preached in every city of the empire. Perhaps some of the northern tribal peoples were involved in that kind of diaspora (or dispersion).

By mechanisms of going or coming and whether voluntarily or involuntarily, it would seem that God was in the mission business whether His chosen people fully understood that fact or not.

It seems like today most believers "live and move and have their being" with only the slightest awareness if any at all of the grander plans of God. This is the rea- son why, after Paul spent three years in Arabia rethinking his understanding of the Bible, he felt he had to refer to God's plan of the ages as being a "mystery."

In doing so he was no doubt aware of his own earlier ignorance of that plan and the general ignorance of his hearers, and he excused them by saying it was a mystery. But clearly it should not have been a mystery. Today it's the same—it shouldn't be a mystery, but it is.

It is terribly unfortunate that the overall purposes of God are either unknown or nearly totally ignored by believers in the contemporary church. That grim fact is the reason for the importance of a course like this one.

You can go back through the whole Old Testament yourself, and there are glimmers of a larger story at a number of points. One of the clearest is in Exodus 19 where God says to Moses beginning in verse 4,

> *You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to My- self. Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

A clear New Testament reference to this is in I Peter 2. Peter says,

> *You also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

If you stop right there, you get the impression that the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is what is being mentioned. However in verse 9, Peter goes on,

> *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.*

This latter statement does not negate the Reformation idea that we all have direct access to God somewhat like priests. But it emphasizes the more important role of a priesthood to declare the praises of Him Who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. In other words, the missionary significance of Exodus 19 is clearly preserved in what Peter says in I Peter 2.

This idea of a distinct plan unfolding from Genesis 12 on is fairly easy to establish. In more recent years I have gained an even larger picture, more difficult to see, and it has to do with events prior to Genesis 12. When you stop to think about it, it does not seem very impelling to suppose that at Genesis 12, with Abraham, God launched an entirely new plan. What kind of a plan would it be that would unify the Bible not just from Genesis 12 on but unify the Bible from Genesis 1:1 on?

One reason we cannot easily see the connection between the first 11 chapters of Genesis and what follows is because our cultural heritage, for most of us, is the Reformation, a period during which the big issue was how to get to heaven. The Catholics seemed to be saying you work your way to heaven or even pay your way to heaven, while the Protestants insisted that you must believe your way to heaven. I think that the Protestants by emphasizing belief were more safely right, although their emphasis has often been understood to mean "belief in certain doctrines," not the kind of heart belief the Bible talks about. Of course, the Catholic emphasis on works is not entirely wrong either. In fact, biblically you cannot separate heart faith from heart obedience. They are two sides of the same coin.

Thus, in a sense, the Protestants gave a better answer to the wrong question, a better way of going to heaven, but the question was not central in scripture. Jesus even went so far as to say "He who would save his life will lose it but he who will lose his life for my sake and the Gospel will find it." In other words, a better answer to the wrong question or at least to a lesser question.

Back to the point. If Genesis 12 is interpreted to be merely the beginning of a global campaign to get people out of this planet and into heaven, then the earlier part of Genesis does not easily fit in.

However, if, as we saw in the previous lesson, the blessing of God through Abraham actually inducts those who respond into a kingdom at war, then we can easily note that that war began with Genesis 1:1, the first defeat coming when Satan seduced Ådam and Eve; God struck back with the choice of Noah and the elimination of an evil generation. Then God's choice of Abraham is seen as another "selectivity" which enables another new beginning to be played out in the text of the rest of the Bible and the subsequent centuries of the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

Thus, what unifies the Bible is not simply the redemption of humans but their redemption to fight a war against evil. We look almost in vain for reflections of this war in David's prayers and Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. It is hard not to think that their own salvation from their enemies is the most important thing. God's concern for "the foreigner" is there but very marginally so.

Meanwhile God's chosen people are not necessarily the only people on earth who seek His face. His people will both bless and be blessed in their Babylonian captivity. They will regard it as mere punishment rather than an opportunity to witness or an opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of Satan's continued intelligent opposition, yet witness they did, and learn they did, despite their overwhelming preoccupation with their own situation, their own land, etc. (Isa. 49:6)

In preparation for the next lesson there is one thing to note about the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Genesis Joseph tells his brothers, "You did not send me to Egypt, God did." This gives un an example of how the Old Testament often looks at things from the point of view of God's purposes in an event. This statement does not constitute a denial of what the brothers did. It is simply a different way of looking at it.

Something similar exists in the case of David sinning by counting the people. In 2 Samuel 24:1-25 the text has God being the one who "incited" David to do this wrong. The same 25 verses, verbatim, occur in a centuries newer document, 1 Chronicles 21:1-25, where the only difference is that this text says that Satan "incited" David to do wrong.

Note that Chronicles was written after the Babylonian captivity took place and it is possible that the Jewish theologians had had their awareness sharpened regarding Satan due to their many years of living in the do- main of the dualistic Zoroastrians who acknowledged two equal Gods, one good and one bad.

The Jews rejected the dualism but may have recognized more clearly than before the existence of personal opponent and destroyer of God's work. The word "satan" occurs in the Old Testament over 20 times mostly in the sense of "adversary," but as an evil person only in 1 Chronicles and Job. When Jesus called Peter a "satan" he was no doubt saying Peter was an adversary. Most of the time in the NT the word "satan" refers to an evil intermediate being working to tear down the works of God and thus His reputation.

The result of the Babylonian experience is a striking difference between the Old Testament perspective on evil and the NT point of view, which incorporates in numerous passages the existence of Satan as a person, something rarely represented in the OT. But that will have to wait until next time. This is merely Part I.

Lecture 5

The Unfolding Story of Scripture: Part 2

Your readings for this lesson give many detailed references to the theme of missions in the Bible. However, rather than to simply summarize those for you, let's begin today with an unusual way of studying the Bible. Many if not most Bible scholars do not use this approach. They may not be familiar with the fairly simple arithmetic which is necessary. What I refer to is called by a scary name, "exponential growth." It is important because it is the kind of growth process which is involved in exactly the same way in calculating interest on an investment, the growth of population of a country or the growth of town or a church congregation or denomination. Here we are mainly interested in the growth of the Jewish people. It is very handy to know how this works. Pastors in India especially need to know these things, where thousands of believers are held forever in debt due to interest rates they cannot easily calculate.

Let's take some examples.

Suppose either your bank account of 100 dollars or your church of 100 members grows by two percent. How many dollars or members will be the result? You can easily add 2 to 100, since a growth of 2% means two people or two dollars per 100. But suppose the starting number is 200, then what will be the result of 2% more? Again, it is apparently 4 more making a total of 204. Suppose your starting number is 300 what is 2% more? To do that you finally have to get down to multiplying 300 by the decimal .02. That gives you 6, and added to 300 gives the new total of 306. One step further is to realize that if you multiply 300 by 1.02 you get 306 directly.

In case your congregation grows 2% one year and only 1% the next, you can handle that by first multiplying by 1.02 and then by 1.01, or 300 x 1.02 x 1.01, which is 309.06.

But suppose we don't contemplate a change of rate of growth from year to year. Suppose we are wanting to find out the result of an average or steady growth rate during a five-year period.

In that case with a starting number of say $1,000 we get 1000 x 1.02 the first year, or $1,020.

The second year we get 1020 x 1.02 or $1,040.40.

The third year we get 1040.4 x 1.02 or $1,061.208, which is $1,061.21 if rounded off.

And so on. However, this process seems a bit tedious. It can be written for five years as:

1000 x 1.02 x 1.02 x 1.02 x 1.02 x 1.02

Don't take fright, this can also be written with a shorthand number as: 1000 x $(1.02)^5$, or $1,104.08

[Note the little "5" means you multiply the first number five times by what is in the parenthesis. This little number is called an "exponent" from which we get the scary name "exponential growth." It is also said "we are raising 1.02 to the 5th 'power.'" But it does not matter what this little shorthand number is called. We don't have to give it a name.]

Let's take a more useful example.

If you begin with 70 people instead of $1,000, and use a growth rate of 2% per year for 400 years:

70 x $(1.02)^{400}$, or 192,829.51

This latter example might have been the case of the family of Abraham going down into Egyptian captivity. But, note, it results in nowhere near two million people.

But suppose they grew at 2.66%. In that case we see that 70 people x $(1.0266)^{400}$ is 2,544,497 people (rounded off).

Of course, the immediate question is, "Is a growth rate of 2.66% (for 70 people for 400 years) a reasonable rate?" *The Pocket World in Figures: The Economist* for 2006 lists 20 countries with a growth rate of 2.85% or higher. If the children of Abraham grew at 3.5% they would have become:

70 x $(1.035)^{400}$= 66,257,944 that's 66 million not just 2.5 million!

Of course, if 70 "people" went down to Egypt, they may have only counted the adults. If an equal number of children were along, then they would not have had to grow 2.66%.

Note, however, the explosive increase in the results with just the additional .85% of growth rate from 2.66% to 3.5%! This is as significant for its effect on interest rates as it is for population growth rate.

In the case of the Egyptian sojourn the doubting scholars who question the number of people in the Exodus simply need to use a little arithmetic to see how readily it would have been possible.

A second illustration where the non-arithmetic intuition of scholars is flawed is in the arguments about the number of Jewish people in the Roman empire at the time of Christ. One of the major church historians of the past was Adolf Harnack. He thought that the Jewish proportion of the population of the Roman empire in Paul's day must have been 10 percent. If the Roman Empire contained 100 million people (which itself is well accepted) then the Jewish population would have been 10 million.

Critics have wondered how there could have been that many Jews. Where would they come from? Some said it could not be. Others, like Rodney Stark, have suggested that the Jews must have made a lot of converts to grow that large in number. In general the 10 million figure is not doubted. The question is how it happened.

But, again, by simply doing a little arithmetic it is possible to see how 10 million could easily have grown from say 586 BC, the fall of Jerusalem, to 14 AD, if only 26,000 was the starting number and the growth during those 600 years was only 1%:

26,000 x $(1.01)^{600}$ = 10,181,168

If Jews grew at 2.5% they would have only needed to be four people 600 years earlier, since:

4 x $(1.025)^{600}$ = 10,873,747

None of these suggestions of growth rate were necessarily what actually happened, either 1% or 2.5%. However, these examples do show clearly that it would not have been unlikely for the Jews, who in general may have had more stable households, to have grown to ten million in Jesus' day.

Note, however, that it may be helpful to indicate just how these types of arithmetic can be done. All you need is a $5 hand calculator of the type that has an XY key [In some cases an YX key]. In that case, taking one of our cases above, you do the following:

1. Punch in the starting number, say 70
2. Punch the times sign, X
3. Punch in the 2.66% in the form 1.0266
4. Punch the XY key
5. Punch in, say, 400 years
6. Punch in the equals sign (=)
7. You get 2,544,497

In the same way if you want to know what $1,000 will become in ten years at a 4.7% growth rate, you

1. Punch in 1000
2. Punch in the times key (X)
3. Punch in 1.047
4. Punch the XY key
5. Punch in 10
6. Punch in the equals sign (=)
7. You get $1,582.95

Now, suppose you want to know what the interest rate (or growth rate) would be if a number of 3,000 grows to 10,000 in 25 years?

1. Punch in 10,000
2. Punch in the divide key (/)
3. Punch in 3,000, then equals (=)
4. Punch the shift key the XY key
5. Punch in 25
6. Punch the equals sign (=)
7. You get 1.049, which means 4.9%

This calculation could be written as $(10{,}000/3{,}000)^{(1/25)}$ [Note that in this case the little number is a fraction. In this case the "exponent" or "power" is the fraction, while just the 25, as a denominator, means you are taking the 25th "root," that is you are asking what number if multiplied by itself 25 times would equal the 10,000/3,000?]

While this latter way of doing things may seem more complex it is helpful if you want to know directly what it would take in growth rate for 70 people to grow to 2.5 million in 400 years:

1. Punch in 2,500,000
2. Punch in the divide key (/)
3. Punch in 70, then equals (=)
4. Punch the shift key then Xy key
5. Punch in 400

6. Punch the equals sign (=)

7. You get 1.02655, which means 2.655% average growth rate.

Or, if you want to know what kind of a growth rate (or interest rate) would be required to grow from 1,000 to 10,000 in 20 years, you

1. Punch in 10,000
2. Punch in the divide key (/)
3. Punch in 1,000, then equals (=)
4. Punch the shift key then XY key
5. Punch in 20
6. Punch the equals sign (=)
7. You get 1.122, which means 12.2% average growth rate or interest rate. One reason we cover this subject is due to the fact that many people are bound up in confusion over things like this. Christians in India need a pastor who can help them calculate things like this so as to know what borrowing money at a certain interest rate will mean.

Incidentally, note that if you are working with an interest rate per month the same calculations will work. That is, $100 will grow to $200 if the interest rate is

5.95% per day for twelve days

5.95% per month for twelve months

5.95% per year for twelve years.

This is because the calculation is the same in each case:

$100 \times (1.0595)^{12} = 200$ or,

$(200/100)^{(1/12)} = 1.0595$ (read 5.95%)

One of the central meanings of these calculations is the fact that a slight change in growth rate makes for a big change in growth result over time.

A quite different growth factor we can see in the Bible would be the equally incredible. Let's think about the general question of what affects growth rate. Obviously when the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children fewer children die prematurely. I think that it is not illogical to suppose that the Jewish families had a higher growth rate in ancient times precisely due to factors of that kind.

The general observation is that if a population does not grow very much, there must be a lot of war, disease, family breakdown occurring. It is easy to conceive of Satan doing his best to promote these contrary factors.

While Bible scholars do not often point it out, a very slow growth of population is indeed a measure of abortion and infanticide as well as the truly major factors of war and pestilence.

An example of this is the fact that southern England, after a relatively calm three centuries of literacy under occupation by Roman legions, in about 440 AD lost their protection, and England immediately sagged back into chaos and bloodshed, with invading Anglo-Saxons, and all that. For more than 600 years until 1066 AD, studies estimate that the population did not increase in the slightest. This is not normal at all! Think of the abnormal loss of life during those 600 years!

Or, take the 27 million people estimated as world population in Abraham's day. After 2000 years, by the time of Christ world population is again estimated at 200 million. Is that a huge growth of an additional 173 million people? Yes. But is it a slow growth? Yes. Let's see:

$(200/27)^{(1/2000)} = 1.00100$, which we can read as .1%, (i.e. subtract 1 and then multiply by 100, or push the decimal point over to the left two places) that is not one percent but one tenth of one percent.

By comparison, the world population growth rate is 1.7%, or seventeen times as fast, and *The Pocket World in Figures* lists five countries in the world today that are growing faster than 4% which means 40 times as fast, and eleven are growing faster than 3%, or thirty times as fast.

However, even world population growth rate is only 1.7% due to the fact that many of the developing countries are greatly suppressing their growth rate—18 countries are at zero or negative rate of growth.

However, a dramatic way to measure the carnage and horror that has dogged the tracks of humanity for much of human history, is to ask what world population would have become, starting at 2000 BC with 27 million, if growth at 2000 BC had occurred at the current global rate of 1.7%.

The astonishing answer is that world population at even that reduced rate would have exploded to six billion from 27 million in only 321 years. And, if world population had grown at 3.5% it would have become six billion in only 123 years.

This should fairly broadcast to us the ugly presence of ongoing slaughter, disease, and starvation for much of the human experience. At the same time, it gives insight into the very real, physical dimensions of the advance of God's will in the expanding kingdom in more recent years. God is not simply out to save souls in eternity but to rescue His creation from war and pestilence. The degree to which that is accomplished is certainly related to the glorification of God, and that, in turn, to our sense of mission.

> *All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God (Ps. 86:9, 10).*

Lecture 6

The Intertestamental Period

The four centuries prior to the birth of Christ have been called the Intertestamental period. This period gets its name from the absence of content in our present Bibles for these four centuries—that is, it is the period between the Testaments. In all fairness, however, the boundaries of this period are the very artificial creation of the decision in 1812, by the American Bible Society to drop the so-called Apocrypha from their evangelistic printing of the Bible. They did that because they wanted to save money and also because of course the literature in the ancient Greek Bible actually covered much of this period.

But of all periods this is packed with perhaps the most influential events. All of these evens, added to all of the previous Old Testament materials, is so significant that it is hard to imagine that anyone would feel that the New Testament could possibly stand alone.

When the curtain goes down at the last page of Malachi (prior to the Apocrypha which has been removed from our Bibles) and the curtain goes up in the New Testament, we do indeed enter into a radically changed world. While Confucius, Buddha, and Socrates all lived just before the period, their greatest influence was no doubt during the period. Alexander the Great, a student of Aristotle who was a student of Socrates looms very large in this period and essentially changes much of the world permanently.

In China the Qin dynasty for the first time unites China and builds the Great Wall. But Alexander unites an even larger portion of the earth and is more important for our interests because he introduced the Greek language far and wide.

But by far the most significant thing in this period, which of course built on Alexander's extension of the Greek language, was the Greek version of the Old Testament.

This Greek Bible, which was the Bible of the early church, was more likely the Bible of Palestine as well since many scholars believe that Greek had by the time of Christ become the primary language of most people in Palestine. That is to say, when Jesus was reading from the Bible in Luke 4 in his hometown synagogue, He was probably reading from the Greek Bible.

This particular document is often called the Septuagint or LXX which refers to the 72 translators who supposedly did the work.

A most important point, however, is that this Greek Bible was not exactly a translation of a previous document but a selection as well as a translation, that is, our concept of Biblical inspiration must certainly include the remarkable selection that took place drawing upon perhaps 400 other documents. Long stretches of first and second Samuel and first and second Kings are actually commentaries on other documents that are named in the text. The overall selection process produced a single, coherent,

composite document for the first time. Many people have recognized the unique characteristic of this document. No other religious tradition has a single, most important document of the character and quality of the Old Testament. The impact of this document in all directions is truly remark- able. No other translation has had the same profound impact. When the New Testament refers to Scripture this is the document to which it refers. Without it the thousands of synagogues scattered throughout the empire would have never been able to attract Gentiles in anywhere near the same number as were called "God fearers" in the New Testament. More than any other human achievement, guided by the Holy Spirit of course, the Septuagint, or the Greek Bible, literally created the early church. 80% of the quotations in the New Testament from the Old Testament are drawn from the Greek Bible, not from Hebrew documents. This means, of course, that some documents did exist in Hebrew. It was not for a thousand years that rabbinical scholars actually pulled together and published the Hebrew counterpart to the selection of documents found in the Greek Bible. When they did they followed meticulously the same writings. All they changed was the order.

In Luther's day there were two major Biblical traditions that were considered authoritative. The Greek Orthodox tradition understandably stayed with the Greek Bible and of course the Greek New Testament. The Catholic Latin tradition in Luther's day had considered Jerome's fourth-century translation into Latin as authoritative. Luther didn't want to have to contest the subtle interpretations of either of those two documents and decided creatively that he would go back to the Hebrew which by the time of his birth had been in existence for perhaps 700 years.

The Protestant Reformation, therefore, for the first time established within Christianity the importance of the Hebrew language and culture. Christians and Jews had very early polarized. The Jews in the period of early Christianity, you can easily imagine, tried to distinguish themselves from the Christians who were being persecuted, while the Jews had long before achieved immunity from persecution. This didn't make the Christians happy for it often meant their death. This is only one of the reasons for the divergence of the two traditions.

Luther's decision to use the Hebrew began a very slow process of appreciation for the Jewish tradition, but it would still be centuries before anything like friendliness developed. Indeed, Luther himself on one occasion said that the Jews, if they did not acknowledge Christ, should have their tongues torn out. Meanwhile, regrettably and astonishingly, due to Luther's decision, Protestants have paid almost no attention at all to the Bible of the early church, that is, the Septuagint. In our seminaries today, this great achievement of the Intertestamental period, which had such great influence in the entire ancient world and which is the foundation of the New Testament Greek documents, is almost totally ignored. It's not routinely studied in the curriculum at any point. The Old Testament department focuses exclusively on the Hebrew Old Testament while the New Testament department, employing the Greek language, focuses exclusively on the Greek New Testament, not the Greek Old Testament.

Scholars have noticed that the New Testament at any point makes no reference to translators even though Jesus' ministry takes Him into the area of the "Decapolis" which was a cluster of ten Greek speaking cities north of Nazareth. This is one more reason why it is widely understood that Jesus could speak Greek likely even as a primary language.

Just in general the amazingly different world we en- counter in the pages of the New Testament is mostly the result of events of the Intertestamental period. Many Jews had been transported to Babylon early in the period. The Jewish commentaries on the Bible, called the Talmud, give credence to the thought that most of the Jews never got back to Palestine even by Jesus' day. The Babylonian Talmud is a huge shelf of books compared to the Palestinian Talmud which is very much shorter. In addition, there were perhaps a million Jews in northern Egypt as well as perhaps another 9 million in the rest of the Roman Empire. For the most part they kept the faith. And as Peter remarked in the book of Acts, Moses is preached in every city.

Thus the setting of the New Testament is by no means a start from scratch situation. It is more like a tinder-box. By understanding the situation, the phrase grows on us, that Jesus was born "in due time." When His first sermon in Luke referred to Old Testament events in which Gentiles were blessed of God, we can see

the basic continuity between Jesus and Paul despite the fact that some scholars make Paul out to be the promoter of a substantially different religion.

Due to events in the Intertestamental period, the Jews had already achieved a special dispensation from the Roman Empire to worship their own gods in their own way. In all the empire the Jews were the only group that had achieved that kind of recognition. They had fought desperately for their autonomy in the Intertestamental period and while they had finally pretty much accepted the Greek language, they had never forgotten the desecration of their temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. Their reaction was so strong that they were able to gain a begrudging recognition by the Roman Empire.

It may be difficult for Christians to acknowledge, but the Jewish families which had fanned out across the Roman Empire, due no doubt to commercial activity, were nevertheless respectable people. That's why their synagogues were able to attract the God-fearers already mentioned. Hugh Schoenfeld, a prominent Jewish scholar in England, who actually translated the New Testament for Jewish use, insists that the Jews were sending missionaries out across the empire a hundred years before Christ was born.

This is no doubt the phenomenon to which Jesus referred when He mentioned that the Pharisees were "traversing land and sea to make a single proselyte." This of course may have meant that they were more interested in Gentiles adopting their Jewish culture than them turning their lives over to the living God. Thus, Jesus went on to say that these missionaries were making hypocrites. That is actually a bad translation because in Greek the word "hypocrite" was simply the common word for an actor in a play who is pretending to be somebody else. It wasn't a bad word as it is in English. But it is clear right there, to Jesus, that a shift in culture was not by any means the main thing about which they should have been concerned.

Before we leave this Intertestamental Period we need to note once more the great significance of the captivity of the Southern tribes by the incredibly ruthless Assyrians. The Northern tribes had already been dispersed, never to return as a movement, and leaving a vacuum in northern Palestine into which various races would flow, creating the later much resented Samaritan population.

While it was a series of deportations across years, the deportation of the Southern Kingdom is usually referred to as 586 BC. What is very important is the fact that the Babylonians took over, and soon after that the Persians became rulers. The Persians with their Zoroastrian religious views were much better to the Jews, and it is likely that there

was borrowing in both directions. The Persians even allowed some of the Jews to return to their land and reconstruct the temple.

In all of this commotion there is little doubt, as mentioned in Lesson Four, that the Jewish scholars gained a more specific understanding of Satan that was a specific person. Most of the earlier documents in the Old Testament, as we pointed out then, use the word simply to refer to any adversary. On one occasion where God opposes a bad prophet, God is called a satan.

This gives highly important insight into one of the most profound differences between most of the Old Testament and the New Testament, and at the same time underscores the fact that the Jewish people were not the only ones with whom God was dealing and revealing Himself.

The relatively benevolent rule of the Persians extended for about 200 years, from 532 to 332 BC, at which time Alexander the Great took over Palestine. Under the Greeks, while the Jews still were allowed religious freedom, Greek culture was pressed upon them.

Greek domination continued for more than 200 years, until the Roman Empire overran Palestine in 63 BC, during which time the Greek language and culture gained a strong hold on at least the remnant of Jews who had reoccupied their land.

Thus during this period, we see a succession of outside rulers over the Jews. The Babylonians were better than the incredibly cruel Assyrians who were experts in skinning people alive and piling up pyramids of heads. The Persians were better than the Babylonians. The Greeks in some ways were even better. As empires go, the final rule of Roman law offered still greater advantages. The Roman's Latin language did not replace the Greek, due in great part to the fact that the Romans looked up to the Greeks as superior in language and literature. Many of the house- hold "slaves" in the Roman empire were actually respected teachers of Greek language and literature.

It could just be that some of the "God-Fearers" across the empire, who attended Jewish synagogues, did so because they wanted to hear the Greek since in many cases it was no doubt the Greek OT that was read out in the Synagogues.

It was the Roman legal system, however, which protected Paul and granted him the right to be tried by Caesar, when it became clear that he had no chance if tried in Jerusalem.

This is the scene, then, in which we enter the New Testament period in our next lesson, a scene in which the Bible of the early church is widely known and read over a considerable portion of the earth. Its influence was greatly enhanced by the fact that the Jewish people were the carrier mechanism of that Word, their lives and conduct being the most visible meaning of those scriptures. Then, as now, it is the actual presence of transformed lives which gives the best introduction to the word written.

Lecture 7

The Gospels and Christ: A Global Perspective

"If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20).

There is a perfectly huge amount of literature on the subject of the Kingdom of God. You can find endless discussions about when such a Kingdom is going to come and if it is already here. The New Testament talks about it in both ways. You can even read about the supposed or possible difference between the Kingdom of God, which is a phrase most frequent in Mark and Luke, and the Kingdom of Heaven, which occurs in parallel passages in Matthew. John has very few occurrences of the Kingdom of God.

This particular statement, "If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you," is not found in Mark or John, but in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew it is one of the only four instances where "Kingdom of God," not "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs. The phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs 32 times in Matthew and no other place in the entire Bible.

Many scholars believe that Matthew and Luke build on Mark to begin with, which is the shortest of the Gospels, but that Matthew and Luke were able to employ an additional document, called "Q," which is merely the first letter of the German word for "source." Thus, possibly some of the four references in Matthew to the Kingdom of God rather than Kingdom of Heaven may have come in from the Q document.

The best explanation for Matthew's use of the Kingdom of Heaven in place of the Kingdom of God, as I see it, is the fact that Matthew was beamed to Jews and they did not believe in pronouncing the word "God" but tended to use the word "heaven" instead. Jesus Himself may have done that in the Lord's Prayer, where the word "God" does not occur but rather it says, "on earth as it is in heaven"—that is, as it is in the domain of God's rule.

In any event, if someone on the mission field who has never heard of the Bible were to read the Gospels for the first time they would clearly get the idea that the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Heaven), is the main subject—not in the sense of "how to get to heaven" but how the power, the rule, the authority of God—of Heaven—can get to earth, how His Will can come on earth as it is in heaven.

By contrast, the religious mutation of Christianity that emerged from the Reformation focuses on the opposite, turning the New Testament upside down, allowing us to misread dozens of passages.

Apparently in the long, slow history of Western civilization, before the Bible was really widespread, Christianity did not present a challenge for change in this life so much as it helped people otherwise lacking in any conceivable earthly hope to submit to the "as is" situation and fix their hopes on the afterlife.

The Bible much more focuses on God's will, His Kingdom, becoming a reality in this life. I am still enough of a fundamentalist not to think that the world is going to get better and better until Jesus comes to congratulate us on our accomplishments, but I do think He expects us to work toward that end whether it is attainable or not as a means of glorifying His Name, and empowering our evangelism. What rings in my ears is the phrase in the parable, "Occupy 'till I come."

If Jesus had just gone around and urged people to wait out the next world, the Gospels would have been very different from what they are. Jesus challenged every kind of evil. Your readings this time make reference to the series of very unusual concerns He had, which contrasted sharply and unexpectedly with the perspectives of the devout and religious disciples.

Indeed, to this day we extensively misunderstand the NT. We don't often hear people interpreting the Parable of the Prodigal Son as primarily presenting the older son as the Jewish people who did everything right but could not understand the Father's love for the other nations, who, in their perspective, were unredeemable.

You see the same modern confusion about the parable granting equal wages to workers who were not there all day. This procedure would logically have astonished the earlier workers, who, in this case, typify the Jews who are consternated over God's goodwill to the gentiles as seen in the behavior of Jesus.

This missiological issue became a very drastic situation as recounted in Luke 4, when Jesus deliberately pointed out two Old Testament instances where God was good to non-Jews. In that case the synagogue crowd exploded in fury and surged forward to kill him.

In other words, standing back, removing our religious glasses that seem to see everything in terms of how we can have our sins forgiven and get to heaven, we can begin to glimpse an almost entirely new scene in which the issue is not so much salvation as mainly service, that is, what we do after we get forgiven. In fact, Jesus actually said, "he who seeks to save his life will lose it and he who will lose his life for me will save it." Very slight variations of this statement occur in all three synoptic gospels, actually twice in Matthew and Luke—verses rarely quoted by Evangelicals.

This repeated emphasis of Jesus has a very different meaning from a common approach in evangelism where you begin by asking a person if they were to die right now would they go to heaven, thus focusing attention in the very beginning on how they might seek to be saved.

Jesus' "message" is summed up in the Gospels as two words: "repent and believe," which probably meant something like, "give up your own pursuits and follow and obey Jesus Christ." Yet we interpret it to mean, "ask forgiveness and assent to a short list of theological statements and you've got it made."

Look at John 17:1:

> *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."*

Or, John 17:2:

For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Or John 4:33:

Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

This verse makes clear that God has work on earth to do. Connect that statement with the following (John 17:4):

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

In these verses you can see clearly the New Testament balance—the New Testament indissoluble connection—between the recruiting of human beings and new life in Christ and the work of the Father.

For Jesus to glorify the Father it was necessary for the Father to glorify Him. In some sense it's the same with us. But for God to glorify Himself in us is not an end but a means to the end that we might glorify Him.

However, we normally take all this to mean that God's main purpose is to rescue men and to glorify them, when the fact is that He is equally recruiting men to serve Him as Jesus did in glorifying His Name. Jesus recruited people into the Kingdom of God which was an important achievement, but He also was recruiting them to do as He did—as He said, "As my Father has sent Me even so send I you." He didn't say, "As my Father saved Me so save I you." That's the Evangelical interpretation which essentially ignores the entire larger cause of redemption. Seeker churches and Evangelicals in general are usually seeking people who seek to be saved rather than people who are willing to repent and believe and be God's servants in following Jesus and serving as He served—both saving men and seeing them glorify God.

One of the very key verses in this respect is 1 John 3:8,

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

In the New Testament "the works of the devil" to which Jesus could refer were drastically limited by His hearers' limited understanding of creation and of the fallen condition of creation. For example, they knew no more about germs than John Calvin did. The challenge for us today is to discover what Jesus would have said to them had they known what we know about germs, in other words, would He have said that germs are one of the works of the devil which He and His followers are to set out to destroy?

It is common today among many Evangelicals to be content with the first century understanding of nature and to believe that if we can just build up our immune systems enough through eating the right things, in other words whole foods, organic foods, instead of degraded foods, that we will then be able to throw off any disease whatsoever. It is admittedly amazing to the extent that this is true. But there are still a large array of diseases from smallpox to SARS to Guinea worm to river blindness to tuberculosis to dengue fever which we have to go out and slay. The healthiest immune system will not guard you against malaria.

Challenge 1

In other words, a major challenge faces anyone who lives in the age where we can actually see tiny parasites like malaria in microscopes and we can trace the four very clever stages of their attack on the human body. We have even noticed their insidious change in their human hosts to make the bodies of those infected at- tract more mosquitoes so their infected blood can be transmitted to still more victims.

I point this out simply to illustrate the extensive difficulties in understanding for our day what Jesus wants to say to us if we merely focus on what He said in the first century. With increased insight into the works of the devil we have an increased span of responsibility. Our Christian mission becomes different and larger.

Challenge 2

The second major challenge to which we need to refer in this lesson is the very perplexing question of how the New Testament is different from the Old Testament. In the early centuries, Jews did not want to be persecuted along with the Christians and understand- ably sought to make clear to the government that the Christians were not Jews. Thus, lamentably, many Christians were tortured and executed because Jews made that point to the government. The Jews had certain rights of religious expression, on which the Christians, they felt, ought not to depend.

Meanwhile, there was an enormous cultural difference between the increasing numbers of followers of Christ who were Greeks, and the proportionately decreasing numbers of Jewish followers of Christ. The distance became isolation. The isolation bred prejudice, antagonism, and criticism which grew across the centuries.

For these reasons exaggerated contrasts were often drawn between the Old and New Testaments giving the general impression of the inferiority of the earlier testament. Walter Kaiser, Jr., an eminent Old Testament scholar, does not even think the phrase "Old Testament" is a helpful label. But his perspective is not the understanding of the mainstream of our Christian cultural tradition.

As a result, when we study the contrasts and continuities between the Old Testament and the New Testament we find ourselves walking on eggshells. Very few people are as willing to recognize the continuities as the contrasts. But the continuities are obviously the most basic doctrines of the entire Bible.

Just last Sunday I heard a sermon that stressed the fact of grace in the New Testament versus the fact of law in the Old Testament, when in fact Abraham was as much saved by grace as anyone in the New Testament. There's no significant distinction between the grace of God and the power of the blood of Christ to forgive, whether you lived before or after His birth. It's also true that faith is not something that was invented in the New Testament or that came to light only in the ministry of Christ or the apostles.

When Paul, in Romans 1:5, stated his commission un- der God "to bring about the obedience of faith in all nations" he wasn't saying something that was brand new to the New Testament. When in the next chapter he insists that the meaning of circumcision is "circumcision of the heart" he's not saying anything different from what we read in Jeremiah, or even back in Deuteronomy.

It is patently false that the Old Testament is where people got saved by obeying the law and in the New Testament people get saved by giving intellectual assent to a list of basic doctrines. This perspective is simply heretical, far removed from the thrust of the

Bible. In both testaments obedience from the heart is described as faith, and this is the kind of faith that saves you. It's not a case of believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for people's sins. Faith and obedience in the Bible absolutely cannot be separated in either the Old Testament or the New Testament, no matter what the Reformers thought, whether Protestant or Catholic.

There are other reasons for people making distinctions between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The so called dispensational school detects cultural differences that are significant enough to them to imply theological differences. For them the dispensation of the Old Testament is radically different from the dispensation of the New Testament. I grew up in that stream of thinking, but the longer I live the more it seems that the continuities between the two testaments are much more significant than the differences.

In the New Testament one of the major shifts is the departure from the symbolism depicting the slaying of animals for the forgiveness of sin. But it was never true that faith was not essential in the process of animal sacrifices. The Old Testament itself often makes that point—that obedience is even better than sacrifice. So this is not the basic distinction between the two testaments but simply a deeper awareness of symbolism which would be significant for both Jew and Gentile.

It is thus true that Christ's sacrifice has been interpreted as a replacement for Jewish sacrifices. But, notice, this is a replacement of symbol rather than a replacement of meaning.

Also, there is the shift in the New Testament from the misunderstanding of some, that only Jewish people could be saved, to an awareness of the access to God of all peoples. But even this is simply a heightened aware- ness rather than a distinction. Many Gentiles came to God in the Old Testament.

In any case, we must resist the thought that the Gospel is like a baton passed from the Jews to the Gentiles and was never really possessed by the Jews. That idea goes along with the thought that somehow true faith was first discovered in the New Testament and is now possessed solely by the Gentiles.

Take a look at Paul's generalization in Romans 9 about the failure of the Jews to attain righteousness (Rom. 9:30-32):

> *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness t hat is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.*

If we don't understand this we will have a hard time evaluating the eternal prospects of people like Zechariah and Elizabeth or even Mary, the mother of Jesus. Contrary to what some people think, God did not just choose anybody to be the mother of Jesus. When Gabriel said to her, "You have found favor in the sight of God," he wasn't telling her she had won the lottery, but was speaking to someone whose character was appropriate to the assignment that God had for her. She had already, it would appear, the kind of faith that Abraham had who also did not know the details of the substitutionary atonement of the shed blood of Christ.

Challenge 3

In conclusion we can refer back to a previous lesson where we noticed the interrelations between the Jews in captivity in Zoroastrian territory.

This makes for a truly major difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is very important to realize that most of the Old Testament things are described in the terms of God's ultimate control over all events—His sovereignty. We do not need to go over that again. We do need to understand that the New Testament recognition of an intelligent adversary who is in some sense "the God of this world" even after the Cross is both a major new perspective but also one that is rarely recognized.

In Summary

We can see at least three "challenges" as we seek to understand the New Testament:

1) the continuity of belief that works against evil

2) the general question of the continuities and differences between the testaments

3) the important and specific difference in the way bad things are described.

Thus, we see the indissoluble unity of the Bible in regard to the relentless purpose of God to reconquer a planet under the control of an evil one, and to recruit men and women to be involved in that task.

Lecture 8

The New Beginning of the Global Mission

In our topic you note that we are speaking of a new beginning not the beginning. It is not as though God's plan for the globe was a NT invention. It was a continuation and heightening, and an unprecedented "lateral" shift of truth-in-culture, but it was not a total new beginning.

In fact, however, it had so many new features in it that a loud clamoring among scholars has been going on for centuries to the effect that the Apostle Paul invented a different religion from that of Jesus. Such scholars focus on the fact that the form of faith Paul promoted does seem in some ways like a distinctly different religion. Jews think so to this day. But not just Jews; such discussions take place among Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical Bible scholars, pastors, and theologians. One of the more famous books on this subject is that of J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*.

However, it may just be that all such thinkers are working with an artificial problem because they are simply not thinking missiologically. Like the dispensational scholars who produced the classic *Scofield Reference Bible*, they can be praised for picking up the numerous differences between eras and taking them seriously. However, some of them have felt they were forced to make the New Testament into a radically different "new dispensation," one in which even the Gospels are not completely part of the so-called "church age," and the book of Acts is seen as a mere "corridor" of transition from one dispensation into another, and unreliable for the formation of doctrine. Doesn't that very conservative dispensational perspective seem similar to the more blatant liberal insistence that Paul invented a new religion?

I do think that there is at least one important difference between the kind of changes that took place over time within the Biblical stream of the Old Testament, on the one hand, and the kind of change we see in the New Testament shift from Jewish culture to Greek culture. Obviously, right within the enormous span of time covered by our Bibles, we are able to read of several different epochs:

1) Abraham's form of faith—which did not involve either circumcision or the Ten Commandments

2) the form of faith, whatever it was, while the "children of Abraham" were slaves in Egypt

3) the form it took when Moses tried to lead the ragged refugees in the wilderness

4) the new circumstances of the period of the Judges

5) the later period of the Davidic Kingdom

6) the period of Solomon's temple worship

7) the radically new situation in the Babylonian and the Persian captivities when the synagogue was invented and Satan was recognized.

8) the different dress in the new Palestine of Greek and Roman occupation, which we see in the New Testament

9) only to be modified greatly after the New Testament with the invasion of Titus—the exhaustion of Roman patience—and the definitive destruction of the Temple

10) the ensuing development of "rabbinical Judaism"

11) still later versions reaching down to our day in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reformed Judaism, and even Political Judaism in Israel.

All of these particular substantial changes, being within the same ethnic stream, can be called diachronic—they take place within the same people over time. Note that we are talking about changes throughout 4,000 years.

However, the basic Biblical faith has not changed over time. The heart-faith and obedience God favors—the "fear of God that is the beginning of wisdom"—has not changed. We still quote with approval such verses as

> *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths (Prov. 3:5-6).*

And we still gain insights from the period of Abraham and his faith. In Galatians 3 Paul actually speaks of the Gospel that was preached before Christ to Abraham, meaning the information (good news or bad depending on your viewpoint) that God intended to reconcile all nations, not just the lineage of Abraham.

It could be said that one of the main functions of a Biblical record spanning so much time is to make crystal clear that the same expectations of faith could weather all of these diachronic changes of culture and continue to do so in the future! Note that these changes were not necessarily sudden. No doubt in many cases there were "before" and "after" versions side by side, as with the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, or today between the contemporary and the traditional worship protocols. This kind of change is still a diachronic pattern.

But when the New Testament portrays a major, fairly sudden shift of faith from one ethnic community—the (Semitic) Jews, to the (Indo-European) Greeks and Latin Romans—we are dealing with a significantly different kind of shift. This kind of shift is a major phenomenon which the Bible teaches us in the New Testament especially. This second kind of change could be called synchronic instead of diachronic. But I would rather call it a lateral shift when it's from one cultural basin to another, not within the same cultural basin.

With either kind of shift there is no denying that there may be many disturbing differences, just as Judaism in Joshua's day was quite different from the Judaism of Jesus' day. We have to admit that taking such diachronic differences seriously is to the credit of the so-called dispensational school of interpretation.

But such shifts are mainly the result of the significant fact that times change and culture changes. In Paul's case, however, it was not merely a diachronic shift over time but also a lateral shift from one cultural basin to another. When the Jerusalem council met in the book of Acts and decided that there were indeed certain things about the Jewish form of the faith that ought not to change in the switch to Hellenistic (Greek) culture, they were not dealing with new or old diachronic change but lateral change. The "new

rules" did not necessarily apply to Jewish believers in Christ but to those Greek and Latin believers, called "devout persons" who were not following all of the Jewish customs.

Realistically, then, whether we are studying a diachronic or a lateral shift, we need to expect significant differences of wrapping paper for the Biblical faith. We also need to be aware that even though such changes are inevitable the changes may not be all to the good. Some of the new versions of the Christian faith in Africa, as in the Tai Ping movement in China, or the novel Christian Science and Mormon traditions in the United States, are new combinations of culture and faith that incorporate significant error. To a lesser extent this incorporation of error has taken place in Roman Catholic, Muslim, and, yes, Protestant religious traditions. That is what syncretism is.

Note, furthermore, that in all cases, whether diachronic or lateral, there are multitudes of people who become caught up in a religion or behavior that may contain very little if any true heart faith, but that in the new composite there may as well be truly devout souls whose genuine response to God contains significant, true faith.

Furthermore, after the Biblical faith survived the shift from a Semitic to an Indo-European culture, the new combination of faith and culture also began to move through diachronic shifts. Constantine's era was substantially different from Paul's era, and is where the word "Christianity" comes into the picture, since that was Constantine's political designation. After his 45 years as emperor, the label was soon to become the accepted term for the official religion of the empire. [And thus those employing that label outside of the empire were immediately persecuted. This fact eventually led to the term "Muslim" in the areas of Semitic substratum.]

Later, in the Reformation, we see the lateral shift from the Roman, Mediterranean culture to the Germanic. In this new shift all of the complexities and misunderstandings are present which the Book of Acts so helpfully predicts but were lamentably unexpected and disturbing when they came. We see each side questioning the validity of the other. We see both sides involving multitudes with nominal faith as well as many devout souls.

The Reformation was a massive lateral shift and interestingly took place at the time when the older Mediterranean form of faith was already undergoing significant diachronic shifts, due to the unleashing of the Bible in the Gutenberg era. People in Luther's day, all over England, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany were studying the Bible as never before. That process no doubt contributed to the thought that there could also be a totally independent German form of the faith.

The most important thing NOT to believe is that the polarization we see in the New Testament (impending between Jewish and Greek carrier vehicles of the faith) portrayed one false, older religion with a new, pure, ideal religion. Or, that there is an inherent difference between the kind of heart faith intended in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

It simply is not true that the Jews, on the one hand, represented a religious tradition in which there never had been any basic component of grace and faith, while the Greeks represented a completely new and genuine grasp of both grace and faith.

True, both Paul and the author of Hebrews make many statements comparing a true walk of faith to a sterile legalism. However, that kind of a comparison can be made within every single emergence of a new combination of faith and culture. All forms of Jewish and Christian culture embody both nominal and spiritual followers.

The new, stupendous reality in the New Testament was not the sudden invention of grace and faith, and a passing from a defunct religion of works to a religion of spiritual reality, but the appearance of God Himself in the person of Jesus, who lifted the reality of God from the pages of scripture and literally acted out the will of God. In the face of Jesus, we see the glory of God the Father. This was an absolutely and totally unique gift to both Jews and Gentiles. Note that the name of Jesus is blasphemously employed today by some of the very same people who are supposedly part of the new religious tradition, while it is cautiously on the lips of some of the people who are supposedly part of the old religious tradition.

Thus, as zealous as we wish to be in getting people to (as we say) "accept" Jesus Christ as their Savior, in the last analysis we must recognize that no process through which we lead people, emotional or intellectual, can be an infallible test of the true heart-faith which the Bible constantly emphasizes.

Our lack of infallible criteria is frankly as inconvenient as it is embarrassing. But that lack is apparently as God intended, as we read in the Parable of the Tares. However, the common tendency is for those in one composite of faith and culture to exclude those of all other composites, all other forms, and often earnestly to do so, because for us as humans there does not seem to be any other way to separate the sheep from the goats, even though in the Bible that kind of separation is clearly in God's hands.

When any of us adopts one of these re-clothings of the faith we must relentlessly resist the temptation to overly exalt our own culturally wrapped Gospel and be unable to see the validity of any other form. I will never forget in my seminary days how offended mainland Chinese believers were by the practice in the USA of passing an offering plate in front of each person. They do it differently (at the front door). I was surprised by my own surprise at their surprise!

We all know how many different forms of the faith are swirling around in the United States, and some of the adherents of each one probably think all others are invalid.

There was a time when some Pentecostals insisted that speaking in tongues was an indelible evidence of salvation. Earlier for some pre-pentecostal Evangelicals there was a similar insistence on the necessity for salvation of what has been called "a second work of grace," quoting the verse "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14), equating one of their evangelistic protocols with the meaning of the word "holiness" in this verse.

Probably the most wide-spread breakdown of understanding is the lateral kind of shift, whether in Paul's day, Luther's day, or in India today with those who see things as does the Missouri-Synod Lutheran theologian/missionary, Herbert Hoefer. This movement of millions of believers in India, who retain much of their Hindu culture, is scorned and denounced—expectedly—by both some Western Christians in America and in India by many who are followers of Christ in a Westernized form of faith. Similar breakdowns of understanding can be seen in attitudes toward some of the African movements that are not tracking with Western Christianity. There are now in Africa more than 50 million in this category.

We should not be surprised when after 400 years Protestants and Catholics are still confused over the difficulty of distinguishing between the faith that works and the works of faith. Will we ever accept the simple Biblical statement that "faith without works is dead"? There has always been common ground between true believers in both

Catholic and Protestant camps. The unmodifiable sticking point then and now is the divergence of the two cultures, Mediterranean and German. In Romans 1:5 Paul spoke of bringing about "the obedience of faith" among all Gentiles. It is as though the Protestants accused the Catholics of believing in obedience without faith while the Catholics felt the Protestants were promoting faith without obedience. These are the kinds of theological fine points which lateral shifts often involve.

On the one hand, for Luther there was the unavoidable chasm between the best German spirituality and the worst of the city of Rome's carnal, commercialization of religion plus its cultural stress on celibacy. On the other hand, for the highly spiritual Catholic NT scholar Johan Staupitz, whose fervent preaching on the Pauline epistles jerked Luther out of spiritual depression, there would have been an unavoidable chasm between the best of Roman spirituality and the worst of German nominalism plus the "carnal" desire of German priests to marry.

What was not the case in Luther's day was the of- ten mentioned issue of supposed restrictions on the vernacular translation of the Bible. Luther's superb translation was the 14th full Bible to be translated into German from the Latin, and the previous versions were all done during the previous era of Roman Catholicism in Germany.

Then, as now, it is the obvious Biblical emphasis on faith not culture which is the great enemy of those who wish to canonize a particular type of Christianity.

As we reflect in this lesson on the enormous significance of the New Beginning portrayed in Paul's ministry, a lateral shift from Jew to Greek, we must ruefully acknowledge at the same time that the many diachronic shifts in our precious Bible cause lots of problems for merely religious people whether they shift or not!

Lecture 9

The Emerging, Expanding Church

In our previous lesson we saw the firm reality, and also the complexity, of a new beginning, a new tradition of Biblical faith through a lateral shift from Semitic to Greek and Latin cultures. We noted the same kind of a confusing shift later on between the Mediterranean sphere and the Germanic sphere, in the Reformation. We pointed out the contemporary shift away from Western culture into the intricacies of African, Indian and Chinese cultures. In this lesson our concern is to see how well this New Testament lateral shift both survived and expanded in totally unexpected ways in the next few centuries.

Our first observation should be to recall that this shift really was not entirely sudden. It surfaced like a delayed-action fuse. It had been in the making for centuries before the birth of Jesus or Paul. At the time the Pauline letters were being written, literally thousands of Jewish synagogues had already been sprinkled throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Even more significant was the amazing and gratifying fact that the faith and faithfulness of these far-flung Jewish communities of what is called "the Jewish diaspora"— the Jewish Dispersion—was so real and had such integrity that it had already attracted two kinds of Gentiles:

1) Proselytes—perhaps as many as 100,000 individuals of Gentile background who had gone the whole way in adopting Jewish culture and faith, and

2) God-Fearers— perhaps a million who at least attended the Jewish synagogues, to hear the scriptures and to enter into worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Much of this could not even have occurred had not what we think of today as the "Old Testament" been in the Greek language. In at least the East end of the Mediterranean, including Palestine, the Greek Bible, the Septuagint, had become common. In Greek areas Synagogues were able to attract and maintain Greek God-Fearers precisely because of the existence of the Septuagint.

Thus, all this was a massive head start, which Christian historians have usually been loath to give its proper place. They sometimes have allowed the impression that Gentiles gained nothing and had nothing to gain from Jewish believers.

The divergence of the faith, even faith in Jesus Christ, between Jewish and Greek cultures can be seen in Romans 14, where Paul courteously cautions Greek believers against belittling the Jewish customs of the Jewish believers in Jesus. Paul himself, a bicultural of both Jewish and Greek culture, firmly believed, as he said in Romans 1:16, that the Gospel he preached had the power of salvation for both Jew and Gentile, but you have to wonder (after reading Romans 14) how many others truly believed that.

A tragic element also enters in. The Jews had fought and struggled to attain special favor and you might say, license, to pursue much of their own religion within the

Empire. When Gentile groups began to form, it is apparently true that Jews sometimes called upon Roman authorities not to extend that same license to these new groups, within which there may not have been any Jews at all.

This could have led to persecution and even death of the early Gentile followers of Christ, and naturally, to the widening of the divergence between the two faith traditions. In the process thousands of Jewish followers of Christ became seen as more Jewish than followers of Christ. Before long, perhaps in a single generation, it became easier for the Jewish followers of Christ to identify with Jews rather than Gentiles.

As the rift widened and deepened, both sides began to think ill of the other, and Christian history is full of terrible evils inflicted upon communities of Jews throughout the Mediterranean and middle Europe. To the Jews, the word "Jesus" became associated with their persecutors.

Meanwhile, despite sporadic persecution, the initially substantial "God-Fearer" population expanded. Civil authorities began to identify them with the sneer- word, "Messiah Nuts" which is something like what the word "Christian" meant.

The testimony of daily life of Jews carried some of them into marriage with emperors. Now, in the same way, the integrity of life of the followers of Christ gained them respect. In one instance, in particular, one of two sub-caesars, Constantius, married a woman who had grown up in the East where Christianity was far more widespread. It is possible that this kind of Christian influence caused him to refuse to implement the terrible decade of the Diocletian persecutions in his area of Western Europe including the British Isles. He sent his son Constantine as a formal hostage to grow up in the East under the watchful eye of the other Caesar, to ensure good relations.

Constantine grew up to inherit his father's role and eventually became the sole caesar, ruling favorably to Christianity for 45 years, early moving the seat of empire to the new city called Constantinople, today Istanbul. These 45 years, plus the rest of the 4th century in general, are the amazing window we have into early Christianity. This is when Eusebius was commissioned to collect documents and information about the first three centuries, and compose his mammoth multivolume study, apart from which we would know very little. It was this window which allowed the canon of the New Testament to become established. This is the period of the empire-wide Nicene Council and the resulting Nicene Creed.

After Constantine (called Constantine the Great) died, a younger relation, Julian, soon became an anti-Chris- tian emperor. He did not make much headway in turning the clock back, and died prematurely fighting the Persians. Christianity then returned, became the official religion of the empire, with no further major threats.

No further threats to the identification of the Empire with so-called Christianity, but a huge destabilizing element loomed from the East. Oriental peoples from the steps of Asia moved in on Visigoths and Goths north of Rome and Constantinople. This pushed the lightly Christianized Visigoths across the boundaries of the empire, temporarily. They were condescended to and mistreated and eventually seized Rome in 410 AD under Alaric. The occupation of Rome was relatively nondestructive, due to the fact that the Visigoths were somewhat Christian, did not burn the churches, respected women, did not harm those who did not op- pose them.

Rome in the West had already yielded much of its glory to the New Rome of Constantinople, but after 410 was never on a par. Gothic rule was turbulent and within a

third of a century, was further depressed when the Huns almost entered the city, in 446 AD, a date which scholars centuries later began to think of as "The Dark Ages," even though the centuries that followed were in fact the "Light Ages" for the tribal peoples to the North. Actually few scholars today think that the Dark Ages terminology is helpful. It was an invention of the 15th Century Renaissance.

Thus, from the rise of Constantine in the West until the fall of Rome to Alaric in 410 AD we have roughly a hundred-year window during which most of what we know about early Christianity either happened or was recorded. Eusebius the official historian, Jerome, translator of the whole Bible into Latin, Augustine, the most influential theologian of all time, even Pelagius, long misunderstood, unfairly blamed for "Pelagianism," were all in this century.

Because of Eusebius we have the ten-volume Ante- Nicene Fathers, referring to the centuries prior to the Council of Nicea. Thanks to Eusebius we know of people like Clement of Rome, Mathetes, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, in Volume II, people like Hermas, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria. In Volume III- VI, Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus; Cyprian; Caius; Novatian, Gregory Thaumaturgus; Dinoysius the Great; Julius Africanus; Anatolius and Minor Writers; Methodius; Arnobius.

From Volume VII on we encounter fathers of the third and fourth centuries, as well as whole documents such as The Gospel of Peter, The Diatessaron of Tatian, The Apocalypse of Peter, The Visio Pauli, The Apocalypses of the Virgin and Sedrach, The Testament of Abraham, The Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, The Narrative of Zosimus, The Apology of Aristides, The Epistles of Clement (Complete Text), Origen's Commentary on John, Books I-X, Origen's Commentary on Matthew, etc.

Others have emulated Eusebius and added the so- called Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, the first series of 14 volumes contains mainly works produced or brought together by Augustine and Chrysostom. A second series of 14 volumes of additional materials relate to both before and after the Nicene Council.

This, of course, is all "printed page." Much that we will never know we must simply work like detectives to try to understand.

For example, we will never know in this life the details of the earlier centuries of the many different varieties of the faith, nor can we know the whole picture after Constantine came into the picture because what we do know was highly influenced by political factors.

That Constantine gave close attention to the unity and growth of Christianity during 45 years of relative peace over which he presided we cannot doubt. That, like an earlier Napoleon, he was not just a general but paid close attention to civic affairs, presiding over the massive shift of the seat of empire from Rome to a new city that he named Constantinople, we cannot doubt. That in leaving he decided to turn over the Lateran Palace (the White House of his day) to the Christian leaders in Rome, we do know. That, after he died, the brief three years when Julian tried to re-establish earlier religion fizzled because the former priestly tradition had no idea of mercy and good works, we do know.

We also know that massive changes took place in the very form of the faith. In New Testament times, as with the Jews (and today's Mormons) the faith was primarily a shared experience in the household. The captivity had ended what temple-centric faith

had developed, and the Deuteronomic focus on the family flourished. Built on the minimum basis of ten heads of family, Synagogues also were invented in captivity and survived and spread far and wide.

As Jewish faith was taken over by people of Greek culture, who had temples, the believers in Jesus as Messiah and King did not go near the pagan temples but maintained their faith almost entirely at the household level. Unfortunately, the Greek word for household gathering (ecclesia) is routinely translated in English as "church" which goes back to "Kirk" which goes back to the Greek word "Kyriacon" which means temple. Today when we go to church or see a church burning down we assume that we are talking about a building.

But, all this is greatly due to the fact that under Constantine the believers could come out of the catacombs, could get together for more reasons than weddings and funerals, could even use the formerly pagan temples, and enjoy a government dole for their pastors. This remarkable transformation is perhaps the only thing that could have happened when the whole empire went Christian, and many good things came of it.

However, bad things also resulted. The Mennonites, who for many decades found no government friendly to them, have generally interpreted the transformation under the well-meaning Constantine as Constantinianism, or simply "The Fall of the Church." They rightly fear the faith becoming official. Unfortunately, their own experience down through history seems very parallel because their communities, mainly perpetuated biologically, have routinely incorporated their own children whether or not they are heart believers. The resulting "official" faith for them has been inadvertently what could be called a "tribal constantinianism." In an attempt to forestall that process, one branch of the Mennonites, called Hutterites, require their young people to live outside their communities for a year to make sure they want to come back.

Another bad thing that happened was the identification of Christianity with the Roman Imperial power. Samuel Moffett, in his authoritative Christianity in Asia, points out that in lands bordering the Roman sphere, like Persia (Iran) once Rome became Christian, anyone who professed the Christian faith was suspect of being sympathetic to their enemy, Rome. As a result, when that happened, more Christians were killed for their faith than during all of the previous centuries under sporadic Roman persecution.

In far more ways than we may realize our Christianity is part and parcel of the Roman cultural tradition— from the wearing of wedding rings and throwing rice at weddings to the celebration of Jesus' birthday (which was probably in June) on the day of the annual Roman Saturnalia, celebrating Saturn including the giving of gifts. In later lessons we will see many other cultural traditions from later centuries woven into "Christianity" which do not at all derive from the Bible, including, of course, the assumption that to become a follower of Christ means automatically taking on and taking over the Roman form of Biblical faith which is called becoming a "Christian." We easily forget that no one in the NT called himself a "Christian" even though that sneer word was employed by outsiders for certain believers.

We certainly can appreciate the immense social and intellectual investment which is represented by the Christian tradition. At the same time, as we shall see, certain elements that became incorporated along the way clearly misrepresent the Bible. We may easily deplore some of Constantine's actions but it would be hard to imagine how history would have been rewritten if one of the largest and most powerful empires in human

history, definitely superior to most others in those days and earlier, had not embraced the faith to the extent it did.

Both before and after the window century from 310 to 410 AD, grim conditions and chaos were more than likely the order of the day. This blessed incubation period allowed a movement to begin that all of the subsequent tribal invasions could not obliterate. Especially durable as understood by Mark Noll, professor of history at Wheaton, was the development of the monastic study/work centers. Of that development he says (contrary to much Protestant thinking):

> The rise of monasticism was, after Christ's commission to His disciples, the most important—and in many ways the most beneficial—institutional event in the history of Christianity (*Turning Points in Christian History*, p. 84).

Indeed, apart from the work of these so-called order structures, very little happened in Christian history until Protestants invented their own equivalent in the form of the many globe-girdling Protestant mission societies.

Of that story we will inevitably hear much more in our later lessons.

Lecture 10

The Classical Renaissance

The first 400 years AD are a glorious interplay of dynamism and diversity. At the same time, we can look back and see how predictable the different main views were. Finally, we can see amazing parallels today to the main perspectives then. This is a truly rich and significant period to study.

However, my first duty in this lesson is to make clear that the very title, Classical Renaissance, is my own invention. I don't know of anyone else who has dared to employ this phrase in the way I do. The obvious danger is that the phrase, Classical Renaissance, may lead people to assume I refer to The Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries, which, in fact, was, in part, a "rebirth" of interest in the Roman/Greek classical world.

In this case I am drawing attention to the original "classical" renaissance—the 4th century itself. After all, the word "renaissance" is, like most words, not under lock and key and is employed in many other ways. As I have studied the development of Western civilization, I have noticed through the centuries what I first thought I might call various "flourishings" of peace and quiet and faith. Later I boldly decided to call all of them "renaissances," using the word in a more general sense.

Specifically, I have found reason to think of five renaissances in the last two thousand years of Western history. After identifying these five "flourishings" or "renaissances" I noticed that in four out of five of the cases others had already employed the word renaissance!

I also found that if you utilize a grid of five four-hundred-year periods, 0 AD to 400, to 800, to 1200, to 1600, to 2000, you will find that the five renaissances fall in the latter part of each period:

1. 300–400, The Classical Renaissance
2. 700–800, The Carolingian Renaissance
3. 1100–1200, The Twelfth-Century Renaissance
4. 1500–1600, THE Renaissance
5. 1700–2000, The Evangelical Renaissance

Each of these epochs or pulses is described in some detail in my article in the Perspectives Reader, entitled "The Kingdom Strikes Back," where I have a diagram which shows the essential parallel of these five renaissances to the "pulses" Latourette describes.

Notice that the flourishing portion of the most recent 400-year period started earlier than just the last century of that final four-century period, that is not about 1900 but about 1800. Actually, in each of the five epochs the renaissance begins a little earlier each time, and is a bit stronger. By the fifth it is almost an explosion by contrast.

Just in general, this 400-year breakdown is intended to be an impartial grid and basically means no more for the structure of history than 100-year centuries. No one

pretends that history falls precisely into either 100 or 400-year periods. I feel it is helpful to use such a grid to which to tie things. That seems easier than to track 40 centuries!

Thus, even though there are some things (these renaissances) which seem roughly to coincide with 400-year periods, other very significant things don't seem to pay attention to that grid, such as the doings of the Celtic Christian movement or the rise of Islam.

One other thought is that many of these periods begin in chaos or persecution. Roman government crackdowns in the first 400 years, Gothic and Saxon invasions in the second 400 years, Viking invasions in the third 400 years, for example.

However, in this lesson we focus on the 4th century and our first, "Classical Renaissance." In our last lesson we already pointed out the lifting of persecution under Constantine and the scholarly work that followed. There was also scholarly work needing to be opposed. Indeed, Eusebius brought together documents which were themselves critiques of opposition to some earlier streams.

Probably the most formidable opponent of standard Christianity was associated very early with a wealthy businessman, eventually a Bishop, named Marcion. His reaction to the Bible was to embrace just the Pauline message and ignore anything that was appreciative of earlier Hebrew faith. Consequently, he threw out the whole OT and most of the New—anything which seemed more Hebrew than Greek. For him Paul's religion "superceded" that of the Jews. He was thus the first "supercessionist" in understanding the church to replace the Jewish tradition, not merely inherit the Jewish faith as enriched by the ministry of Jesus.

His perspective was a predictable conclusion, and his kind of ethnocentrism bedevils us to this day whenever we find it difficult to figure out how the Biblical faith could be transferred from one earthen vessel to another.

For example, some may puzzle over the question of how any Hebrew before Christ could ever have been "born again," or how any Catholic before Luther could be born again, or how any Lutheran before the Evangelical Awakening could be born again, or how any Evangelical before the Charismatic movement could be born again, or how any Charismatic before the emergence of a house church movement in China could really be born again, etc.

Marcionism, ancient or modern, represents the inability to see one's faith clothed in unfamiliar garments, customs other than one's own.

Marcion, himself no doubt a dedicated believer, accomplished (accidentally) one good thing: scholars believe his drastic abandonment of treasured documents actually assisted in the process of firming up the "Canon" —that is, a list of approved NT documents. The LXX had already firmed up what we call (misleadingly) the Old Testament, but Marcion's influence may have speeded up the formation of what we call (misleadingly) the New Testament. Note that I think it would be better for us to speak of the Bible, Part I and Part II.

Marcion's fairly strong following may have survived to some extent in another major divergence just a little later, namely, Manichaeism. Mani carried the Zoroastrian full-blown dualism (both a good and a bad god) into Christianity, in a very strong movement into which the famous 4th-century theologian, Augustine, first became a believer. After a number of years in the Manichaean stream Augustine abandoned it and

then tended toward the neo-platonic concept in which all evil is the mysterious work of the one good God.

Augustine's pendulum swing has defined what some scholars regard as a long-standing syncretistic element in Christianity of the West. This resulted in only a vague idea of Satan. It talks of Satan being completely defeated at the Cross and no longer "walking around as a lion seeking whom he may devour" —even though the latter phrase was penned by Peter after the Cross.

Another ancient perspective we have inherited is the idea we call the heresy of Pelagianism. Although none of the writings of either Marcion or Pelagius survive (only criticisms by their opponents), our understanding of Marcion may be more correct than our view of Pelagius. Latourette felt it necessary to suggest that Pelagius probably was not a Pelagian but only a "semi-pelagian."

Similarly we can note that many other ancients are popularly misunderstood. That is, the Stoics were not stoical, the Epicureans did not have epicurean tastes— any more than Calvin's thinking was equivalent to Dutch Calvinism or the Puritans were puritanical.

There are, in fact, many features of Western Christianity that do not derive from the Bible and at the same time there are many features of the Bible that have not properly survived in Western Christianity. The phrases "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven," which occur 98 times in the New Testament, do not appear at all in the early creeds. Presumably Constantine did not warm up to the idea that there was any other kingdom besides his. Even the Cross as a symbol was not in use in the first 300 years.

In other words, every cultural vehicle of faith in history is in part an earthen pot in which the glory of God is carried, our own form of faith included.

It is commonly assumed that the doctrine of the Trinity was always held by Christians, but for over half a century an alternate perspective (named after Bishop Arius—*Arianism*) was the official creed of Roman Christendom. And, admittedly there has been some real Biblical truth in Arianism, Marcionism, Manichaeism, Augustinianism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, even Islam. Some of these are better than others. None is perfect.

Fortunately, God judges us by the heart and not just by our heads, and much less by our labels. Donald McGavran is famous for saying of the huge African phenomenon of marginal sects (52 million and over 10,000 denominations) that "It does not matter what they believe for now if they just keep on studying the Bible."

In any case, the final, flourishing fourth century involved significant changes. Followers of Christ were now finally forced politically to accept for themselves the label Christians, even though no one in the New Testament ever called himself a Christian— the word in the NT was used merely as an outsider's sneering label for Christ's followers, something like "Messiah Nut."

The fourth century was when, in Rodney Stark's words, two different forms of Christianity emerged and di- verged, the Church of Power and the Church of Piety. The Church of Power phrase refers to the public and official activities which were partially funded by the Roman government, and which eventually included all Roman citizens whether they individually were believers or not. The latter, the Church of Piety, refers to the highly selective and elite small communities ("orders") of "monks" who wanted to be more fully faithful than was required by public morality.

The “orders” proved to be a great blessing to Western Christianity. They maintained libraries, made copies of books, both Christian and secular. Apart from their labors only four manuscripts exist from the period of the Roman empire. Lynn White, Jr., UCLA’s famous medieval scholar said that apart from the orders’ literary endeavors we would know no more about the Roman empire today than we know about the ancient (and apparently brilliant) Georgian empire. These monks who sang their way through the Psalms each week were, in White’s words, “The first intellectuals to get dirt under their fingernails.”

But in the relatively brief fourth century, the Roman Church of Power is not known for sending missionaries beyond its borders. They did exile “heretics” such as Arian leaders whose faith after 60 years was rejected and was picked up among the Gothic tribes. This unintended mission effort explains in great part the fact that when masses of tribal (“barbarian”) peoples later invaded the empire they represented a “heretical” version of the faith and for that reason were at least relatively gentle invaders. They did not molest the women, and they kept their word. Some Roman aristocrats said they were more Christian than the Romans.

Ironically, the so-called “Fall” of the Roman empire is usually pegged simply as the overrunning of the Roman (what is now the Italian) peninsula. There were, however, two quite positive factors in that unprecedented event.

First, it marked the achievement of significant military skills on the part of the tribal peoples north of the empire (middle Europe) who had for many decades been rotated in and out of the Roman legions.

Second, the prime mover of the decline of Rome in the West was the pressure of the Huns invading Europe from the steppes of Asia. They pushed the mildly Christianized Gothic tribal peoples into Empire territory, Alaric finally invading Rome itself in 410. The Huns themselves arrived at the Roman gates forty years later. By that time the actual seat of the Roman empire was no longer the city of Rome but the city of Constantinople (today’s Istanbul), a significant move which had been made over a hundred years earlier.

By the end of the Fourth Century, while the Gothic tribes were only superficially Christian, the faith had also penetrated the Celtic parts of Europe in a much more serious form and remarkably early had resulted in advanced scholarship. In our next lesson we will go further with the remarkable Celtic movement to Christ.

Here, at the very end of the fourth century Pelagius, already mentioned, is graphic testimony to the advanced Biblical scholarship already the case among the Celtic peoples.

Pelagius was so advanced he was an embarrassment to Latin scholars, such as Augustine. Yet, because he came from an ethnic background generally despised in both the Latin and Greek worlds they did not feel they could learn from him or agree with him. His native language was within the Celtic sphere, yet he arrived in Rome with a command of both Latin, Greek and Hebrew when most of the Latin scholars, such as Augustine, knew only Latin. Considerable commotion ensued. Doctrines for which he was blamed were condemned (he was too optimistic about the human will). But in a number of face-to-face trials he was able to defend himself successfully, especially at the Eastern Greek-speaking end of the empire where his Latin accusers who followed his tracks had to work through translators, unlike Pelagius. Most of the differences between the two parties we would call semantic. It is probable that people like Jerome, who

considered the Celtic peoples “pigs,” felt they had to arrive at some sort of formal rejection of the insights of Pelagius.

In any case, Pelagius stands as a durable example of the surprisingly advanced Biblical scholarship which existed by the year 400 among some of the Celtic tribal, head-hunting people into whose midst the faith of

the Bible had gained a deep and permanent foothold. In our next lesson we will see how their grounding in the Bible allowed them to “re-evangelize” what we call England after the Anglo-Saxon invasions had encompassed all of the southern part, and how they contributed very significantly in the renaissance of Christian faith which occurred at the end of the next period. It is, in fact, difficult to imagine how the Christian tradition in the West would have survived without the help of these Celtic “mission field believers.”

Curiously, the fall of Roman power in the West after 400 AD precisely allowed the faith to spread beyond former Roman borders, while the continued military power of Rome in the East, due to its identification officially with Christianity, worked to prevent the spread of the faith beyond the limits of the Empire there. This helps to explain why Islam arose originally in opposition to Rome but not to the Biblical faith which they tried to gain from Christians we would call very defective in their understanding.

I believe we can see a parallel between the unfettered rise of Christianity in Western Europe following the decline of Rome in the West, and the continued and similarly accelerated spread of Christianity in the colonial world today ever since the colonial powers in modern times rather suddenly pulled back following World War II.

We will see in the next few lessons that in Western Europe even the Latin version of Biblical faith— despite being considered a universal faith centered in Rome— eventually gave way to many different cultural versions of the faith both before and after the events surrounding the tumultuous “Protestant Reformation.”

Lecture 11

The Carolingian Renaissance

The period from 400 to 800 AD does not merely begin in chaos and end in a renaissance of faith in a new cultural basin. It does that, and in that sense it is parallel to the other 400-year periods. However, two major events do not fit that pattern: the steady rise of Celtic Christianity even early in the period, and the competitive rise of Islam toward the end.

The most significant thing in any case is the rise of the "barbarians" themselves and their conversion by the end of the period. By "barbarians," in this context, reference is made to the mainly Gothic peoples. They were forced by the terror of the Huns pressing in from the East to invade and eventually conquer the city of Rome, which had been the seat of the Empire until Constantine moved it to what is present-day Istanbul in Turkey.

The barbaric invasions are commonly associated with the fall of Rome. They at least caused the fall of the city of Rome. They were not really the end of the Empire since the seat of Empire had long since been transferred to Constantinople and the empire continued with vigor for centuries—even if biased Western scholars have generally renamed the eastern continuation the Byzantine empire.

Furthermore, the fall of the city was not uncontested. The continuing empire sent army after army to recover it during a century-long warring seesaw that reduced the population of the Italian peninsula by 90 percent. The seriousness of that conflict can be seen if compared to the ten-year seesaw of the Vietnam war during which the population of both the North and South did not diminish but doubled.

Also, the new owners of the city of Rome were at least partially Christianized "barbarians." They attempted seriously to continue the functions of the western half of the empire. They soon adopted Catholic theology over against their previous Arian theology. The Benedictine movement proceeded to move north, establishing monastic centers and taking over former Celtic outposts, making about 800 monastic centers in total—centers of literacy, art, the maintenance of Roman technology and science.

In any case, the collapse of Roman military power in the West allowed remaining "real" barbarians, the Germanic Angles, Saxons and Frisians, to pounce into southern England as the Roman legions began to withdraw to defend their eastern borders around 440 AD. Later called Anglo-Saxons, these invaders, too, were eventually converted, first by the Celtic Christians they displaced and later, and gradually, to the outward formalities of the Roman version of Christianity.

Even today, the Anglican archbishop of York (in the north) wears the characteristically Eastern Orthodox vestments (Celtic Christianity came from the eastern end of the empire) while the archbishop of Canterbury (in the south) wears Roman garments. Not for another 1000 years did the Celtic Irish fully embrace Rome. When that

happened it was their way of maintaining a cultural distance from the hated Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere in England, which had just recently broken with Rome (under Henry VIII).

Meanwhile, during the entire 400–800 AD period, the "mission-field Christians" of the Celtic sphere possessed the most advanced scholarship of the Christian tradition, and in a significant sense "saved civilization" as Thomas Cahill's book puts it.

But this is not the way the Roman tradition has even wanted things to be described. We saw in the last lesson how the advanced scholarship of the Celtic movement was manifested in the person of Pelagius as early as 380 AD. As late as the very end of our period Charlemagne needed over 3,000 Celtic teachers for schools on the continent.

What has been said to be history's most detailed artwork is to be seen in the Celtic practice of "illuminating" Biblical manuscripts out of reverence for their content. The "Book of Kells" is today perhaps the world's most valuable piece of art.

The Celtic movement is famous for its austere penalties (remedies) for sinful conduct. These were contained in a substantial book which had a remedy, often fearsome, for everything from pride to adultery. This feature of their version of the faith impressed the Romans and became the so-called "the Roman confessional."

Their divergent haircut ("tonsure") was never claimed by the Roman church, but "the Roman collar" was originally Celtic just as was the entire lower-case set of letters in the so-called "Roman alphabet," which we employ to this day.

From the perspective of missions, one of the most illuminating events in the entire period was the outcome of the eagerness of the Roman tradition to move north in Britain and thus seek to "convert" the Celtic movement to Latin Christian customs and dates. This was, in effect, the belated attempt for the Roman party to force a mission-field movement to accept the culture of the Mediterranean missionaries.

But to do this was inherently difficult. The Celtic movement was well established, as already noted. Many things were different between eastern and western Mediterranean Christianities, that is, Greek and Latin. It would have been easier to forge a bond between Greek Christianity and its derivative Celtic version. The Latin vs. Celtic divide ran superficially from differences of tonsure to differences of their Easter date, but much more profound were the basic differences of radically different language and culture, and even worse, the differences of invaded and invaders—Celtic and Anglo-Saxon.

Popular lore, especially in the Roman tradition, has it that this whole tension was resolved by the Synod of Whitby, a forest gathering of both Roman and Celtic leaders convened by Wilfred in about 663 AD. But in fact it was by no means actually resolved. Bede's description of that meeting over a century later loyally reports the Roman customs gaining acceptance, but even more than a century later you can tell that Bede felt that the Roman emissaries were haughty while the Celtic leaders were humble and that it was a superficial victory.

In actual fact a truly significant chain of events took place, not unlike the wisdom of the Jerusalem council in choosing the bicultural Barnabas to go to Antioch. Rome in an impressive stroke of wisdom found a new man, Theodore, to be archbishop of the Anglo-Saxon Christians. He was a bicultural who hailed from Tarsus in the East but who happened to be loyal to Rome. After delaying three months in Rome to allow his hair to

grow out in the Latin way, he was sent off to England at the age of 66 to see what he could do with the irreconcilability of the two forms of Christianity.

Augustine of Canterbury (not to be mistaken for the North African bishop, Augustine of Hippo, the influential theologian) apparently did not have the missiological and contextualizing insights of his superior, Pope Gregory the Great, and thus had not laid a foundation (six decades earlier) which was conducive to yielding to Celtic culture. His assumption was that since there was "one baptism" there should be oneness of customs as well.

Wilfred, who had pushed for the Synod of Whitby and its pro forma decision for the Roman way, was, by the time Theodore arrived, bishop of a huge territory. Theodore chopped it into four, incurred the wrath of the much younger Wilfred whose opposition to Theodore resulted in Wilfred's expulsion from Britain more than once. Theodore's logic was to recognize monastic centers more than municipal boundaries so as to harmonize both Celtic and Roman customs.

A second, Theodore-sponsored synod, convened in about 668 AD, actually accomplished much of that for which Whitby is noted. Theodore's influence was secured partly by the fact that, although he began his post at 66, he held it for more than twenty years. Intelligent, decisive, and insightful, his role both highlights the never-quite re-solved divergence of two cultures but also the very real flexibilities of compromise. Today, well over a thousand years later, the phrase "first among equals" may derive from the fact that of the two archbishops of the Anglican Church, York and Canterbury, the latter is said to be the first among equals.

It is interesting that while the Celtic and Roman spheres were miles apart culturally, the differences never led to the massive military collision we see a few years later as Islamic armies crossed over the Pyrenees with a view of converting all of Europe to Islam.

In this picture we see three different "earthen vessels" in which the treasure of true faith is carried, the Latin Roman, the Celtic, and the Semitic (Islam). All lean back to some extent on the Bible. Using different words, they nevertheless all recognized the same God. The Islamic movement represented a culture in which plural marriage was acceptable but not homosexuality. The Greek and Roman were the opposite. The Islamic inherited far more of the advanced civilization of Rome than remained in the western Mediterranean once overrun by the Goths. But in its early days it inherited a distinctly defective form of Christianity and only parts of the Bible. The Celtic scholars were advanced in Biblical studies but far removed from the sophistication of the Mediterranean. Of the three, Islam's chief drawback was less contact with the Bible.

All are flawed, and their cultures are all very different from one another. What we see is clearly a recipe for misunderstanding and mutual opposition, but at the same time the very possibility of our faith being carried in quite different "earthen vessels" shines through giving Christianity (and to a less extent Islam) today unique advantages over all other major religions.

By contrast, when people within any tradition propose that their own earthen vessel over all others should command the stage, then that very advantage is lost. Thus, when people speak of the extinction of the Christian church in North Africa that way of saying it does not make clear that for most of the constituents it was simply a case of exchanging an ill-fitting (and dangerous) Roman garment for a safer and more readily

fitting Semitic garment. The New Testament presents the lateral shifting of the faith from one culture to another. There was nothing inherently contrary to that New Testament process in the fact that Mohammed founded a culturally Semitic tradition. There was nothing wrong in the use of Arabic or praying to Allah, or praying five times a day or belief in the virgin birth of Jesus. Actually all those things Mohammed borrowed from the Christians. Arabic Christians were praying to Allah for 500 years before Mohammed was born. Today around the world there are 30 million Christians who still pray to Allah and see the same word in their printed Bibles.

What was profoundly unfortunate in the case of Islam is that the Christians with whom Mohammed was in contact possessed only parts of the Bible, and, in fact, had a faulty view of the Trinity (which he rightly rejected).

The Qur'an is at least as deficient as the Book of Mormon, even though many have been led to Christ by reading the Qur'an. Worse still are the additional and later writings and traditions. Much of the things that are objectionable in Islam developed either later than Mohammed or are merely features of Arabic culture, in the same way as much of Christianity cannot blamed on the Bible and developed later, or merely represents Mediterranean culture (such as celibacy and homosexuality).

It would be alarming if the faith had been watered down when it went into Greek culture, further diluted going on into Latin culture, further still when it was passed on to German culture, and so on. However, the consistent remedy for that kind of watering down is that eventually each new cultural group replaces the missionary version of the message with knowledge gained directly from the Bible itself. All church movements thus should eventually have direct access to the Bible.

For example, in the 400 to 800 AD period the Celtic movement did have direct, serious contact with the Bible, while Muslims did not. Today, Muslims still primarily need contact with the Bible. Urging them to "accept Christ" and call themselves "Christians" is not good enough. The name change is not even necessary while effective contact with the Bible is.

In the first volume of Winston Churchill's four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, he makes the comment that in the eighth century settled Europe was subjected to "two smashing, external assaults."

He referred to the huge army of the Saracen Muslims which crossed the Pyrenees from Spain into today's France, and was barely defeated in 732 at the Battle of Tours in south France. He also referred to a far worse onslaught from the north—the "Norsemen"—the Vikings—pouring into middle Europe from today's Scandinavia for 250 years. But that second assault falls into the 800 to 1200 AD period.

The most permanent "assault" upon the Gothic sphere was the quiet, non-military infiltration of first Celtic and then Benedictine centers—the 800-some centers mentioned earlier. These centers were the result of a peculiar phenomenon called monasticism in which unmarried men, forsaking marriage (yielding to the Mediterranean respect for celibacy) banded together for various reasons: devotion to Christ, safety and security, evangelism, and in a turbulent age, the desire to preserve Roman literature and technology.

Perhaps their most significant characteristic was their high respect for the Bible. They copied it painstakingly, sang their way through the Psalms each week, and made it

the focus of their existence. Were it not for these devout and energetic centers we would know next to nothing today about either the Roman empire or the Bible.

Other than those documents copied and handed down in these monastic centers only four manuscripts survive from Roman times. Today, virtually all of the major cities of Europe were once tiny points of light—just as cities in this country like Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, were once Moravian mission-established towns planted in the forests of North America.

You may hear these days what a mistake it was to plant "mission stations" and expect the people in surrounding areas to adapt to the implanted culture from afar. But that is what happened in many places. It did work. That is why the Latin language was the uniting language of Europe and America for so many centuries continuing even after the emergence of printing and the literary use of the vernaculars. Latin continued to be taught widely in American schools as late as the 1940s. It continues to be the uniting language of the Roman Catholic church.

Once the threat of the Roman legions was no longer the case, it is not surprising that the Roman language and culture of the Benedictine movement became the preferred pattern over the much more austere Celtic tradition, due to the long remembered prestige of the Roman empire. But note that Rome had to fall for its religion to spread, just as modern colonialism had to collapse for national churches to really grow. However, the extensive influence of Celtic Biblical sophistication cannot be overestimated.

It was the grandfather of Charlemagne that stopped the Muslim invasion of France. Charlemagne himself, according to some scholars, was the most influential ruler on earth for 1,000 years before and after his life. But, remember, he is the one who needed to bring 3,000 Celtic teachers into his realm to establish schools for common people. He is the one who adopted their orthography—called the "Celtic minuscule," which today forms our lower case alphabet (even though it's called Roman).

The final century of the 400 to 800 AD period well deserves the label scholars have given it: the Carolingian Renaissance. This is one of the chief reasons to abandon the later snobbery of the label "Dark Ages" after the fall of the western Roman sphere. The Carolingian Renaissance was the pinnacle of light and lift to the tribal, "barbarian" region of Europe. Too bad that much of it was to be destroyed by the Vikings. But that is the story of the next 800–1200 AD period.

Lecture 12

The Twelfth Century Renaissance

History is often portrayed in terms of names, dates and places. However, history can also be described in terms not of a huge number of individual people but a small number of ethnic peoples—which are successively caught up in a lengthy unfolding drama.

Within the overall story of this planet, the last 2,000 years is one of the most exciting periods to understand. It can be seen as a five-act play, each act lasting four hundred years, each act ending in a renaissance of sorts, each portraying the expansion of the Biblical Kingdom of God from one cultural basin to another, the third of those 400-year super-centuries being our focus in this lesson.

In this period, the main peoples in addition to the Scandinavian sphere which is being invaded by the Gospel, are the Jewish Semites in whose midst the Kingdom or Rule of God was present for many centuries. Then came the Romans, representing both the Greek and Latin spheres, in whose midst the Kingdom was highlighted in the first 400 years. Finally, there are the Gothic peoples in whose midst the kingdom began earlier but expanded greatly in the previous 400 years, which ended up with the pinnacle of the Carolingian Renaissance. Perhaps the most influential people were the Celts who figured strongly in the second act.

Expansion of the Kingdom took place less dramatically or less sustainably into Eastern Europe, east as far as China and the Philippines and as far south as Ethiopia. But the new major actor in this third act in the main stream of the expanding Kingdom are the peoples— Vikings—which today we call Scandinavians.

In this third of five acts, we see the story speeding up with decisive interaction between Latin Roman, Gothic, Celtic and Viking peoples.

By 800 AD, the advance north of Islam was stopped. Perhaps one reason is that the Muslim leaders, already conquerors of the Mediterranean high civilization, lacked interest in pushing further north into illiterate, “barbarian” territory.

In any case, by 800 the Gothic barbarians had definitely seen a great light. Now they had the towering figure of Charlemagne as their leader—godly, humble, scholarly—and hundreds if not thousands of schools for children were in place. The Celtic movement was in great shape. Charlemagne, and the continent, owe almost everything to it.

The most indigestible element on the continent was the relentless attacking of Charlemagne’s realm by Saxons still on the continent. Their brothers had earlier invaded Britain successfully and had become Christian to some extent. But the remainder on the continent were still pagan and very resistant. Charlemagne felt he had finally to deal very harshly with them, literally uprooting thousands and moving them way inland creating what today in Germany is called Saxony.

However, one other potentially disturbing factor was soon to appear. It is said that in the year 800, when Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the "Holy Roman Empire" down in Rome he looked out into the open sea and saw some Viking boats. Prophetically, he remarked that they were going to become a problem. And in our period in this lesson they certain did become a problem.

What Charlemagne did not know was that already, at that very moment, 800 AD, Lindisfarne, a major monastic outpost off the eastern shore of northern England had already been ruthlessly sacked and the monks killed. This was to happen 13 more times across the decades.

The relative peace and quiet and composure of Ireland, Scotland, England, and middle Europe was soon to be exploded, ravaged again and again for 250 years by these cruel pirates from further north. Medieval chroniclers spoke of dead bodies in every direction. The English prayer book contained for centuries the phrase, "from the fury of the north men, Oh Lord deliver us."

Their devastation was difficult to oppose because they came by sea. Most of the monastic centers had been well defended from land attack, often backed up to the sea from which, until the Vikings, there had been no threat. Now they were suddenly vulnerable.

Vikings would appear without warning, unlike the fast traveling word of the slow advance of an army on land, sometimes in small numbers, increasingly in large numbers. They came intermittently and then began to stay, exacting payments from those whom they permitted to survive. Their expanding territory in England was called the area of "Danegeld" (gold for the Danes) thinking they were all Danes.

They were repulsed eventually south of London, by figures such as Alfred the Great, a seriously believing Anglo-Saxon chieftain who even promoted the translation of key documents from the prevailing Latin into the Germanic tongue of the Anglo-Saxons.

By 900 AD things were at a low point. Hundreds of both Celtic and Benedictine monasteries had been destroyed. Others had declined. Something new emerged called the Cluny renewal. At Cluny in south France in 910 a new determinedly Benedictine monastery was founded that soon achieved a unique status: it was ostensibly directly under the pope and could not be commandeered by local kings or bishops, as had been so often the case with other monastic centers once they attained enviable wealth.

The Cluny pattern proliferated fairly rapidly. Dozens and then hundreds of new and reformed Benedictine centers joined this new pattern. Cluny, emphasizing worship, not work, developed a very high level of artistic and liturgical complexity. The Cluny center itself was rebuilt again and again until it became the most impressive center north of the Alps both physically and politically in the religious realm. Art for God's sake became central. Liturgical complexity demanded architectural elaboration. Mass came to take all day. The enormous and opulent "Cluny III" center was badly damaged in the French Revolution and is now a museum.

The most influential single feature of the Cluny reform was the idea that local bishops could not command their centers. This foreshadowed the massive turbulence of the "Investiture Controversy," in which not just Cluny centers were freed from secular or local religious control, but, gradually, even the appointment of bishops would no longer be the right or at the approval of secular rulers. The later fight between Henry IV of

France, the current Holy Roman Emperor, and the current pope meant bishops could lose their positions.

The Cluny pattern, coming earlier, was also more basic in one sense. It created a new kind of freedom which could be called regulation without administration. The pope was the regulator but not the administrator of the Cluny houses. This was somewhat theoretical since geographical distance greatly reduced actual authority. It amounted, however, to a recognition of local Abbots of monasteries as autonomous from local bishops of dioceses. The diocese was an overall umbrella of citizens in a given area whether they wanted to be included or not. The monastic center, by contrast, was very definitely an additional step for those who became members.

For some years I have been promoting two technical terms for these two different structures—modality and sodality. Membership in the church or family or community (modalities) is generally an automatic or at least a "benefit of the doubt" structure, while admission to membership in an "order" (a sodality) is a long and involved process in which no benefit of doubt is intended. In the modality the leader is dispensable. In the sodality the follower is dispensable.

The Cluny movement became the dominant monastic pattern until a strikingly new and even more influential pattern emerged about 200 years later—the Cistercians. Still Benedictine, they deliberately rejected the finery and endless and flowery worship of the Cluny movement. They differed also in the mother house having even greater control over all the other Cistercian centers. Laymen could become full members. Some of their centers eventually would be for women. This new movement expanded more rapidly and even more successfully than had the Cluny reform. Bernard of Clairvaux, author of the hymn "Jesus the very thought of Thee" was perhaps their most widely known and respected leader. But the Cistercians, too, eventually became extremely wealthy and somewhat bogged down.

Now appeared a further kind of disciplined way of life. The Benedictine "regula" or way of life pertained to monastic houses during centuries when parishes by comparison were very fragile and intermittent. As the Viking menace diminished, parishes and rectors thereof became more common and a "regula" was sought for rectors. What evolved is called, logically, "Clerks Regular" (in some cases, Canons Regular) which provided an accountable, disciplined pattern binding together priests who worked in different parishes.

However, by far the most significant mutation in "order" structure was what emerged at the very end of the period, not even gaining momentum until the early years after the year 1200 AD. I refer to the Friars—the Franciscans and the Dominicans. They were the first of a new breed of Catholic orders to venture forth into the highways and the byways—for one reason, Europe's roads were better and safer by this time in history.

By the end of this third period (800–1200) the first two Crusades had already transpired. The first had conquered Jerusalem only to lose it again. The Crusaders had killed every living thing in the city. When the Muslims reconquered it 88 years later they again invited back both Jews and Christians, even the kind which had brutally taken the city earlier.

In addition to the beginning of the Crusades, and the Friars, this period also saw the emergence of the universities and the cathedrals. Let me close by pointing out that world population began to rise much more steeply in this period. In an earlier lesson we

looked at the phenomenon of "exponential growth" and saw how deceptive it is and yet how easy it is to calculate.

At this point the emphasis is not so much on the method of calculation or even the varied estimates of world population during this period but on the keen significance of population non-growth. Note that the population of the British Isles is estimated to have been one million in 440 AD, after three centuries of literacy, when Roman Britain was, with the Anglo-Saxon invasions, about to dive back to darkness. The population was still one million when, in this third period (1066 AD), William the Conqueror crossed the channel in another permanent conquest of England, introducing the Latin language tradition, which, mixed with the Germanic, became the beginnings of modern English. However, what does this lack of growth during 600 years imply?

The answer must be the unremitting presence of war and pestilence, both. Think of the millions of premature deaths in 600 years that would explain that non-growth! It was not a case of China-like government suppression of births, or the extensive infanticide in China. Medieval chroniclers, somewhat as today, took the attrition of pestilence (that is disease) as a "given." It was something they had no means of combatting, being totally oblivious of germs.

Today, from one disease alone (cardiovascular disease—strokes and heart attacks) we lose as many citizens in the USA as we would if we were fighting 300 Iraqi wars. We spend a billion dollars a day patching people up who are attacked in this way. We spend virtually nothing in exploring root causes of cardiovascular disease. However, the effects of other diseases and the situation in non-western countries is often considered far worse. Nevertheless, Africa south of the Sahara has about the same population as the USA, yet here in the USA we lose 6,000 people per day to cardiovascular disease and cancer—the same number Africa loses per day to HIV/AIDS.

Deceptively, we spend an enormous amount on curing and avoiding disease—defensive measures. But there is virtually no money in finding the root causes, the origins, the pathogens behind most of our diseases. Indeed, we have been so long deceived (especially back in the 12th century) that the entire history of medicine is characterized by the nearly continuous but yet unexpected revelation that most major diseases are not conditions but rather infections.

Take for example, tuberculosis. It was for centuries assumed to be the result of people being exposed to conditions of dampness and cold. The Black plague which we will look at in the next period was the result of something no one suspected—fleas. Yellow fever was a total mystery. So was malaria, etc. Now, belatedly, in rapid fire, we are discovering that ulcers, heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimers, and schizophrenia are all infections, not conditions. No longer are duodenal ulcers assumed to result from stress or spicy foods.

But to this day there is no money for exploring disease origins. Big money comes from sick and desperate people who want a cure, not a general solution. These comments are not an indictment of our massive medical/pharmaceutical industry, which is responding to the cries of sick people. It is to point out the degree to which in both the 12th century and today we are either unaware of the nature of disease origins or we are doing little about them.

Historically, however, mere cleanliness protects us from much illness. Proper diet also does. So do proper exercise and sleep. In this way historical "pestilence" has

significantly diminished since 1066 AD. However, the history of Christianity has largely been a concern for getting people into heaven, not that of destroying the works of Satan.

The monastic movement went clearly beyond a focus on the next world. The medieval bridges, roads, buildings, education, and governmental structures were extensively the labors of those who made the second step into the orders. Many of the early insights into genetics, astronomy, and science in general, came from the orders. The periodic table of elements was first elaborated by Jesuits.

However, the keen thinkers of that time were groping their way in thick darkness. Back then we did not realize the extent to which we were up against an intelligent enemy. We did not have any valid clues as to the infectious origins of disease. The Bible gives many very intelligent rules for avoiding disease. But until recently God could not, Jesus could not, Calvin and Luther could not, talk about microbiological enemies which they could not see with the naked eye.

Today we have learned how to see such things, even entities as small as viruses. But we lack a theology for fighting them. And less than one percent of medical money goes to the discovery of disease origins. In the 12th century people were unwillingly blind to such things. Today we are willingly blind to them. Our theology has not grown with our knowledge. Our missions are today relatively superficial. In mission fields around the world we have spread vital and necessary hope of heaven. We have little theology that addresses the roots of poverty. We can “save” people for heaven but we are not effectively saving them from grinding poverty.

We will take this up again in the next period—where the Black plague will not allow us to avoid it. However, looking back on the Third Period we see a gigantic step forward in knowledge of God’s creation, His purposes for His human followers and, incrementally, the domination of His Kingdom over war and pestilence—population began to rise.

Lecture 13

The Renaissance Proper, 1200–1600 AD

By 1200 AD all of Europe, southern, middle, and northern, had gained a common written language, Latin. That link existed very specifically due to the Christian faith. That faith was the Roman formulation—the earthen vessel—in which the treasure of Biblical faith was precariously carried. The Roman earthen vessel would not forever dominate Europe but it did last long enough to give it a single language that endured as a vehicle of scholarship many centuries after the somewhat superficial unity it had at 1200 AD.

Many new and unprecedented events emerged which together defined the increasing momentum. We saw in the last lesson how the final years of the 800 to 1200 period were bursting with new vitality—the first appearance of universities, cathedrals, crusades and, above all, the new pattern, the Friars. Still other evidences of mounting vitality, such as the Albigenses, the Cathari, and the Waldensians, were brutally crushed.

At the same time, the most powerful Pope of all time, Innocent III, was able to excommunicate rulers and interdict whole countries in order to establish morality and justice as he saw it.

But moving into the 1200 to 1600 period, the Friars—the Franciscans and Dominicans—very soon became a truly major additional force, not politically, militarily or, at first, even ecclesiastically, but spiritually. Within a few years there were 60,000 followers of Francis. Their evangelists blanketed and greened Europe, and thus the Twelfth Century Renaissance flowed over into the next period. The emergence of the Friars could well have been the most important event as we enter the 1200–1600 period.

This was also the period in which the Black Plague took the lives of one third of the people in Europe. It is believed that 20,000 Franciscans (as well as many more others) died in Germany alone—because they intentionally, despite the known risk, tended the sick.

There was also the curious and amazing phenomenon of the Crusades. While they began in the previous period they caused much of their disturbance in the 1200–1600 period. On the one hand they certainly reflect the increasing momentum of both civilization and the official Christian faith in the West. Some were launched as a direct result of sweeping spiritual revival. On the other hand, they betrayed the still-savage background of the majority of the now-Christianized Goths and Vikings. The Crusades were a combination of prayerful dedicated believers and crude adventurers. All were led by former Vikings.

At this stage the Islamic tradition was by comparison much more “civilized” than the middle and northern European “Christians.” If a crusader went out of his mind, the

common remedy would be to gouge a cross in his scalp and pour molten lead into it. By contrast, the Muslims possessed far more sophisticated understandings of physical and mental illness—as well as literature, science, philosophy and political science.

In the 14th century a leading Christian library north of the Alps might have 400 books while, an Islamic library down in Córdoba, Spain had 400,000 books.

Meanwhile, there was also the comparative magnificence of the Chinese civilization under the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan as reported by Marco Polo. Mar- co Polo's father and uncle had been in his court earlier. At that time the Khan, whose mother was a Nestorian Christian, asked them to relay to the Pope his request for 100 missionaries who could teach science and theology. After delivering this amazing message to the Pope, the two brothers returned to Europe, now with the 15-year-old Marco. They had been able to recruit only two Dominicans, who turned back when things got scary.

However, the Polos did arrive. Marco Polo who was favored by Kublai Khan stayed in China 17 years working closely with the emperor. He later wrote up his experiences back in Europe. He was most surprised by the Mongols' use of paper money, coal for heating— not just wood—and a postal system which was something like the pony express which functioned briefly in the American expansion to the West.

Just before 1300 AD a Dominican finally arrived in the court, but after the death of Kublai Khan. Despite the intense opposition of the Nestorians there, he did gain a following of some 6,000.

The general acceleration of things was vastly spurred on by one of the side effects of the Crusades—a greater acquaintance with the Greek and Roman classical world over which by this date the Muslims were the main custodians. This "rebirth" of the classics gave the general name "Renaissance" to a period that in fact was actually less of a renaissance than either of what scholars refer to as the Carolingian Renaissance or the Twelfth Century Renaissance. These two earlier renaissances (and we could add what I have dubbed The Classical Renaissance of the Fourth Century) more profoundly affected society than did THE Renaissance of the 15th Century which involved mainly artists and scholars.

The Wikipedia states,

> Historians now point out that most of the negative social factors popularly associated with the "medieval" period— poverty, ignorance, warfare, religious and political persecution, and so forth—seem to have actually worsened during this age of Machiavelli, the Wars of Religion, the corrupt Borgia Popes, and the intensified witch-hunts of the 16th century. Many of the common people who lived during the "Renaissance" are known to have been concerned by the developments of the era rather than viewing it as the "golden age" imagined by certain 19th century authors. Perhaps the most important factor of the Renaissance is that those involved in the cultural movements in question—the artists, writers, and their patrons—believed they were living in a new era that was a clean break from the Middle Ages, even if much of the rest of the population seems to have viewed the period as an intensification of social maladies.

The most reasonable conclusion would seem to be to extend the usual meaning of The Renaissance to include the Reformation of the 16th century, with an emphasis on the Gutenberg printing revolution in the 1450s and the many children of that printing

revolution in the following century. Within 50 years a thousand printers emerged, and by Luther's day in the early 1500s three million printed documents had been produced, three quarters of them religious.

Thus, what started out as a renaissance involving only a few became a reformation more profoundly affecting the entire area of European society than any previous event.

Interestingly, the term "Reformation" is not entirely accurate. It implies a reformation or an improvement of theological and moral patterns, when in fact it is much more helpfully understood as a final breakdown of an essentially temporary and superficial extension of Mediterranean culture and theology—an extension into the Germanic basin. It is basically an example of the breakaway of a mission-field church. It is one more case of the earthen vessel of the missionary culture finally yielding to the new earthen vessel of a new missionized cultural sphere. The Reformation was by no means primarily a theological squabble over the doctrine of the justification by faith. "A cultural reformulation" would be a better phrase.

For example, John Wycliffe, two centuries before the Reformation, is called the "morning star of the Reformation." His vernacular English translation of the Bible is said to epitomize the thrust of the Reformation and to emphasize the "issue" of the suppression of the Bible and especially the Bible in the vernacular of the various language groups of Europe. In reality, for Wycliffe and later John Hus, it was not so much the case that the Bible could not be put in languages other than Latin but whether or not the Bible was more authoritative than the Pope.

Even that was not at bottom the real problem, but the fact that once you elevate the authority of the Bible, the basis is there to liberate outlying countries from the cultural and political domination of the Pope and his Latin church.

Luther gained great indignation against all things Roman simply because of a routine visit to Rome on behalf of his order. Even had that not happened the breakdown of the "uniformitarian" principle (on which the papacy stood) would have undoubtedly happened in any case. In that case we would merely have not heard of Luther. His trip to the "stinking city of Rome" and its multitudinous tourist traps for naive Christian visitors changed him from a Christian German to a German Christian. Next, money-raising by Rome, promising contributors things after death further troubled him.

His posting (not dramatically "nailed") on a bulletin board of items for a perfectly routine discussion (of his so-called "95 theses") certainly highlighted the theological features of the Reformation. But those same things he also wrote about to the current Pope with no great difference of opinion. That Pope was one of the best. He favored the "Elector Frederick" (the "senator" from Luther's region) as the best candidate to become the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Until that issue of the choice of a new Emperor was decided, the Pope, even if disagreeing with Luther, was not eager to offend Frederick by working against Luther. In 25 years it was settled but the friendly Pope was no longer in power.

Far from being an issue over the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, Luther's was the 14th entire Bible rendered into German. In Italy, Spain, France, and Germany hundreds of small groups were studying the Bible and believing in justification by faith. Only when it became clear that the Bible in the vernacular could be used for

divisive political purposes was it necessary for both Protestants and Catholics to restrict the reading of the Bible to scholars. Both camps burned Bibles in unofficial translations.

A proper reading of the Book of Acts could have allowed for a peaceful diversity of "Insider Movements" within the various cultures over which the Latin church had extended its reach. Why, for example, should Mediterranean respect for celibacy be extended into Germanic territory?

Had the Reformation been mainly a matter of doctrinal reformation, the Lutheran "revolt" would not have spread automatically to all of the territories beyond which the Roman empire had not thoroughly "romanized" the cultural substratum—as had been the case, for example, in France, Spain and Italy.

There would seem to be two exceptions to the rule that the Reformation succeeded where the Romans had not succeeded. In both Poland and Ireland, we see outlying groups who deliberately stayed "Roman" in order to distinguish themselves from peoples that had gone Protestant, and who were geographically between themselves and Rome.

Of course, the Roman domination of much of Europe for centuries created a tension leading to half-hearted loyalty to the Reformation—and considerable hesitation and confusion. To this day villages in Germany side one way or another, or post the percentage breakdown of Catholic or Lutheran at the edge of the town as you drive in. However, for at least a century such differences led to innumerable armed conflicts such as endure in Northern Ireland, which goes back to the Celtic/Anglo-Saxon tension long before the Reformation.

This perspective I am giving you is missiological. It would seem to aid enormously in modern attempts to decipher the complexity of the complexion of global Christianity. The same word, Reformation, is often mentioned when a radical change of earthen vessels takes place both at home and in the so-called mission lands.

But it is uncommon to hear of the significant parallels between 1) the transmission of Biblical faith from Jewish to Greek and Latin worlds, 2) the transmission of Biblical faith from either Greek or Latin to several other worlds farther north, and 3) the transmission of Biblical faith from Western Christianity to forms of the faith that prefer not to adopt Western culture along with the treasure that always comes in earthen vessels.

There are other parallels. Islam can be seen as the transmission of Biblical faith from a Roman to a Semitic earthen vessel. Islam is, unfortunately, blighted by the simple fact, as we have seen already, that the form of faith from which Muslims drew their cues was itself a highly defective Christianity. One insightful scholar for this reason has said that Islam is victim of (flawed) Christianity. Furthermore, the Bible in its entirety was not available in Arabic.

Other parallels thus can be seen all over the mission world, that is, cases where the Bible becomes available and a considerable number of people prefer to interpret it for themselves instead of accepting the missionary's culturally laden interpretation.

Even in American history we can perceive what H. Richard Niebuhr's *Social Sources of Denominationalism* famously points out, that denominations are basically more often different cultural streams than they are theological disagreements.

The beginning of global missions is to be seen in the later years of this period, due to the ability to circumnavigate the globe. It is for Protestants a matter of acute

embarrassment that the beginning of global missions is almost entirely a Catholic event. Ample coverage of this significant beginning is contained in the reading assignments for this lesson.

Lecture 14

The Evangelical Renaissance, 1600–2000 AD

In this final 400-year period we can notice the acceleration of history as never before. While this lesson covers merely the fifth expansion, two things are true: 1) more things happened in this period than any other, and furthermore, 2) events that did happen are 100 times as likely to be recalled, recorded and reported, and reported accurately.

Our next lessons will deal with incidents and events occurring in the period, but this lesson is the only one that will look at the entire period.

First of all, the most concrete measure of additional activity in this period is to compare its population to previous periods. It is true that all population figures are only estimates, especially in ancient times, but they are in any case very helpful.

Year Ending Period	Global Population	Growth in 400-yr Period	Average Annual Growth
0 AD	200 m		
400	206 m	3%	0.01%
800	220 m	7%	0.02%
1200	360 m	64%	0.12%
1600	545 m	51%	0.10%
2000	6,000 m	1001%	0.60%

The projected global growth rate at the end of the last period is of course much faster than the average for the 400-year period. Right now, a projection for the period between 2000 and 2010 is 1.55% (which is over twice the average for the last 400 years), but is, even so, an artificially depressed average for a world in which countries like Germany and Japan have a negative growth rate while countries like Afghanistan are growing at 4.8% which is three times the current global average of 1.55%.

Another way to put it is to note that the 1200 to 1600 period added 50 percent to global population, while the 1600 to 2000 period was twenty times that much, or 1,000 percent. In Europe and America that could have been 40 times as fast.

The situation is even more extreme when you realize that the earliest spurt of growth was in the European sphere where war and disease have decreased a great deal. Today the situation is reversed where European growth approaches zero. Deaths through wars have in fact decreased so much that traffic accidents on a world level kill five times as many people.

Thus, the main thing to note is that a whole lot more happened in this last period than any other even if only because there were 20 or more times as many people in the geographical sphere of the Evangelical Awakening.

Let's now turn our attention to the nature of the Evangelical Awakening which directly and indirectly fueled what scholars have called "The Evangelical Renaissance."

It created a significantly different form of Christianity. The Reformation had stressed doctrine as the key "verification" of Christianity. The Evangelical Awakening came along and added an emotional dimension. The "Evangelical experience" was now necessary. It was not just a matter of believing the right things, it was supposed to be an emotional experience. Pastors who were Evangelical were expected to be emotional about what they preached. Mass movements involving revivals in which people would fall down, weep and groan became expected. Additionally, a third dimension of "verification" of faith was the matter of "by their fruits you should know them." In a moment we will see the profound social changes that stemmed from Evangelical Christianity. Either right thinking, emotional experience or even "fruits" can be faked and even faked earnestly. But it became harder and harder to fake all three.

Another generality: in the earliest centuries one of the characteristic features of human society was the relative powerlessness of human beings. There were empires, but on the average a whole lot more people then than now really could not very effectively "take control of their lives" as we hear so often today. The slow but steady increase of both hope and actual absolute ability sparked by the spread of Christian faith began to surface.

Curiously, it began in many cases partly because of egalitarian perspectives in the Bible. A poetic ditty from a clergyman contributed enormously to the Wat Tyler Rebellion in England as far back as 1381. He said, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the Gentleman?" In modern English this would come out "Back when Adam tilled a field and Eve spun some cloth, who then was the aristocrat?" This was a serious poke at the upper class/lower class caste system in England. But it helped to fuel a major and angry movement which moved more than 100,000 rural people in upon London and the Crown, torturing and murdering a number of people in authority.

In Luther's day "peasants' revolts" occurred. Aristocrats and peasants were so far removed from each other that winter hunting jaunts were known to take a few peas- ants along so that if an important person's feet got too cold they could be thrust into the opened abdomen of a peasant who was sacrificed for that purpose. At one point peasants, who now more and more had access to the Bible, presented ten respectful requests, one of them limiting the number of peasants that could be so used on one hunting trip. The final statement said that if there were any requests in the list that were contrary to the Bible they would be withdrawn.

Thus, the Bible caused a vast array of societal changes, mostly peaceful, but not always. Oliver Cromwell's "Roundhead" soldiers won every battle and skirmish over the "Cavaliers," who represented the upper classes. Thus shortly into our period England experienced a relatively mild revolution a hundred years before France, but nevertheless ended up cutting off the head of Charles the First. Then, Cromwell's army was energized again to cross the Irish Sea and slaughter a hundred thousand Catholics.

But with Cromwell's England (and constitutional democracy) much else was changed. The decks of the English navy even got scoured clean enough "to eat off them." Even the vote was again and again extended to more and more of the people and finally to women.

It would be hard to believe that even the Declaration of Independence would have been signed had it not been for the English Evangelical Awakening flowing over to the American colonies and into the "Great Awakening of the Middle Colonies." Of course it wasn't just the Middle Colonies that were affected despite the name of the movement. From Boston to Charleston, now a single denomination (Presbyterian), extensively ruled by a democratic government, provided the model for a single secular government that would do the same. In 1789, when the U.S. Constitution was drafted, only one block away there was a similar group redrafting the new Presbyterian constitution, and many of the same men went back and forth. The Revolutionary War itself would not have succeeded had the Presbyterian denomination not avidly and explicitly preached the war in a way that today would cost them their tax exemption.

And then, what some people call the "Second Awakening," the surge of faith in the middle of the next century, had an equivalent causal effect on the Civil War, which to a great extent was fueled by the consciences being aroused in the minds and the hearts of millions of people.

Curiously, a Nobel Prize-winning economist, Robert Fogel, who was the early instigator of the new academic discipline of cliometrics—the study of history by quantitative analysis—wrote an entire book on the subject of the contribution of Evangelical revivals to the unfolding story of American history. His book entitled, *The Fourth Great Awakening*, insists that there is no more illuminating way to look at the American story than through the eyes of Evangelical awakenings. That a Yale University professor would write such a book is quite astounding if the thesis did not have some real credibility. Its upshot is so pro-evangelical that if a well-known Evangelical historian had written it, it would have been laughed off the stage as pure propaganda.

For our purposes in exploring the unfolding drama of the expansion of Biblical faith, probably the most significant transition in this 1600–2000-year period is the passing of the baton from Catholic missions to Protestant missions.

From the time of Columbus the Catholic countries had the policy of sending missionaries on nearly every ship in their world explorations. Very often, as in the case of Columbus himself, these voyages were seen as means of extending the faith. Thus from 1500 to 1800 evangelization in the non-Western world was essentially a Catholic show. Tiny movements of the Quakers and the Moravians, for example, did precede the year 1800, and as Charles Chauncey's *The Birth of Missions in America* shows, some Protestants were actually thinking in terms of missions before 1800. But by 1800 the tables were turned. The devastations of the French Revolution by 1800 had already extensively cut the economic roots of Catholic global mission. Meanwhile, the empire of

the English was rapidly growing and people like William Carey by the year of 1800 were already in India.

Unlike the Catholics, Protestant global explorations not only had nothing to do with missions, but were often, as in the case of the East Asia India Company, outspokenly opposed to missionary activity, thinking it might disturb their commercial ventures. Even in the Catholic sphere there was a tension between missionaries who were concerned for the people and commercial companies which had drastically different interests. But in a leap and a bound Protestant missionary work caught up with the Catholics within a relatively short time, and long before the year 2000 these two major sources of missionary initiative had equivalent overseas empires of faith as well as commerce.

It is important to note that colonialism is mainly a misnomer. The earliest prongs of penetration into the non-Western world were not colonial, but commercial and missionary. The Belgian Congo would be a case in point. Commercial rubber firms treated the Africans so harshly that missionaries complained to everybody who would listen including newspapers and governments, and eventually persuaded a reluctant Belgian government to extend its civil rule to the Congo in order to protect the people of that country. Stephen Neill's *Colonialism and Christianity* paints a very different picture concerning popular thinking about the "ravages" of colonialism. It's a simple fact that many countries were more effectively ruled by colonial governments than contemporary governments.

Once Protestants got back into the act, a trickle became a major force, and along with the earlier Catholic efforts, the globe has undergone a larger transformation as a result of missionary effort, taking mistakes into account, than any other force in human history.

Protestant effort can be described in terms of three overlapping eras. The era inaugurated by William Carey didn't do much more than hit the coastlands of the world, despite many Catholic inland endeavors.

Hudson Taylor, in 1865, founded China Inland Mission determined to go where the Catholics had already gone—inland, not just to the coasts. His work also spawned the concept of a mission of lay people as well as a so-called "faith mission" approach which was not so much a matter of not directly soliciting funds, as it was a genuine "frontier mission" approach. That was the second era. Curiously, it began and flourished with its emphasis on the two early stages of pioneer and partnership work before the first era ended, which by this date was already emphasizing the missiological strategies of well-established fields where partnership and participation are the reigning perspectives. This clash of missiologies hampered the new era until the first era really ended and the second era also moved into the partnership and participation stages.

Almost immediately a third era began. This era was non-geographical. The two words, coastlands and inlands, blanketed the earth. But two missionaries noticed that thousands of people groups had been bypassed, mainly minorities, whose languages were assumed to be unimportant. Cameron Townsend zeroed in on the tribal peoples who were distributed horizontally, while Donald McGavran zoomed in on sociological layers of society which were equally discreet and impenetrable in what could be called a "vertical" segmentation. These two men, in the 1930's, essentially tore back a huge curtain on a vast new sphere of missionary responsibility that earlier missionaries might have been

overwhelmed to see. This new sphere has been called the challenge of the unreached peoples and constitutes the third era of Protestant awareness in the 1800 to 2000 year half of our fifth expansion.

There is one other major surge of mission effort that must be mentioned. One hundred and fifty new mission agencies were founded in the United States alone in the five years following the Second World War. This, however, does not mark off a new era if the eras are to be defined in terms of an awareness of a new frontier. It was a mighty surge, all right, resulting from the enforced education in global realities undergone by eleven million servicemen and women. Its distinctive character was the addition to existing mission efforts of various services such as Mission Aviation Fellowship, Far East Broadcasting Company, World Literature Crusade, etc.

Meanwhile, back home, as the year 2000 approached, the truly massive impact of the various Evangelical awakenings, notably that of D. L. Moody, had successfully transmuted from Bible Schools and Bible Institutes to Christian Colleges and Christian Universities. Thus, Evangelicals were able not only to increase in number, but to enter the mainstream of American society and become relatively visible rather suddenly. Unexpectedly, this has triggered a rather vast ground swell of anti-Christian phobia which has frantically pushed into the courts, schools, and public society extensive anti-Christian propaganda, such as in seen in the 48 million copies sold of Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code,* which so skillfully undermines the Christian faith.

In the Evangelical world itself, huge new energies are being poured into an estimated one million extremely expensive two-week educational trips by mainly young people. I refer to these as educational since they are very rarely of any value to mission work in a direct sense.

At the same time, many local churches, especially mega-churches, are expressing serious mission vision by the practice of bypassing established veteran mission agencies. This also is not a good idea. A third drawback of mounting Evangelical vitality is seen in the extensively believed idea that we don't need to send missionaries any more, just money for national workers.

Another dimension, at present, is the increased emphasis on relief and development work which is usually very helpful in a humanitarian sense, but again does not make a significant contribution to the cause of missions. Missiological study, journals, books, societies, as well as seminaries with significant missions study curricula are also on the upswing. In succeeding lessons we will be exploring other aspects of this incredibly explosive Evangelical Renaissance.

Lecture 15

Collapse of Colonialism, The Rise of Globalization

Our topic leans heavily on the book, *The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years*. There is certainly no value in my just repeating what is in those chapters. Rather, I would like to build up a larger context for that phenomenon—the phenomenon of the retreat of the West.

The West, of course, is a rather silly word, for what is west of what on the globe? Everything is west of something. We are talking about Western culture. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, there is what is called Western culture. Western culture is predominantly a Christianized phenomenon. It doesn't mean that Westerners are Christians, except in culture. It does mean that a Westerner is a person whose ethical judgments and philosophical, cosmological, worldview thinking, and so forth, have been predominantly the result, whether he knows it or not, of the Hellenistic tradition, which is non-Christian, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Western European Christian experience.

Eastern Christians are also Western in the larger sense of Western culture. In other words, Russians are part of the Western cultural tradition. When the Russians cross over into China, they are Westerners, even if they are living in Siberia or going into China. China is non-Western, because China in thinking and culture, at least prior to Mao Tse-tung, was for the most part unaffected by the West. Communism, however, is a Western phenomenon.

Westernization has taken place not only through missionary penetration of the provinces of China, but because every single card-carrying communist is a Westernizer. His materialism derives from Christianity.

Christianity is the most materialistic of all known world religions. In fact, it has to be, because as some great theologian said, "God was the first materialist." He created the atoms, those shining, brilliant, unfathomable beauties that go together with the sub-atomic particles; and all this unbelievable complexity that is beyond our comprehension in its ultimate reality— God created all this!

All of this is based on God's wisdom, and it is the Christian who understands and is awed. The Christian does not worship it, but respects it and sees the glory of God in the handiwork which He has displayed for us: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Thus, the created world we have in common with communism. Many other things we have in common with communism. The ravages of communism across the world, as an atheistic, anti-religious system, are to a great extent just bizarre perversions of a Christian inheritance. The Bible itself is anti-religious! Read chapter 1 of Isaiah. Read

chapter 23 of Matthew. Christianity is not even really a religion, according to some theologians, and when it becomes a religion, it may no longer be a faith.

Now, that is an overstatement. I do believe there are many religious people who are also profoundly Christian. But it is Christianity alone—Evangelicalism in particular—which allows for the acceptance of people who do not go through fancy rituals, and who are not beholden to any observable patterns. Even Evangelicals eventually fall into patterns, so that if you walk into the most highly unstructured Evangelical service, the people there can tell exactly what is coming next. So don't let people in non-liturgical traditions claim that they are non-liturgical in the ultimate sense.

But despite habit structures being what they are, the fact of the matter is that Christianity in a certain sense really isn't a religion. It is a faith, it is a life. It is, in this sense, the only candidate for a world faith. All other religions are religions. Even Christianity becomes a religion all too easily.

But Christianity is the only world religion in another sense. When people speak of world religions, they often only mean long-lasting religious systems. Any long-lasting religious system with lots of followers in any place is sometimes called a world religion. That's nonsense! To be a world religion you have to have, in some sense, an affinity with all the cultures of the world. There is no other good candidate for that description except Christianity and its extensive cultural diversity. Christianity is the religion (if you wish to call it that) which has been most willing to take upon itself the cultural clothes of every tradition.

Islam, by comparison, although in some ways a heretical variety of Christianity, is much more of a religion, in that it requires the Arabic language in its holy book. It requires facing towards Mecca when you pray. It requires many things to be the same wherever it goes. It is what the communists in Indonesia once called an imperialistic religion. The communists, before they fell from power in Indonesia some years ago, claimed that the Indonesians were dupes to accept a foreign religion.

But they were unable to pin that criticism on the Christians. The Christians had churches that were built in Indonesian architectural styles; their Bible was in Indonesian languages; their hymns and music partook, at least to some extent, of the Indonesian cultural tradition. In that sense, Christianity was nowhere near as foreign an invasion as Islam. And, by the way, Christianity got to Indonesia before Islam did! That is a very interesting thing. Islam is a relatively recent in Indonesia.

The Bahai religion is much too small a movement to be called a world religion, but it does to some extent follow Christianity in a multi-cultural approach. Their problem is their scriptures. Bahai people will tell you about their ineffable, ethereal scriptures, but they cannot be translated! I think that it is true: they are un-translatable! For when you translate them, no modern person with any sensitivity would go along with their bizarre and rather crude character. They have the same problem at that point as Islam. However, Muslims refuse to translate their scripture for the additional reason that they envision a global single language.

The point is that somehow there are many children of the Westernization process: communism is one of the children. It reflects faithfully many of the ethical concerns of Christianity. The ethical system which the communist society espouses, but which it does not have the power to live up to, is for the most part Christian. Their emphasis on the equality of all people was borrowed directly from Christianity. Their cell structure, their

emphasis on confession, all this was borrowed directly from Christianity. Their sense of history comes directly from Christianity. Communism is a bizarre, heretical, and virulent evil, but to a great extent it has been a part of Western Christianized civilization.

The process of Westernization produced an immense fertility of mind and industry, of political and demo- graphic power. There is no example in human history, in the annals of mankind in any part of the world, of any other human movement gaining momentum so rapidly, building up population and wealth and power so rapidly, as you see in Western Europe. And that is precisely where the Bible was unleashed.

That power spilled over in many ugly ways, tragic ways, and also beneficial ways, all across the world. What earlier parallel is there of a vast muscular spill-over of population into another part of the world, as the modern colonial movement?

What about the Crusades? The colonial movement was, in fact similar in some ways to the Crusades. It was far less holy, far less Christian in most ways. But for most of its early history, under the Portuguese, Spanish, and French—before the Bible-pounding Protestants got into the act—colonization was definitely a Christian Crusade. All ships carried priests: missionaries with the intent to convert people to Christ as King.

When the Protestants got into the act, their first large- scale presence on the open seas was the pirates. That's right, the pirates were Protestants, and you can imagine how easily this fitted into the Catholic stereotype of Protestantism. Father Baegert, a missionary priest, in his book, *Observations in Lower California*, pointed out that Protestants actually ruled the Caribbean, meaning that pirates ruled the Caribbean, and why didn't they evangelize? Some of these pirates actually did have chapels in their outposts, in their hideaways. Some were religious men. With all their cut-throat piracy, they may have thought they were doing God's will.

However, in general, when Protestants got into the act, colonization no longer had a Christian dimension to it. For example, the Dutch were allowed into the ports of Japan even after Japan totally sealed itself off from all other ships. The reason was that no one would have ever suspected the Dutch Protestants of bringing Christian missionaries. That is not quite true, however. The Dutch actually did bring chaplains with them to Taiwan. At one time there even was a fairly promising movement there. They also eventually did bring chaplains into Indonesia, the so-called Dutch East Indies. But, as I say, Protestants in general were less religious by far than other colonizing powers.

Notice that all this immense muscular outburst, whether you call it a crusade or not, to a great extent was a result of the explosion of a community produced by the limited tincture of Christian faith in Europe. When I read books written by secular scholars about the rise of Western civilization I just have to shake myself to realize that these authors are systematically omitting all of the Christian dimensions. I would read in Latourette about the Evangelical Awakening and its impact on the English parliament and everything else; and then I read a secular book with no reference of any kind to anything of that sort! It is just as if you're reading about two different worlds.

In fact, there was a great deal of vitality, of Christian devotion, of high-mindedness, of social reform, political reform in Western civilization and colonialism. The ending of slavery is one of the most obvious results of Christianity. Slavery was not something invented by Christians. In fact, to this date in history, there have been far more white people enslaved by white people, than black people enslaved by white people. Who are the Slavs? They are the quarry from which human slaves were gained for centuries

and centuries, for over a millennium, the greatest source of human slaves sold into Africa. Slavery, therefore, was not caused by Christianity; slavery was there before Christianity ever arrived. Christianity was what eventually percolated into the higher circles and, through John Wesley and the Evangelical Awakening, into the lives of Wilber- force and the Clapham Sect. Clapham was a district of London where these Evangelicals lived. They were called a sect, although they were really only a subordinate party in Parliament. They were the ones who led the anti-slavery movement.

The impact of Christianity on the rise of Western civilization, virtually unknown and undetectable in secular books, also accounted for the vitality and the military power of the West. It is a strange thing that the very muscle wielded by the Crusaders in cutting off people's heads was muscle produced by Christianity. Christianity makes people healthy. It turns "the hearts of the fathers to the children." There is a lower infant mortality instantly when a population becomes Christian. There are all kinds of good things that happen: orphanages and hospitals, insane asylums. All kinds of problems are ameliorated because of Christianity. All that produces power, even for those who do not acknowledge it, and eventually spills over across all the world.

But the impact can either be called colonialism (with an adverse twang to the word), or it can be called a blessing. I don't know of any clear-thinking member of a former colonial country who will not be able to tell you how ambivalent their people are about the former colonial presence. Many people in India today, if they had their choice, would ask the British back. Of course, they would probably have to think twice! There would be lots of people who would be opposed to it. And there would probably be a lot of violence.

It is incredible that any one country would rule another country. Allan Moorehead wrote a book on the South Pacific called *The Fatal Impact*, and describes it as literally fatal to thousands of people, as slave ships and European diseases captured or killed off those people. It was fatal in other ways, since their cultures were largely destroyed.

The point is that, at some point in history, the vast, massive and, for most observers, utterly irreversible movement out across the world all of a sudden began to crumble and retreat—after four hundred years of massive, muscular, irreversible outreach, controlling every square foot of the world!

So we have this amazing and unexpected collapse of colonial power. I will not say that I don't think that there is the slightest intrinsic virtue or superiority in Western man. I really do think that there is a great deal of superiority in Western culture insofar as it has been affected by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I will give not one millimeter of credit to any other source! It is Christ. Western nations can say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I!"

But I was sitting in a hotel room years ago talking to a Christian leader, John Gatu, from East Africa. He and I in a few minutes were to debate, before cameras, his widely criticized proposal for a moratorium on all mission work. He came up to my room in the hotel. It was his initiative to talk to me, hoping somehow that we could avoid unnecessary conflict in our discussions. I'm sure after the debate he was completely satisfied with what I said, because I agreed that in his situation in Kenya a withdrawal of missionaries from authority was quite reasonable.

But there I was, talking to a man whose own people a few months earlier were involved in the Mau Mau uprising. If I were John Gatu, I would be very embarrassed at

the thought that my people, the Kikuyu, were involved in the orgies and unbelievable atrocities of those satanically-driven people. What I tried to tell him—yet what I couldn't easily convey—is that I was just as aware as he was of the orgies of brutality and bestiality among the tribal people of my own past.

Consider the Irish. They were originally headhunters. In their little boats they would go up the Irish Sea and suddenly besiege a little village thirty miles away and kill every man, woman and child. They would pile all the heads into their boats and return, almost sinking, hollow out those skulls, process them and drink out of those skulls. Irishmen were drinking out of skulls as late as the sixteenth century!

Who are we kidding? Satan is the god of this world. All peoples come from a background of satanically controlled cultures. There is no intrinsic merit in Western society apart from the direct and indirect impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Science itself is a result of the cosmology which is uniquely found in the Judeo-Christian tradition. You cannot be a scientist if you do not believe in the orderliness of nature. You cannot be a scientist if you are merely a Hellenistic philosopher. Plato believed in a pantheon of quarreling gods, whose quarrels decided whether it rained or didn't rain. You couldn't possibly have been a scientific observer of weather if you were a Plato. There is nothing about the Hellenistic tradition that would ever have allowed science to develop. The so-called Greek science, about which many books are written, is in a totally different category from Western science. The roots of the latter are the godly reflections of Christian people upon the orderliness and beauty of a creation which God designed.

However, there came a time when God obviously said "time's up" for Western political power. The crumbling of that vast world-wide empire is the story of the "Re-treat of the West." However, the retreat of the West is actually only the retreat of political and military power. It is not a retreat of the cultural or economic power, or the retreat of the religious influence of the West.

Many people assumed, and maybe many hoped, that with the withdrawal of the troops and the colonial offices of the Western powers, they would have taken with them all other influences. But, as you'll see in the chapters of my book, in many cases the cultural impact of the West actually escalated in the absence of the often stuffy, censorious, and condescending colonial rulers.

The other important thing in this whole story is that in most cases the gospel of Jesus Christ actually was given freer reign with the Retreat of the West. It was not the gospel that retreated! The *Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years* book is simply the story of the unbelievable fact that the church of Jesus Christ emerged from this twenty-five-year period of Western retreat more powerful, stronger, more rooted, more indigenous than ever before!

At this point our dual topic, from colonialism to globalization, can be seen not as two different eras but as a very long and gradual transition in which both are present at all times. The end of the "25 Unbelievable Years" is described in that book as the end of only certain externalities, the outward clothing. The inner dynamic of the impact of the West did not decline at all, and is now the major driving force in the entire globe.

Globalization also is not new, except in its extent and rapidity. For thousands of years, goods from one part of the world have been traded for goods from other parts. All that has happened is, seemingly, that the process has been astoundingly speeded up.

Interdependence has increased to the point that some are suggesting that the main reason China will not literally conquer the USA is due to the industrial and commercial interdependence of the two countries. Frankly, that may be the opposite. When the Gothic tribal peoples had learned the art of war by mustering in and out of the Roman legions, it simply made them both willing as well as able to overrun the Western Roman capital of the city of Rome itself. The Empire never again regained it.

A recent book proclaims that the world is now "flat." That is, there is a level playing field and small businesses in one place must contend with huge industries thousands of miles away. (On that score it is just as much a smaller world as a flat world). The book gives an example of workers in Egypt losing their jobs.

The work they used to do is now suddenly taken away from them by more efficient processes in China. Lantern makers of Cairo used to work months in advance to pile up stock for the moment when the Islamic year made carrying around hand lanterns the thing to do. Now those millions of lanterns are made in China and shipped to Egypt at a lower cost.

The thousands of Egyptians left without work are not less willing or less able to work. They simply cannot compete with Chinese efficiency. They have been made poor through no fault of their own but because of sweeping improvements in global communication and manufacturing. Neither is it due to people in China trying to harm them. The Chinese workers are simply trying to make things that the world will buy, so they then can buy things other countries of the world make.

Another example is that after 9/11 travesty in New York, the first two million miniature American flags sold in the USA were made in China!

For centuries, but more gradually, what is called technological unemployment has been taking place as hand looms gave way to textile mills, and subsistence farming gave way to mechanized farming. Today the transitions are blindingly swift and millions upon millions of people in the so-called Two-thirds World are suddenly without work. At the same time smaller numbers do in fact have jobs as part of the global economy due to distant outsourcing—jobs that never existed before where they live.

Advanced globalization has obviously injected a new ingredient into the necessary strategy of Christian missions. That will have to await another lesson.

Lecture 16

Post-World War II: The Expansion of New Missions

1. The Decline and Fall of the IMC

The International Missionary Council was formed as a direct result of the 1910 World Missionary Conference, which itself was the first in history on the world level of its kind. It was uniquely a conference of specifically missionaries and missionary executives.

As a direct result of this conference, the International Missionary Council came into being in 1921, delayed by World War I, but following efforts of John R. Mott, in one of his most impressive accomplishments—setting in motion what eventually became 22 "National Christian Councils" in the mission lands. These councils brought together all the missionaries from whatever agencies were at work in those countries.

An unexpected result of this new "council of councils" was that over the next several decades, national churches were being planted which began to produce impressive leaders, which is good. However, once that happened extensively it then seemed reasonable for these church leaders to be included in the meetings of these various National Christian Councils which had earlier been purely about missions.

That in turn led gradually for these National Christian Councils to change their names and their functions to National Councils of Churches. India had one of the largest such councils and actually did not change its name, but did change its function when, in 1945, on the encouragement of mission executives who were present, it voted that expatriate mission leaders could no longer vote. From that point on, to vote you had to be a national church leader. This was happily understood as desirable nationalization.

However, depending on your perspective, this was a great achievement when all of these councils became church councils, but it unintentionally maimed fatally the mission focus of the parent body, the International Missionary Council. Although the Western country councils were still mission agency executives, the delegates from the 22 overseas councils gradually and inevitably became exclusively church leaders. In 1958 at Ghana the IMC voted to merge with the World Council of Churches, and the idea of seeing things at a global level through the eyes of mission executives was no more.

This cursory summary will at least give you an idea of why there needed to be another 1910 type conference in 1980 and why, though in vain, that conference attempted to establish another world level structure representing mission agencies. That world level structure did not come into being until 2005, being essentially an outcome of "Singapore 2002," a conference convened specifically to maintain momentum in the Unreached

Peoples sphere. The new organization was called the Global Network of Mission Structures, as will be mentioned below.

2. Post WWII Surges in "Service"

A second unexpected event of monumental proportions followed the Second World War. As with all wars, it was a great tragedy, but good things do come out of tragedies, on occasion. It was as if we collected up enough money to send 11 million of our people on a world tour rubbing their faces in heretofore almost unknown mission work in the Pacific Islands, where, for example, the Japanese would never have been routed had not 75% of the island people been Chris- tians who identified with the countries which had sent them missionaries.

Then, in the first five years after the war, the returning war-enlightened service personnel formed 150 new mission agencies. This surge of new agencies would have constituted a new era in our analysis of the three eras, had they dealt with some new frontier of mission, such as the bypassed "unreached peoples" which have more recently been stressed.

Although the GIs didn't start a new era, they started a huge new push into the world of missions of the US population. You might say that WWII was perhaps the greatest surge in mission awareness even beyond the Student Volunteer Movement half a century earlier. The unique feature of these 150 new missions was their stress on technical services to existing mission agencies. The former military personnel had gained skills in radio, flying planes, printing, managing, and making tough decisions, and the new missions reflected these technical skills.

3. The Changing Structures of Global Missions

The "Service Missions." First there were, as just mentioned, these new service agencies emphasizing radio, planes, literature, child evangelism, etc. We could add relief and development agencies as well, whose concerns were spurred by the direct contact of GIs with conditions in foreign lands.

Internationalized Missions. Secondly, there were the many agencies which, one by one, puzzled their way through the transformation from a national agency serving internationally, to a truly "internationalized agency" which drew from more than one country and in some cases, forthrightly drew overseas national leaders into membership.

These mutations were not at all simple. There is no book on how to internationalize a national agency serving internationally, unfortunately. But by the year 2000, dozens of missions had added the word "international" to their name. That word used in that way, however, has no precise technical significance. It usually simply means that other western countries are collaborating in support of the new "internationalized" agency. In some cases, as with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, more and more non-western personnel are becoming members.

Third World Missions. Another new structure of missions, regrettably new, because it should have been attempted long ago, is the idea of the overseas national churches themselves forming their own mission sending structures. These are sometimes called "Third World Missions." Probably the major exception to the rule that none of the western missions ever thought of such a thing, or initiated such structures is the case of

the Christian and Missionary Alliance and its work in South East Asia. There, but nowhere else in their global outreach, they made sure that their planted national churches always had a mission department, such that missionaries going from the Philippines under the CMA would be sponsored and supported by CMA churches in the Philippines, not by the CMA headquarters in the United States.

4. Focus on Peoples and Ethnic Groups

The biggest change in strategic perspective in the twentieth century was an outgrowth of the impact of the thinking of Donald McGavran, a third generation missionary to India, for whom the invisible barriers of culture (not just language) had become visible and all- important. He figured that once even a lone individual from one group had become a Christian, that person should not be encouraged to join the existing church of another group, but should be perceived as a "bridge of God" back into his own group. Thus, the very fact that someone within a group had, for the first time, gained an understanding of the gospel was an event much more strategic than the fact that one more person followed Christ in a group where many were already Christians. Why? Because now a whole new group suddenly would become penetrable.

His specific application of this insight was, however, almost exclusively that of detecting people in the back rows of a church (which he would call a "conglomerate church") and taking advantage of that "bridge of God" into a new compartment of society which heretofore was sealed off by cultural barriers.

My take from this insight was that if such invisible barriers of culture were as important as McGavran made them out to be, then all such sealed off groups which had no converts at all were in really bad shape and deserved special attention. At first McGavran was very reluctant about this new emphasis on what became called "unreached peoples." He wanted to be sure agencies did not overlook any existing "bridge of God" in their concern to start from scratch with new groups. In hindsight it is obvious that both concerns were valid and, within a very short time, McGavran got on board with the unreached peoples movement. So did many other agencies that now became indebted to his original insight about the strategic importance of cultural barriers.

Unfortunately, however, now and then, someone may consider the idea of "homogeneous churches" a form of racism. But one man's racism is another man's freedom of self-determination. There is certainly nothing racist about people finding it easier to speak their own language and enjoying the benefits of mutual recognition of cultural traditions. The very idea of "black power," "brown power," and other types of cultural pride serve to underscore the truth of McGavran's position.

5. The Lausanne Movement, the WEA, the GCR, and the GNMS

In the wake of the breakdown of the IMC, Carl F. H. Henry, one of the most prominent Evangelical theologians, whose wife was the daughter of a missionary to Cameroon, persuaded Billy Graham to go with him in sponsoring a world-level congress on evangelism in Berlin in 1966. This turned out to be so successful that a second, larger one, with a greater emphasis on missions, was convened in 1974 in Switzerland in the city of Lausanne.

The International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne was far more influential. About 20% of its participants represented cross-cultural mission out- reach.

Widely known and respected is the Lausanne Covenant which was drafted by John R. Stott and formulated in final form by a committee during the congress itself.

The Lausanne Covenant has a substantial section on missions. But it talks somewhat as if the whole thing has been pretty much of a failure and is still up against virtually hopeless odds. In a later Lausanne sponsored conference in the Philippines in 1987, the Manila Manifesto had a much more significant section on missions. Incorporating direct input from people at the USCWM, John R. Stott was again the chief drafter.

A key feature of the Lausanne movement—and there have been many regional Lausanne conferences across the years—has been its inclusiveness when compared to the meetings of the World Evangelical Fellow- ship (now called the World Evangelical Alliance). The WEA has all along been dominated by denominations as members, which match up to the WEA's very explicit statement of faith. The Lausanne movement takes in local churches and individuals, no matter what their denominational relationships might be. At a Lausanne-sponsored meeting it would be easy to run into a representative of the "Lord's Army" (a movement of 500,000 in Rumania), or a member of the Lutheran Church of Latvia, even though such Christian leaders would never appear at a WEA meeting, and, in reverse, the WEA would be unheard of in such circles.

A second feature of the Lausanne Movement is that, true to its origin, it consistently includes church leaders, even high officials in older, pre-Evangelical churches, with the idea of evangelizing them on the subject of evangelism.

Back in 1974 my talk was censored before the meeting, eliminating any use of the word "mission." I had to use the title "Cross Cultural Evangelism: The Highest Priority." I had to convert my M-1, M-2, M-3 codes to E-1, E-2, E-3, thus exchanging the word "mission" for "evangelism." I understand that Billy Graham feels that he can escape some governmental opposition by talking solely about evangelism as the initiative of citizens within a country and not referring to organizations, like missions, that seek to influence from the outside. He has a point, but of course, his logic then depends solely upon people already existing in the country or within a people group who are willing and able to evangelize. That is, this approach depends totally on previous mission work, so that it can hardly take the place of pioneer mission work. In the case of Unreached Peoples, note, there have not yet been any previous missions.

The Norwegian Missionary Council was always one of the strong forces in the IMC, and when the latter be- came assimilated into the World Council of Churches it was, along with other western mission agency councils and associations, left somewhat high and dry. In fact, some thinkers arrived at the conclusion that, due to the widespread growth of overseas churches in virtually every country, mission sending structures were now completely out of date, and thus, agencies such as the Norwegian Missionary Council were dinosaurs we could do without.

This perspective has merit in all cases where national churches already exist. But now, widely, the nations of the world are no longer conceived of as the countries of the world, but rather are conceived of as the roughly 24,000 peoples of the world. As a result, traditional mission perspective is now again back in favor, and in fact, is clearly impelling in view of the serious possibility that current overseas churches might ignore the very existence of minority or even majority populations that are outside the spheres of those existing churches.

Indeed, the ethnic tensions within countries are not minor but major factors in mission strategy. It is entirely understandable and yet entirely unreasonable to sup- pose that a church movement within one ethnic group in a country will automatically reach out effectively to other ethnic groups when those groups are, as is often the case, centuries-old enemies. Indeed, the anthropological dictum that "the closest are furthest" holds true with dire effect in the majority of all cases of ethnic near- neighbors. For example, a Navaho evangelist would be more welcome among the Norwegian Laplanders than would Norwegians living nearby, who might resent or be resented by the Laplanders. Similarly, a Canadian missionary would tend to be more welcome among the Zuni Indians of Arizona than a white citizen from Phoenix.

These realities help us to understand why mission strategy is not always intuitively obvious. They also explain why it is that just sending money around the world to people who are then supposed to evangelize their near-neighbors is unwise more often than not. It also explains why short-termers who don't tie into long-term missionaries already on the field are unlikely to do more than get for themselves valuable cross-cultural experience, their real contribution to missions being of little value or perhaps even harmful.

Finally, the very complexity of mission strategy helps us understand why local churches are unlikely to be successful in sending their own missionaries without sending them through existing veteran agencies that have bumped into many of the unexpected features of field strategy.

But back to the Norwegian Missionary Council. Left high and dry by the demise of the International Mission Council, it took the initiative to form what later developed into the Great Commission Round Table. The process was set in motion in a meeting hosted in Hurdahl, Norway by the Norwegian Missionary Council, composed of representatives of the AD 2000 Movement, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the World Evangelical Fellowship, and the Billy Graham Association. Representatives of all but the latter met again several times and there now exists a global level "round table" of these key entities. Mission executives as such are not prominent, but the GCRT was consulted in the formation of the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS), and gave its blessing.

The GNMS itself was founded in Amsterdam in April of 2005 in a meeting intentionally small. About thirty representative mission leaders from the entire world voted to establish an office, in Malaysia it turned out, to coordinate further discussion. A corporation was later formed and the outlook is now very positive.

There are many national and regional associations of mission agencies. They can, and do, confer about matters concerning their territories. However, only a global entity can best track migrating peoples which today go all over the world. Since it is usually true that a given group can be more easily reached in one location than in another, it is one of the crucial tasks of the GNMS to do that.

Lecture 17

Beyond Christianity

The title of this lesson was not designed to be provocative. At no point are we talking about "individual Christianity." All the movements we will talk about involve whole families and even communities, and perhaps countries. A biblical faith is not adequately or durably represented in anyone's "individual Christianity."

But "Churchless Christianity" is the title given to a serious book by Herbert Hoefer, a senior Missouri-Synod Lutheran theologian who was a professor in a mission field seminary for some years. The book is a report of a scientific statistical sampling of the population of the largest city in Southern India, Chennai, formerly Madras. It is a very concrete witness to the kind of thing we refer to when we speak of "beyond Christianity."

Dr. Hoefer's intention in his book is to describe the surprising existence of a considerable amount of true faith in Jesus Christ which exists outside of the somewhat Westernized church movement in India. That's where he gets the idea of "churchless," which we can understand simply to be a movement which is outside of the formal Christian church movement in India. It is not without some kind of fellowship groups.

His sampling techniques were employed within that huge 13 million or so population of greater Chennai. He found that about three quarters of the population held a higher view of Christ than the average European. The other 25 percent appeared to be serious believers in Jesus Christ. The worship and Bible study of the latter did not show up in the church buildings of that area but was confined largely to homes of extended families. This 25-percent category he called Churchless Christianity. Amazingly, this sphere in greater Chennai is two or three times as large as the formally Christian population.

However, it might have been better to have described this phenomenon Christianity-less churches, rather than Churchless Christianity, because while it is outside of the formal Christian movement it nevertheless manifests itself usually in the form of what we call "House churches." It simply does not wish to be associated with Western Christianity, and particularly with the mainly Dalit (untouchable) level of society. That is, the millions of people involved in this de- scribed phenomenon have faith in Christ but not in a Christianity tied both to the very lowest classes and to Western degradation (that is, nuclear rather than extended families, high divorce rates, pornography, alcoholic debauchery, huge criminal populations, etc.). This is why you could equally say that it is a movement of Christianity-less house churches.

These same percentages are not true in other parts of India. In tribal North East India, where the population figures are far smaller, the Christian population is as high as 75% or even 95%. However, the same kind of a phenomenon, that is, faith and practice unrelated to Western-styled church life, could arise anywhere in India or in the entire globe.

As we explore this global phenomenon it will be a bit of a review of some things we have already said in earlier lessons, but we will look more systematically at this particular type of thing in three periods—the New Testament period, the Reformation period, and the current world period.

The New Testament Period

We have already noted in a previous lesson the extensive changes over the centuries of the outward, "earthen vessel" in which the true riches of faith are contained. We mentioned various stages throughout the Old Testament and New Testament and into the period of the Roman Empire when Constantine introduced one of the biggest changes of the "earthen vessel." We described most of the earlier changes as diachronic, that is, within the same cultural tradition, but changes over time. However, we described the New Testament picture as being a much more radical type of "lateral" change, where the earthen vessel of one culture changes over to a very different culture, and continues to exist simultaneously with the very different cultural vehicle of the source culture.

These lateral shifts are the most disconcerting because almost always those whose faith is carried in the earlier vessel fail to recognize the validity of the faith contained in a contemporary, but different cultural vessel. That is, some of the Jews who believed in Christ could not conceive of Greeks being faithful followers of Christ with- out switching over to Jewish foods, clothing, language, etc. So also the Greeks who followed Christ could not conceive of that same faith being truly represented within the Jewish culture, which they thought to be out of date, never adequate, or dead wrong.

Later, Roman Catholics of Mediterranean culture couldn't conceive how the faith could be contained in a vessel of Germanic culture. Let's look at that much studied period.

The Reformation Period

Predictably, those who held the true Biblical faith in the Germanic culture vessel felt that the Mediterranean vessel was invalid and was now to be superseded, and those that held the faith in the Mediterranean vessel thought the Germanic vessel was invalid. This is again parallel to the assumptions of some of the Greek believers that the Jewish vessel was an invalid vehicle of the faith, and vice versa.

Meanwhile, during the Reformation period there were actually many different versions of the faith. There were still lingering traces of the Zoroastrian survivals of Manichaeism in the form of the Cathari believers in southern France, although the Catholics tried their best to exterminate them completely.

There were peasants in Germany who read the Bible and believed in ways that didn't correspond to either Catholic or Lutheran traditions. A simultaneous phenomenon called the Anabaptist movement was so strong as to be termed, often, the third force of the reformation. Roman Catholic and Anabaptist traditions are continuing to this day with a considerable social split, not just between Catholic and Protestant, but between Protestant and Anabaptist traditions.

The most powerful source of belief in both a faith and a particular earthen vessel is that of the Roman Catholic tradition. That stream, more than any other tradition, is the one which successfully extended its language. Latin survived for many centuries and performed the valuable function of a trade language and a scholarly language somewhat the

way English is today. Unity through one language was a beautiful vision and the existence of a common written language in much of Europe has been a tremendous benefit. At the same time, this so called "beautiful vision," which could be called a "uniformitarian concept," broke down permanently with the Reformation.

Curiously, the Eastern Orthodox Church much earlier gave up the idea of everyone within their tradition speaking Greek. Thus it exists as a number of Orthodox traditions, each with its own language. In a certain sense, this was a reformation before the Reformation.

But from the Roman Catholic point of view, what I call the "breakdown of the uniformitarian hypothesis" was a great tragedy. Their fears have been confirmed by what Kenneth Scott Latourette has famously called the "fissiparous tendency" following the Reformation. That tendency, blamed of course on the Protestants, has produced dozens of different versions of the faith, each within its own earthen vessel. That is a horror for those Catholics who have continued to hold to the ideal of a single universal church with a single language and single cultural tradition. They did not smile to both predict and then witness that ideal breaking up into a thousand pieces.

On the other hand, Catholic missionaries have been much more flexible. No single generalization about Catholic mission strategy could possibly be valid. Note two extremes. In Peru in 1540 the Jesuits decided it was necessary to whip the Incas to make them go to church and to Confession. Sixty years later, in 1600 AD, Jesuits working in China were soon capable of shifting gears radically in almost the opposite direction. In Peru they didn't speak the language of the native. In China, they did. In Peru, they didn't wear native clothing. In China, they did. In Peru, they didn't respect the Inca scholars. In China, they respected the Chinese scholars.

In fact, their "accommodation" to the culture was so complete that reports trickled back to the Vatican that they were syncretizing the Christian religion. After 70 years of shipboard communications back and forth, the Vatican precipitated a decision of the Emperor of China expelling all Christian missionaries of what- ever kind. The sad story of this huge setback is what is called the Chinese Rites Controversy. The decision of the Vatican was against adopting a Chinese vehicle for the faith, even though the brilliant Jesuits, at this point in history, felt that they could see very clearly the value and the feasibility of the Gospel messengers dressing like the Mandarins and mastering their classical Chinese literature.

The Current World Situation

Across the centuries, the Pope's decision against Jesuit accommodation, which triggered the Emperor's rejection of all missionaries, has been amply restudied. Views still vary, but there is a much more friendly attitude today toward cultural change than that of the Pope in the early 17th century. Of course, it is certainly possible to go too far. Before we leave China, it may be well to note a major movement involving hundreds of thousands of believers in the Bible called the Taiping Movement (also called the Taiping Rebellion). It took over the largest city in China at the time (Nanking) and ruled it very fairly and justly for over a decade. The leaders published parts of the Old Testament. They tried to live by the Bible, but they didn't get everything exactly correct. The leader of the movement called himself "God's Chinese Son" or, that is, the "other son of God"

besides Jesus. Some of the missionaries favored the movement thinking that it would eventually turn out all right. Others opposed it as being too far out.

In any event, the Manchu leaders recouped their main city with the help of British, American and French gun- boats who together pursued the slaughter of thousands of followers of the Taiping movement. This is all remotely parallel to the peasant movements of Reformation times whose people were also slaughtered and suppressed.

Today, we find movements that are very similar to the Taiping movement in many parts of the world. In Africa, there are hundreds of denominations that, as in China, have someone who is considered a divine person leading them. Obviously, missionaries are wary of such syncretism. There are probably twice as many movements that are equally different from standard Christianity of the west but which don't have a divine person in their midst. In Africa, all of these so called non-standard versions of Christianity are referred to as African Independent Churches or African Initiated Churches. They are often referred to as the AIC's for short. Their adherents number over 50 million in 20,000 "denominations."

Not only is there a spectrum of different opinions on the part of missionaries toward these groups, as is understandable, but also the groups themselves are a spectrum even more varied in size and in complexion. One of the larger of these groups is called the Kimbangu group, originating in what was once the Belgian Congo, today Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Belgian government, which favored the Catholic church, clapped Simon Kimbangu in jail, who languished 38 years before dying in prison. When he went into prison, his followers were very few. At the time he was carried out to be buried, the Belgian Congo very suddenly became an independent country called Zaire and his jailers speculated that if he had survived long enough to be freed in the Independence movement, he might have been able to recoup some of his followers.

He apparently didn't need to do that because by the time he died and the Congo became independent it turned out that his followers had grown to over one million and are now in the millions. This particular kind of Christianity is, as could be expected, disdained by many missionaries, but tolerated and perhaps respected by others. It is now a member of the World Council of Churches. Donald McGavran's perspective on these African AIC churches was to simply ask, Did they revere the Bible? He used to say, provocatively, "it doesn't matter what they believe if they are assiduously studying the Bible. Give them time, they'll turn out OK."

In any event, in Africa, where there are less than 400 church traditions established by Western missionaries, the number of believers that don't track with Western Christianity of any sort are practically equal in number and may be growing faster. You might say that our faith is now "out of control."

We've seen the same thing already, as we began this lesson, in the case of India. It may be that in China there is something very parallel as well. Very crudely you can say there are three kinds of Christians in China: the Catholics, the state recognized Protestants, and the so-called house churches of China. The latter, as with the AIC's in Africa, represent a wide spectrum of groups, and notice that they are by far the largest in number. The Catholics are far fewer than the recognized Protestant church sphere of maybe fifteen mil- lion, while the so-called house church movement has been estimated to be anywhere from 60 to 80 million.

In other words, most of the believers in Jesus Christ in Africa, India and China aren't exactly "Christians," and whether they are called churchless Christianity, or Christianity-less churches, they are a very strong and stalwart category. No matter how we look at this phenomenon we have to recognize that most of the Christianity which continues in much of Western culture is falling behind despite the fact that it might be more doctrinally correct.

On the other hand, speaking candidly, it must be admitted that of the two billion people in the world who do in fact consider themselves "Christians" a fairly large proportion are not at all clear about what they believe and are far less interested in the Bible than those in the non-traditional new spheres, those in the Christianity-less spheres. This phenomenon, to use Archbishop Temple's famous phrase, "is the new fact of our time."

Lecture 18

Indicators of the Future

Our lesson today speaks of the future and of various "indicators" which can help us anticipate the future—the future of "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In our last lesson we actually talked about one of the major new features of the future, namely the spectacular and unexpected growth of those new types of Christianity which don't readily classify as Christianity, if in fact we understand Christianity, by now, to be simply one of several cultural traditions imbued with Biblical values.

In this lesson, we will touch on some additional "indicators" of the future, such as science and faith, global agency networks, leadership development, university education, the unfinished task, new church planting movements, and the increasingly important concept of international development.

Science and Faith

In my perspective, the most serious of all features of the new future is the seemingly unresolvable polarization between science and faith.

Our global situation is this: it is as if millions of sincere and intelligent and believing scientists are genuinely awed into some sort of spirituality by the sheer wonder and infinite complexity of the nature they behold. Meanwhile, millions of sincere, intelligent believing people are similarly awed by the never ending riches and unexpected spiritual challenges they find in the Bible.

Modern man has gained such breathtaking new in- sights into nature that you might think there is nothing major left to be understood. However, the more we have learned about nature, the more we yet seem to need to find out. It is as though when the diameter of our knowledge increases, the circumference of our ignorance increases more than three times as fast.

Even the simplest things are still unfathomable. Take the attraction of a magnet to a screwdriver. What could possibly be going on between those two objects - each pulling toward each other? There is absolutely no human being alive, or who has ever lived, who has even the faintest idea of what's going on. All we can do is predict the power of magnetism mathematically and describe its behavior minutely. We have not the faintest idea what it is.

It is equally confounding that there is a top and bottom to our world. Discovering that we live on a huge ball hanging in space held into a gravitational orbit by a sun 80 million miles away is common knowledge, and once again, we can calculate very accurately how gravitational attraction functions. But its very nature, while quite different from magnetic attraction in obvious ways, is just as totally inscrutable. No one has the faintest idea how it actually works.

Whether it is in the realm of enormously large things like our own galaxy, which to fly across would require a spaceship going at the speed of light for a hundred thousand years, or the billions of other galaxies both larger and smaller, or whether it is the tiniest things which we can only see with an electron microscope rather than a telescope, once again, our knowledge is in many ways quite superficial.

Consider bacteria, of which there are 30 million different types. Upon invading the human body, they are intelligent enough to bide their time until their number can be multiplied sufficiently to do significant damage. At that key point scientists say, they have achieved a "quorum" and they attack simultaneously. If they attacked before a quorum was reached, the human body would be more easily able to defend itself. Now, that is a lot of intelligence for so small a creature as a bacterium. Until recently, no microbiologist ever dreamed that bacteria could communicate with each other, count noses and attack in force.

Thus, it is easy to see how awestruck many scientists can be. It is equally easy to understand the earnest- ness and the awe of those who pursue the pages of Holy Writ, where we find inklings of understanding of things that science can't say anything about, where we can find challenges to our morality and our very purposes for existence, where we can find sensitivities of love and compassion and the willingness to sacrifice, where we can understand how profoundly different humans are from animals, and where we can seek illumination in regard to our own personal existence and role in life.

The Polarization

How could these two sources of awe—science and religion—be polarized, be in opposition? I believe the fault is on both sides. Religious people have rightly been disturbed when science has been employed as a military weapon, when wild science fiction portrays totally horrifying futures, or when scientists have boasted, so often, of certain knowledge, only to be confounded by later insights which question their earlier audacities.

No wonder some Bible believing Christians insist that science is the enemy of the Christian faith. However, in my youth, science was considered a friend of faith and the Moody Bible Institute put out an incredible series of avant-garde color motion pictures probing the wonders of science and demonstrating thereby the glory of God.

If I type "Hugh Ross" into Google practically every thing on the screen beyond his home page denounces his work. On the other hand, many who write from a religious background denounce Hugh Ross for seeking to glorify God through the wonders of science. One of these religious web addresses actually insists that science is both dangerous and even useless because it says that while the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth demonstrates His handiwork, "there is no speech or language where their voice is heard." Of course the Bible says, "there is no speech or language where their voice is NOT heard." Do we need to twist the Bible to defend it? Misquote scripture to prove our points?

On the other hand, some scientists collect stories from history when scientists were actually opposed by religious leaders even though the Church, for example, has much more often promoted science than it has op- posed it, even providing a theological basis for it! But, some scientists only remember the opposition and develop a sort of righteous indignation towards religion.

Furthermore, many scientists are simply unwilling to allow any divine authority to tamper with their lives.

However, other scientists are genuinely concerned over the fact that religious leaders like John Calvin and Martin Luther stated emphatically that the Bible teaches that the sun goes around the earth and that the Copernican theory of a heliocentric solar system is refuted by the Bible. These scientists don't stop to think that Calvin and Luther misunderstood the Bible. They assume Calvin and Luther were intelligently explaining what the Bible teaches, and that therefore the Bible cannot be trusted.

A similar situation exists today for all of those people who believe the earth is very old. Often, they oppose religion, because of course all religious people insist the earth is just 6,000 years old based upon the teaching of scripture. As I see it, the issue really isn't whether the earth is old or young, but whether the Bible is not to be trusted.

Many evangelicals today have somehow lost track of the background of the Evangelical movement in which it was widely taught that the geological ages preceded Genesis 1:1 and that the creation account in Genesis is a new creation, explaining the origin of human beings and non-carnivorous animal life of the kind that would be achieved at the end of time, when (in Isaiah 11) a lion will lie down with a lamb and the 24/7 violence we see in nature will have ceased. This "pre-Genesis" view was clearly explained in *Unger's Bible Handbook* published by Moody Press in 24 editions over decades amounting to over 500,000 copies. A revision of it is still in print. Unger was the chair of the Old Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Note that if this view were correct—and I am not saying it is—there would be no conflict whatsoever between modern paleontology and the Biblical text. However, everybody, from Time magazine to the kindergarten teacher has been persuaded by earnest Christians that the Bible certainly teaches that the universe is no older than 6,000 years.

Obviously, huge obstacles exists for anyone who would seriously attempt to evangelize in a scientifically-oriented society. Christianity has clearly succeeded among rural populations and among uneducated people all over the world, but in its own backyard it is facing increasing opposition because of religious teachings which may have no foundation in the Bible whatsoever.

We probably need to go back to the days when the Moody Bible Institute promoted its now-closed Moody Institute of Science, and try to understand science anew so that it does not oppose but actually upholds the Christian faith.

Nothing we have said thus far prevents the continued expansion of the Christian faith for the present. It can expand in areas where science is not well understood, or is not considered an obstacle to faith. There are new church planting movements described by David Garrison all over the world, especially among rural people. The Unfinished Task is very nearly finished, if in fact we measure that task by geographical or even socio-logical penetration of the Christian faith in one form or another.

Where we are gaining... and where we are losing...

But all such gains are temporary where a population will soon become educated by the dominant form of education today which is highly secularized both in science and history, and where poverty is not taken seriously by all mission agencies. We already see The William Carey International University adopting International Development as its

theme, as of 1977, and the Fuller Theological Seminary adding a course in International Development in 2005.

But, as long as scientists, who are genuinely awed, denounce Christian leaders who are genuinely awed, the Christian leaders will tend to reject the source of awe of the scientists. It is equally, and even more importantly true, that when Christian leaders (who are awed by the Bible) denounce scientists (who are awed by the works of God), the scientists will tend to deny the legitimacy of the source of awe of the Christian leaders.

Neither side will win unless both sources of awe are understood, both the Book of Nature as a revelation of God and the Book of Scripture as a revelation of God.

We, as Christian leaders, must take the initiative of knowing both books. The Christian leadership development pattern around the world and in the USA normally omits science from its curriculum altogether. Our curriculum does not lean at all, as the Bible itself would urge it to, upon this important additional source of awe and revelation —the works of God in nature.

This leads us to another future indicator.

Christian Leadership Education

Indeed, our leadership education is flawed in several different ways. I have often spoken of three levels of failure: ***wrong students, wrong curriculum, and wrong packaging.***

We have already spoken of the ***wrong curriculum*** when it leaves out the earliest book of revelation, namely the Book of Nature, whose voice is heard in all languages. An almost more serious problem of global leadership development within the Christian tradition is our overwhelming emphasis on book learning and other training programs instead of on selection. By and large, the students at Bible schools and seminaries around the world are not gifted as pastors or missionaries no matter how many A's they earn in school. They were well trained but not well chosen. Selection is the problem.

It is a simple fact, grim as it may seem, that every church movement that depends on residentially trained pastoral leaders ends up foisting off on the church all kinds of highly trained, but ungifted people. This produces non-growth, or actual decline in membership, as can eminently be seen in the United States where every denomination depending on residential training for pastoral ordination is declining.

Meanwhile, around the world, every rapidly growing church movement depends on an entirely different sys- tem of selection-- not who goes to seminary, but who is gifted. Training people who are gifted is remarkably different from trying to develop gifts in those who are already trained.

The third flaw in leadership development is rather simple. Wrong students, wrong curriculum. How about ***wrong packaging***? While missionaries are expected to speak the language of the native, our ecclesiastical structures mindlessly continue to ignore the accepted university pattern of education and continue to call their schools "Bible Schools" or "Seminaries" and continue to wound the future of their graduates with nondescript degrees, such as M.Div.s or D.Min.s, degrees that mean nothing in the everyday world and thus impede graduate studies.

Another indicator to note is the extensive birth of new evangelical universities around the world. Joel Carpenter, Dean of Calvin College, did a quick internet survey and found at least 41 new evangelical universities in the mission lands. These universities,

curiously, have not been the result of missionary initiative. Their existence proves the importance, in the eyes of the national believers, of the university pattern over the seminary pattern. But since these schools are not the result of missionary initiative and are not linked to mission agencies, they are, in many cases, wandering in the world of secularized curricula and are not directly contributing to leadership development in the Christian sphere. We must come to terms with the University pattern of education.

Networks of Mission Agencies

Speaking as we are, of globally-true phenomena, an- other important indicator of the future is the emergence of a new and unprecedented network of mission agencies on the global level.

This was founded in April of 2005 and is called the Global Network of Mission Structures. There are already associations of mission agencies at the national level and, in some cases, at the regional level, but until the establishment of the GNMS, there has never been, on the global level, an association of Evangelical mission agencies. The closest thing to it is the Third World Mission Association, but you can tell by its name that it is not a global association.

The GNMS now faces the challenge of networking on the global level in an age of absolutely unprecedented population interchange. A recent study indicates that the number of migrant workers in the world today is so large that the financial remittances that they send back to their families amount to something like 380 billion dollars a year, which is greater than all foreign aid and foreign investment put together.

Very specifically, the GNMS will be able to track the migration of individual people groups. It may find 10,000 in London or Los Angeles from a group which in the new situation is open to assistance and friendship, compared to the relatively closed attitude of its own people in the foreign situations from which they come.

This is not to say that migration is necessarily a good thing. Probably there is no single phenomenon in world history that has torn apart more families. The evangelization of migrant workers is not an entire solution, but leading people to Christ is certainly an essential foundation for whatever further solutions may appear on the horizon. But that horizon is not simple An even more important factor in the future will come up in the next lesson.

Lecture 19

Frontier #1: Restoring God's Glory

The Lord's Prayer and Social Action

Most of the people in the world are powerless to a great extent. Very few people could change their vocation if they wanted to. They're just scratching out a living, barely, or maybe not even succeeding. Understandably, their religion would have nothing to do with this world; it is all heaven.

In church history, those religious groups that ran governments, like the Lutherans, or the Anglicans, or the Catholics, had theologies which are today called public theologies, or theologies of this world. The minorities that never ran any government—groups like the Anabaptists, the Moravians, the Quakers—tended to think about the next world, because they had nothing they could do in this world. We've inherited more of that theology by far. The person who's a devout fervent believer in Jesus Christ owes more to the Anabaptists than to the reformers or to the Catholics. The Evangelical Awakening is closer to us than it is to the Reformation itself, and it's the Evangelical Awakening from which we derive our theology and our church life, which mostly has to do with the next world. The only exception to this is a man in the Anglican tradition named John Wesley. He took the Pietism from Germany, which was mainly otherworldly, and he grafted into it all kinds of secular concerns. They reformed the courts, the prisons, the insane asylums, the schools—it was an immense transformation of society in England in the eighteenth century. The Evangelicals, though most of them don't remember it today, have this history that did involve drastic and extensive social action.

Today we tend to look down our nose at social action, and if that's a means of getting into heaven, rightly so. But if it's an outgrowth of our faith in the Lord's Prayer, then this is the way we glorify God, to align ourselves with the light instead of with the darkness. When a Harvard professor could make a statement quoted in

Time magazine that if the Intelligent Design people's God exists, then he's the author of all the evil we see, this does not demonstrate a very good basis for evangelism. This isn't the Bible talking, this is not the New Testament with its awareness of Satan; this is a kind of paganism, what we could call evangelical fatalism.

People like John Piper say that everything that moves is God's energy: when a gnat bats its wings, that's the power of God. So he has no room for Satan at all. When you tell your child of 4 that you want them to decide whether they're going to buy this dress or that dress, are you in control of that child, or are you just conceding free will? When God chooses to create beings with free will, he's conceding his will, but he's still in control. If the child chooses the wrong dress you could say "No, you can't do that," or

you could make your child into a robot where it would never say anything or do anything that wasn't you initiating it, but you may not want a robot for a child.

Maybe God doesn't want angels and human beings as robots. He wants them with free will. Now that doesn't mean he condones whatever they do, he deplores what they do in many cases. Apparently, that's part of God's purpose. He chose not to control them. And it's not that he can't, not that he doesn't have the power to defeat evil in all forms, but for some reason he wants us to work intelligently and voluntarily for him, to love him voluntarily, to give our lives for him voluntarily.

But if you subtract the free will and say that God controls everything, then you get into the question why he does all these evil things. Why does he create parasites that blind millions of people? In my book he didn't do that. And to say that he did is a major obstacle in promoting the glory of God. But ever since Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin we have tried to insist on a brittle intellectual formula that is logical but erroneous. If you say, "Why pray the Lord's Prayer —Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven—if that's already true?" But it isn't true. If it were already true, we wouldn't be told to pray that prayer. If everything that happened on earth was God's will already, why pray the Lord's Prayer?

Historically the reason the evangelicals rejected the social gospel was because the masses of them were lower class people that D.L. Moody won to Christ. The people who were talking about governmental level decisions were wealthy college people—the old style evangelicals. So there was a social polarization there, the rejection wasn't purely theological.

Jesus taught in terms of changing society to the will of God. We say that's hopeless, the world's getting worse and worse anyway so forget it. It puts more blame on the evangelicals than on the liberals. But the people who are passionate social reformers were not necessary liberal. In fact, the thing that broke the myth about that was a book by Timothy Smith called Revivalism and Social Reform, where he shows how revivalism directly led to social reform. It wasn't that revivalism was spiritual and social reform was liberal. Revivalism and social reform were the same thing in the 1850s, and there were incredible numbers of societies for the improvement of morals and societies for literacy, society for women's education, societies for abolition of slavery. All this social activity was very evangelical.

But that was before Moody came along. Moody brought millions of lower class people into the church, and they had no stake in running the governments or social change, and so they talked about the next world.

The evangelicals at the Moody Bible Institute began to think about eschatology. For about 35 years, practically everything they taught and wrote about was what was going to happen at the end of time, any moment it's going to happen. In other words, no use building a bridge because Christ may come before you finish the bridge—that type of thinking.

Well, Wesley didn't think that way, he wanted to reform England anyway. And I think we need to align ourselves with the Lord's Prayer whether we're going to do all of that before Christ returns or not. We need to be lined up with God against darkness and evil. However, Evangelicals are not distinguished yet in the fields of medical research on the front lines of doing away with diseases for instance, they're not involved in world level banking decisions, there's no developed theology even about disease.

Evangelicals didn't form any colleges, they formed Bible institutes. And for 60, 70 years they went off into a tunnel, a detour, and kept out of public life—no congressmen, no lawyers, no mayors, no professionals practically. But now all those Bible institutes have become Christian colleges and universities. Evangelicals are going into mainstream public life, and all of a sudden facing questions they never had to decide before. They are gaining a social conscience. They are now members of Congress. They are having to make decisions, which way to vote and how to run the government. They never used to do that, and now they're developing what is called a public theology. This is the simple reason why I think the face of Evangelicalism is changing today.

Lecture 20

Seizing the Future

In the perspective of this course we are dealing with the unfolding of a single story. It is not the story of the universe all the way from the big bang until today. Although presented speculatively, it is more especially the story of a good Creator and a good creation which after a lengthy period is suddenly attacked by a breakaway leader who, with his intelligent followers, wound terribly both the creation and the reputation of the Creator, thus presenting the challenge of redemption and restoration. It can be seen as an epic in five acts.

Act 1 is the longest of all the Acts, by far. During this first act the universe is created and the very lengthy period of the development of life takes place, possibly the work of angels guided by God, pleasing Him as they gradually learn what today we are beginning to understand as the true complexities of life itself.

The emergency arises at the end of Act 1. By this time atoms and molecules and, most surprisingly of all, the incredible intricacies of life have been developed, not just tiny bacteria based on DNA molecules, but small animals. Some of the animals are radially symmetrical, like star fish. Others are "bipolar" which means they have a front and a back, a right and a left. The key point is that none of these animals at this stage is aggressive. None needs to defend itself.

But the emergency, introducing Act 2, arises when, let's guess, the archangel whom Paul calls "the god of this world," with all his host, turns against God. This is the Fall of Satan. As a result of the genetic distortions of a rebel Satan, during this much shorter but still lengthy Act 2, predatory forms of life appear at all levels, from bacteria to dinosaurs, and all of nature becomes a battle ground.

Meanwhile during this tumultuous Act 2 the good an- gels continue to develop increasingly intelligent forms of life. By 11,000 years ago truly modern humans fi- nally appear, but like the rest of nature, are gruesomely distorted and dangerously predatory.

Finally, a major counter move introduces Act 3. A massive asteroid wipes out all life in the middle East, possibly gouging the below-sea-level depression now known as the Dead Sea. And now in this region, the original, non-carnivorous kind of plants and animals are recreated in the Garden of Eden and a new Adam- ic race is brought into existence in the image of God, with the apparent intent of re-introducing harmonious, not carnivorous forms of life, life that is a reflection of the end of time when the lion will lie down with the lamb (Isa. 11).

However, Act 4 begins when Adam falls, and Eden breaks down. Now, the new forms of non-predatory life of Genesis 1 interbreed with the earlier depraved forms of life outside of the region of the Garden of Eden. The Sons of God marry the daughters of men, and the length of human life gradually sags to a frac- tion of what it was intended.

Obviously, as the result of Adam's fall the image of God was damaged or erased, whatever it was, and all human be- ings are now equally depraved and in need of redemption.

We, today, stand at the later stages of this Act 4, in which God's redemptive work is making men new and enlisting them in the war effort to "destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8)."

Meanwhile, in this present Act 4 situation, widespread delusion and blindness prevails even concerning the existence of a war against Satan. This is especially true and tragic in those parts of the world where redemp- tion would seem to have succeeded more completely, that is, in the "Christian" West, and where war efforts could best be launched.

Much of the world is still so beaten down by the ravages of evil—poverty, disease, human conflict—that it is ironic that unlike the West the poor and the powerless of this world are more likely to understand the wartime footing we actually are experiencing. It is further ironic because they may be the least likely to be able to do anything about it. For them "escapist theology" is the best solace. They are the ones who now can best sing "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through."

Since the poor and the disadvantaged can't be effectively involved in a global war to defeat the works of Satan we must return to those whom we might describe as "disinclined," but theoretically capable.

The famous philosopher of yesteryear, Mortimer Adler, made the observation that what the world needed was the "moral equivalent of war"—that is, an attitude of all-out war effort, not fighting against flesh and blood, but against a similarly massive, urgent, intense, sacrificial concentration of human beings against not humans but human problems and other evils which distort God's creation and tear down His reputation. I would add, against an enemy that is not human and whose very existence is denied apathetically by even most Christians today.

Wars in the past have typically gotten started because of some massive and aggressive challenge. The closest thing to that might be a global plague of the sort that killed from 50 to 100 million people in 1918—far more people right after World War I than were killed in the war itself. But even that might not lead to the kind of total war which the United States and other nations experienced in what we call the Second World War. Not many people alive today lived through that war; those of us who did, can recall vividly the utter transformation of a nation involved in all-out, total war.

If our analysis in these lessons is correct, this war has been going on ever since Satan fell, and was renewed with humans involved when Adam fell. Adam's role in the garden was to take care of it, but after Eden broke down, his own survival was at stake. Indeed, his own son lost his life no doubt in part due to the sin permeated atmosphere outside of Eden. There is no likelihood that the equivalent of a Pearl Harbor is going to happen that would rally the social resources of the world, or even Christian resources, or more particularly, the Evangelicals. But it is easily possible to imagine that the force of the Lord's Prayer "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," would require us to do everything we possibly can, not just to exhibit fantastic personal sacrifice, but to mobilize as much of the Christian world and the non-Christian world as possible.

To quote 1 John 3:8 again, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil." This verse points out how very central war against evil, war against Satan, actually is. If this is the central purpose, or one of the central purposes of the Son of God (who made it plain that, "as my Father has sent me, even so send I you"), then His commission is our commission and our commission is today widely underestimated and misunderstood. First century believers could not know how great were the inroads the enemy had made, for example, in the realm of disease.

We do have, vaguely, the structure of war in our hands. Christians, notably in the western world, and now noticeably in the rest of the world, have launched mission agencies which are teams of people explicitly determined to carry out purposeful actions in accord with God's will. These could be considered the "armed forces" of the Kingdom, containing the "servicemen" of that Kingdom. In that Kingdom there are also "civilians," the donors, the supporters, and even those who do not support them, who are "behind the lines." The problem is, that the civilians are not remotely as mobilized at this time as they would be during a real total war, and it is true that even the servicemen are only striking a glancing blow against the Enemy of the Kingdom.

I don't believe the problem is that we have outrageously selfish, evil, or even acquisitive people. We simply have people who don't sense any war effort and are living it up in an apparently peacetime situation.

It might be observed in passing that if all mission donors were to adopt the consumption level of the missionary families they support this would free up, in a large percentage of the donors cases, a good percentage of their income. But right now they would say, "What's the use?" Such a question derives understandably from the thought that the needs around the world are dimly existent, hopelessly too large to resolve, or the efforts being made seem to be ineffective or futile.

If we are going to seize the future in terms of the wartime situation in which we find ourselves, several radically new perspectives must urgently become more widespread.

The Scope of the Problem

First of all, we must realize the true scope of the problem. If Satan is able to dull people's senses and to divert their gaze, that would certainly explain the extent to which, as John Eldredge puts it in his book *The Epic*, "I am staggered by the level of naivete that most people live with regarding evil." How is it possible for us to get a good deal of our country into a war effort in Iraq, where perhaps ten Americans die a day, and not be far more alarmed over the fact that back home due to two diseases alone, we lose as many people as if we are fighting 600 Iraq wars? Cardiovascular disease and cancer claw down to horrible death 6,000 people per day—600 times as many as in Iraq—who go down in as great a degree of suffering as those who are dying in Iraq. Yet the actual mobilization in this country to understand the origins of either of these two major diseases is terrifyingly minor. More than ninety percent of the money that goes for the ravages of these two diseases (almost two billion dollars a day) is focused on treatments of people who are already diseased, not on pursuing the sources of the diseases.

If this imbalance were more widely known, could this function as a "Pearl Harbor," to help us rally the troops for a new world war against disease? Our gargantuan

outlay in this country for medical and pharmaceutical services is almost totally concentrated on healing activity, not on the eradication of the sources of disease.

The Obscurity of the Problem

Secondly, we need to realize that this problem is not only huge and vicious, it is cloaked in the obscurity of confusion and ignorance. What has just been said about the lack of awareness of the problem is itself clearly a separate aspect of it. The hugeness of the problem wouldn't be as serious if it were in plain sight.

However, thus far I have only spoken of the evil of the massive onslaught of disease on animals and humans. Evil also includes the widespread corruption of the human element that might be involved in the solution of the problem!

Then, what about the rarely noticed distortions we see in the very existence of predatory forms of life? How about the genetic transformation that could restore predatory life to non-carnivorous condition? Is that part of the mission to glorify God? If man-eating tigers are vicious due to genetic distortion by Satan and his angels, isn't that a work of the devil? How about one day restoring them through genetic re-engineering? Is the only answer to kill or cage? Would it not be glorifying to God not to be blamed for their current predatory state? Again, is that part of our mission? If so, it involves a knowledge of microbiology which has only recently dawned on us.

But there are still other easily overlooked evils.

After many years working for the World Bank, one of the senior officials wrote a book entitled, *The White Man's Burden*. The book points out the gruesome reality that well over half the funds intended to relieve the poverty and economic distress in underdeveloped nations of the world gets diverted by the dishonesty of government officials and intermediaries in the needy nations, as well as within the ranks of the 10,000 employees of the World Bank itself. Again and again, the World Bank has attempted to clean up its act, but the diversion of funds even within its walls is so extensive that there is little will to do it.

Indeed, for the Kingdom of God to come on earth and His will to be elaborated in opposition to our great enemy, radically new awareness is necessary.

Who Will Fight for Us?

Furthermore, it would be simplest to believe that it would be sufficient if the Christians of the world are aroused to this effort. Embarrassingly, except in the area of personal salvation and hopes of eternity, most of the efforts and initiatives in our world today that focus on the defeat of the works of the Devil are led by non- Christians, or by entities that are not clearly Christian.

If money would do it, then the magnificent efforts of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation could be the answer, since their example has already pressured many other foundations to deal with some of the world's most urgent problems. It so happens that at the cutting edge of microbiological research on sources of disease, Orthodox Jewish doctors are to be found all out of proportion to their percentage of the population. However, even in the case of Jimmy Carter and his outstanding Carter Center, which has a focus on the extermination of disease pathogens, neither the money nor the activity is noticeably derived from the formal Christian movement.

In other words, it does not seem likely that it would be wise to suppose that Christians alone can slay the giants of evil in our world today. In a sense, however, our main purpose, which is more likely achievable, is to clarify the fact that God's purposes, as reflected by Christian initiatives, make Him out to be the opponent of evil, not the initiator of evil.

A Particular Problem

Several types of theology would seem to frustrate any substantial efforts against evil. One theological tradition might emphasize that the world is getting worse and worse anyway, so why bother? Focus on the next world. Another, more virulent form of theology, would actually attribute all tragedies to the initiative of God Himself, rather than to the initiative of fallen angels, or fallen humanity. This latter type of theology is so pervasive that even Christian leaders can write books like *When God Doesn't Make Sense*, or *Where Is God When It Hurts?* In both cases, God's mysterious will, to which we are told we must resign ourselves, is the main emphasis, not an intelligent evil power which we have a mandate to defeat, or at least die in the attempt.

Even more pervasive is the assumption that Christianity is primarily the rescue of human beings rather than the restoration of all creation. It is thought that to escape this world is more important than to restore God's glory on earth through the conquest of the destructive and distorting elements of Satanic fury against God.

Discipline

The one obvious truth about effective human action is that the vast majority of the work of the world is accomplished through social discipline. In a war, the armed forces are characterized by disciplined troop activities. Commercial enterprises typically squeeze the life out of people to get their work done. Once people retire, their good intentions quickly evaporate for a lack of social discipline. Their lives are cluttered with many good things, but strikingly different is their useful output by comparison to their own earlier days when they were in the harness of the work force. Even wealthy athletes and movie stars have to pay "trainers." If the world were to depend on personal will power alone, practically everything significant would grind to a halt.

It is well known that the contemporary church in America requires very little of its people. This gives rise to the fact that we have an Opus Dei in the Catholic tradition which harnesses lay believers in a very accountable lifestyle. In the Protestant tradition we have the Disciplined Order of Christ which tends in the same direction, though far less seriously. When everyone does that which is right in their own eyes, the resulting efforts for the Kingdom are token at best, and essentially meaningless at worst. In the case of the Opus Dei, the "sanctification of daily life" is a marvelous emphasis, but considerably directionless without any clear war effort in mind. In the case of the Disciplined Order of Christ (DOC), there is even less emphasis upon "holy worldliness," to use Richard Mouw's famous phrase. However, something vaguely equivalent, in addition to, but not in opposition to existing congregations, would seem to be necessary if we are going to mobilize Christian believers in any real depth.

At the present time, I am unaware of any substantial, explicitly Christian organization in the world that is focused on the defeat of disease pathogens as is the case with the Carter Center. We have organizations devoted to justice and which defend the

rights of Christian believers in public schools and in public life, but these are, to some extent, defensive, or superficial.

There is not space or time here, to go further in elaboration of what it would take to disassociate God from evil events, or the disciplined group efforts necessary for that purpose. But at least we can sense, with what has been said, the larger dimensions of the Christian mission, and the contrast with what is now being accomplished.

Total war will require thousands of Evangelicals to move to the cutting edge of microbiology and of political life, to work for the transformation of ethical standards throughout the commercial world and a new sense of the need of group discipline to do those things. All this and more is necessary if we are to “seize the future.”