

“THE MANIFESTO”

My vision for evangelism

Written to newsletter subscribers—January, 2000

You have noticed over the past three years my trend away from the newsletter and toward wide-scale evangelism. This motion, I believe, is progressive. It is inexorably of God; I have been gradually drawn toward this since I began studying the Scriptures in 1979, and certainly since 1993. In 1993, I wrote primarily to feed the flock. Presently, I am planning books that will comfort multitudes of emotionally, morally and spiritually sick people—good people—beaten into despair by the God-defiling doctrines of Christianity.

I am now convinced that the false teaching of eternal torment has contributed more to the moral downfall of this world (especially that of the western nations) than anyone can or ever could calculate. We, ourselves, have terribly underestimated its effects. I will quote here from a rare piece of literature, *Christ Triumphant*, published by Thomas Allin in 1890. An intellectual man (and very much a realist), he was nevertheless a man of vision, insight and passion. If what Mr. Allin tells us in the following words was true of his generation, how much more true is it today? How much more ashamed should we be, who have grown so complacent as to forget that we are carriers and continuers of this flame of truth?

Further, I write because deeply and painfully convinced of the very serious mischief which has been, and is being, produced by the views generally held.¹ They in fact tend, as nothing else ever has, to cause, I had almost said, to justify the skepticism now so widely spread; they effect this because they so utterly conflict with any conception we can form of common justice and equity. It is precisely the sense of natural equity which God has planted within us, that the popular belief in endless evil and pain most deeply wounds. And these considerations are in fact a complete answer to some other objections often heard. “Why disturb men’s minds,” it is said, “why unsettle their faith; why not let well alone?” By all means, I reply, let well alone, but never let ill alone. Men’s minds are already disturbed; it is because they are already disturbed that we would calm them, and would restore the doubters to faith by pointing them to a larger hope, to a truer christianity.

Have we been guilty of “letting well alone?” We have. Amazing that any could call “well” a “faith” that lends God the emotional constitution of a medieval torturer. Yet we have lost our purpose in this day of tolerance. Yes, we ourselves have succumbed to a Beatlesque philosophy of: “Let it be.” This philosophy certainly appeals to that part of our nature that hates confrontation and loves to sit down. But what has it done for the spread of truth? For the peace of our fellow-travelers upon this planet? We seem to want to imitate the apostle Paul, but only until the man cinches his belt and boards a ship.

Allin continues:

¹Paul describes the phenomenon in Romans 1:28, “And according as they do not test God, to have Him in recognition, God gives them over to a disqualified mind, to do that which is not befitting.”

A penalty which to our reason and moral sense seems shocking, and monstrous, loses all force as a threat. It has ever been thus in the case of human punishments. And so in the case of hell. Outwardly believed, it has ceased to touch the conscience, or greatly to influence the life of christians. To the mass of men it has become a name and little more (not seldom a jest); to the skeptic it has furnished the choicest of his weapons; to the man of science, and to the more thoughtful of all ranks, a mark for loathing and scorn: while, alas, to many a sad and drooping heart, which longs to follow Christ more closely, it is the chief woe and burden of life.

The mode in which the ordinary creed does its hateful work of hardening the skeptic, and saddening the most devout, may be shown by two brief extracts, "All the attempts yet made," says a stern moralist, "to reconcile this doctrine with divine justice and mercy, are calculated to make us blush, alike for the human heart that can strive to justify such a creed, and for the human intellect that can delude itself into a belief that it has succeeded in such a justification." "Nothing," says the late General Gordon, "can be more abject and miserable than the usual concept of God. Imagine to yourself what pleasure it would be to Him to burn us, or to torture us. Can we believe any human being capable of creating us for such a purpose? We credit God with attributes which are utterly hateful to the meanest of men. I say that christian Pharisees deny Christ. A hard, cruel set they are, from high to low. When one thinks of the real agony one has gone through in consequence of false teaching, it makes human nature angry with the teachers who have added to the bitterness of life."

The phrase "christian Pharisees" is an insightful one. It fingers a truth that we ourselves have lost touch of. Because the Pharisees of our Lord's day rejected Him and endorsed His death, the very word "Pharisee" makes us cringe. The term has become synonymous with "bad person." In this, we have become thoroughly deceived, and have therefore grown ineffective in our evangelism, especially in the important aspect of exposure and rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2). The Pharisees were every bit as socially respected as today's most well-regarded cleric. There was nothing outwardly evil about them. In fact, they were outwardly righteous. (This is why Jesus called them *whitewashed* tombs.) But they loved tradition more than truth. (Note how Jesus equated false teaching with death.)

The Pharisees were thoroughly convinced in their own minds that they were the finest sons of Abraham. Few of us can imagine the wide eyes, the open mouths, the flared nostrils that ensued when a poorly-dressed, religious nobody from Nazareth told these people (yes, they were people) that they were not sons of Abraham, they were sons of Satan. It would be the equivalent of you or me telling a congregation of song-singing Christians at the Methodist church this Sunday: "If you people were truly servants of Christ, you would be teaching His doctrines. But you are teaching instead the doctrines of demons. Therefore, in truth, you are servants of Satan."

Peter was convinced he was serving Christ when he attempted to dissuade his Master from the cross. Jesus, seeing beneath the outward sincerity and righteous exterior, bore to the heart of the matter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan." Paul, too, possessed this gift of spiritual x-ray, calling some who were naming Christ, "enemies of the cross." Only by feeling the shock of the Pharisees can we understand that only those thoroughly convinced they are "of God" could be so thoroughly shocked at being called "of Satan." The principle is timeless. The only group of people today who could be shocked to the point of flabbergast at being called "enemies of the cross," are those who are convinced they are champions *of* the cross. The only people who can fit this description are: Christians.

Christian Pharisees deny Christ. A hard, cruel set they are, from high to low. Adding to the bitterness of life. Such true words. Yet words which even the most zealous of us are loathe to utter. Who will expose the unwitting criminals who have added to the bitterness of life? Who will dare probe behind the whitewashed wall to uncover "a hard, cruel set of christian Pharisees" who have, effectually, done more than Hitler, Stalin or Castro to drive God from men's minds? We have studied the consequence of atomic bombs, of Communism, of renegade germs and viruses. Yet we have never subjected to analysis that amazing thing that

General Gordon has called the “consequence of false teaching.” Why? *Because the consequences of the false teaching of eternal torment are now the fabric of society. They are the dirty fabric long worn to familiarity, from which we have sought to but flick crumbs. The consequences of the false doctrine of eternal torment are so all-pervasive, so closely connected to the invisible and nearly universal undercurrent of human thinking concerning God, that they are impossible now to separate and calculate.*

And so we have missed the invisible for the obvious, failing to smell death for the scent of whitewash. Thus, we have failed to pinpoint the source of society’s moral ills, let alone applied the balm needed to alleviate them.

Allin:

You know [eternal torment] has been taught, and yet you actually complain that men are skeptical, and that thoughtful artisans reject such a creed with scorn. R. Suffield writes [of the Middle Ages]: “The dogma of hell, except in the rarest cases, did no moral good. It never affected the right persons. It tortured innocent young women, and virtuous boys. It appealed to the lowest motives, and the lowest characters. It caused unceasing mental and moral difficulties. It always influenced the wrong people, and in a wrong way. It caused infidelity to some, temptations to others, and misery without virtue to most.”

What, I ask, has the dogma of endless pain and sin really effected? Has it checked the growth of heathenism in our cities? Has it kept the artisan in the fold of Christ? Ineffective always, such teaching is more than ever so in these days, because the intelligent are by it forced into open revolt.

Let us not forget how much the traditional creed has fostered in man a spirit of cruelty. It is sad, but true, to recollect how much of the suffering inflicted by man on his brother man, has been due, directly or indirectly, to the belief in an endless hell. It gave to torture an apparent divine sanction. Not alone have the popular doctrines done all this, but they have greatly influenced for evil the general course of human legislation, and human thought. Many pages might be filled in enumerating the horrors, and anguish added to human life by these doctrines.

Thus it is that by this shocking creed the moral tone is lowered all round, wherever it is accepted. Men are familiarized with the idea of suffering and sin as permanent facts. They have even in some sort learned to consider heaven as dependent upon the belief in an endless hell. The very holiest men believing the popular creed are unconsciously depraved, morally and spiritually.

Let me speak plainly. Too long—far too long—have the clergy been silent; content to complain of a skepticism, of which a main cause is a doctrine they continue to teach (without, I believe in many cases, more than a languid and merely traditional acceptance of it). I repeat that no thoughtful man can believe a doctrine condemned by the conscience; and so men will seek a refuge in skepticism, when they hear the clergy teaching these evil traditions (for they are no more) as part of the revelation of that God, Whose blessed son tasted death for every man. Yes, the peculiar horror of the popular creed is that it sets up evil as an object of worship, of reverence, of love.

So revolting to our moral nature is the popular creed, that it, more than any other cause, produces the most wide-spread unbelief. “Compared with this,” remarks J.S. Mill, “all objections to christianity sink into insignificance.”

The intelligent are by [false teaching] forced into open revolt.

Paul’s accusation of the Jews rehearses the present phenomenon of a world repelled *from* God by the friends of God: “Lo! you are being denominated a Jew, and are resting on law, and are boasting in God, and know the will, and are testing what things are of consequence...You have confidence in yourself to be a guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, a discipliner of the imprudent, a teacher of minors...You, then, who are teaching another, you are not teaching yourself...*For because of you the name of God is being blasphemed among the nations*” (Romans 2:17-24).

I cannot emphasize it enough (many of us have forgotten it) that the most dangerous enemies of the cross are completely (and I mean completely) oblivious of their role. So often I am told that exposure and rebuke must not be exercised upon those who are unconsciously deluded, that is, upon those who are at least sincere. But

by this we can excuse Charles Manson and Adolph Hitler, both of whom sincerely believed that their actions were righteously motivated. The problem is that we have become deadened by familiarity to the horror of the eternal torment doctrine and its effect on God's name. We cringe at the crimes of Manson and Hitler, yet merely roll our eyes when hellfire spews from the pulpit. How can I make you see that today's whitewashed Christian who embraces eternal torment is truly, as the writer testifies, "unconsciously depraved, morally and spiritually."

You say, "But they are nice people!" I say, "So were the Pharisees! The key word here is 'unconsciously.'" You say, "But they don't really teach it with enthusiasm." I say, "They are guilty by association." As the author notes, even a languid and merely traditional acceptance of eternal torment is sufficient to wreak the direst damage. Face it: We are tired, discouraged and beaten. And we disguise our melancholy by misappropriating "all is of God," lending a false air of spirituality to our own fatalistic bent, and to our personal loathing of confrontation. We have lost our righteous indignation, that brand exhibited by our Lord and by Paul. As Thomas Allin says in another place: "I say, that, however familiar this may be, it is necessary to ponder well the sad facts, for by awakening a righteous horror and indignation, we may often most effectually combat such dogmas." It is this torch that I now carry.

The intelligent are by [false teaching] forced into open revolt.

What underlies so many, if not all, of our societal woes? Open revolt. The mother who kills her unborn baby is in open revolt. The child pornographer who defies the law is in open revolt. The supreme court justice who bans prayer from the classroom is in open revolt. The filmmaker who glorifies homosexuality is in open revolt. The gunman who kills schoolchildren is in open revolt. The man who leaves his wife is in open revolt. The woman who steals from the department store is in open revolt. The teenager who smokes his first cigarette is in open revolt. Whether in big ways or in small, in public, private, or in the depths of the human soul, humanity is in open revolt.

Now you must ask yourself: against what, or whom, is humanity revolting? Ask them as individuals, and they do not know. The source of their misery is so subtle that they themselves do not know it. But we know. They are revolting against God. Not against God as He is, but against the caricature of God painted through the centuries by the unconsciously depraved; by the morally and spiritually bankrupt who look, by every outward appearance, to be the whiteness of the world. They are revolting against the god of Christianity.

...who is on the move, by the way. As I write, Christian organizations are gearing up for "evangelistic war," devoting millions of dollars and countless man-hours toward the furtherance of their false gospel, an essential element of which is eternal torment. Dr. James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, issued this statement in 1998:

The changing culture forced a re-examination of this ministry in 1996. Secular humanism, the sexual revolution and the New Age movement had taken their toll. Spiritual confusion was evident everywhere. Thus, we began to ask if we were doing enough to introduce people to the Giver of Life. How should our ministry adapt to the spiritual needs of a society that was rapidly forgetting its Christian underpinnings?

In May 1996, our Board of Directors convened for their regular spring meeting. In addition to discussing the "business" of Focus on the Family, the 11 of us struggled to answer this vital question: "What is the role of this Christian ministry in a post-Christian world?" We deliberated for the better part of a day and then found ourselves on our knees at about 10 p.m. There were tears that evening as we began to understand the Lord's new direction for the work He had called us to do.

In short, we agreed to give greater emphasis to the basics—to infuse a greater spirit of evangelism into each of the 70 ministries that comprise Focus on the Family. Called the Campaign for Righteousness, it expresses our passion

and *raison d'être*.

Try, if you can, to see past the self-righteous struggle, the bended knees, the tears and the spiritual-sounding platitudes (the Pharisees were identically engaged) and realize the shocking truth: Dr. Dobson and his Board of Directors have absolutely no idea what the real gospel is. Worse, they are so deceived that they have adopted and decided to give “a greater emphasis to” a false gospel (a teaching of demons) in place of the true one. These men’s idea of evangelism is: Snap out of your sin long enough to believe in Jesus Christ before you die, or you will be eternally tormented in flames within sight of God Himself, Who will approve of the proceedings. And by the way, you’re saved by grace.

Peter predicts the coming of such false teachers, writing in 2 Pet. 2:1-2, “Yet there came to be false prophets also among the people, as among you also there will be false teachers who will be smuggling in destructive sects, even disowning the Owner Who buys them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many will be following out their wantonness, because of whom the glory of the truth will be calumniated.”

What is “disowning the Owner Who buys them,” except the doctrine of free will, which removes grace from salvation and purchases this boon for those wise enough to barter their “willpower” (free will) in exchange for it? What is a “destructive sect” except that which promises eternal destruction for all to whom God has yet to impart faith? And what does the term “smuggling” suggest if not subtly? “Wantonness” is not the monopoly of Las Vegas prostitutes. In the Greek the word is *aselgeia*. The elements are UN-MOON-LEADING. The literal, Scriptural definition is: “leading or going away by stealth when the moon is not shining.” Peter uses this term to describe those who lead others astray in the absence of light, which in the context is Scriptural revelation. Wherever “fun, food, fellowship and the traditions of men” usurp Scriptural teaching (the careful and meticulous kind) false and destructive teachings follow. The false teachers of Peter’s context must be Christians, as they are counted “among” the believers.

The sad paradox is that these men, in seeking to combat secular humanism, the sexual revolution, the New Age movement and rampant spiritual confusion, are actually poised to spread it. How? They are bent on propagating the very message that caused these societal woes in the first place.

If there has ever been a sadder, more vicious or pathetic circle, I don’t know what it could possibly be.

I wrote in a yet-to-be published book called *Martin Zender Solves Evil*:

A fine and proper hope for normal people is for all evil to have deeper purpose. But if most of mankind is tortured for eternity, what is the deeper purpose? How does anyone “solve” evil? How do you “solve” billions of humans writhing in endless misery in front of God, Who is loving and able? How do you “solve” your husband, wife or children forever turning over flame?

If eternal torment is true, then God is insane. If God is insane, nothing is solvable. Let us kill our young children. Let us arm abortionists with government funding and sharper scissors. Those sucked broken and dead from the womb enter sweet bliss. They do, compared with eternal hellfire. Don’t they? Then better to kill the children now, before the “age of accountability.” Better this than risk them not finding Jesus and being consciously broken for eternity. For, “narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be who find it.”

James Dobson and others fight evil in this world. They “tsk tsk” people who photograph naked women, gamble, take God’s name in vain, and kill human fetuses. But the people are photographing, gambling, cussing and killing because the doctrines of Dobson have maddened them. These are not doctrines of Dobsonian invention, but ones he and others have foisted on the world.

In Colorado Springs they plan to reform the bad people of Earth. The bad people say: “Mind your own business.” Such opposition troubles the planners—note the mystification and head scratching. Such is the seduction of self-righteousness, when you can’t see Godzilla in the room. Martin Zender says: Clear away your Emerald City haze

there in Colorado. Then all you have left is a “loving” God who only loves the loving. The rest He tortures for eternity. Damn, I wonder if that hurts. Your God is worse than your devil, Mr. Dobson. And you wonder why your programs grind and halt. Religion has removed your eyes, and blindness keeps you from seeing Godzilla in the room. His head with all the fangs and drool is sticking out your roof,. Yet all you see is the world running from your building. “Why are people running from our building?” you ask. There is no answer. So you think: “We must need more money. I will write another newsletter.”

Stop writing and listen. Here is what people are saying: You are giving us *God*? No. Your “all-loving” Deity *must* be loved or He loses His mind. If we don’t return His “affections,” He tortures for eternity, whatever that is. LOVE HIM OR ELSE is the “call of grace” from your God houses. It is gift-wrapped in stained glass and *The Feingold Gospel Singers*. You have no idea how this affects our morality, being blind yourselves to your own imperfections. And now we should reward you with right behavior? Your own God does not love His enemies, but rather turns His back on them. Is it our task to outperform Him? If we can, He isn’t God. Many do love your brand of Savior. We call them hypocrites. As for us, we will photograph naked women and shop for calmer deities.

It is now January of the year 2000, and Dr. Dobson is still lamenting over national immorality with his left hand, while unwittingly resolving to fuel it with his right. In his latest newsletter, Dr. Dobson wrings both hands for three pages over the precarious condition of the traditional family. Then, on page 4, he says a most amazing thing:

Isn’t it interesting that in many countries where Christian influence is minimal, the family continues to be supported overwhelmingly?

Interesting? It’s more than interesting, Dr. Dobson. It’s the answer. If only you realized the truth of your own statement, that where Christian influence (and therefore the false gospel of eternal torment) is minimal (such as in third-world countries), there still remains some semblance of morality. Thomas Allin said it over one hundred years ago: **“Thus it is that by this shocking creed the moral tone is lowered all round, wherever it is accepted.”**

If only you realized the import of your own words, Dr. Dobson. Then you would re-examine the “Christian influence,” to find out what could possibly be so monstrously wrong with it that it would actually inspire immorality and unbelief. An honest Scriptural search would expose to your eyes the anomaly of eternal torment, a doctrine so demonic and unscriptural that it makes Satan victor over Christ, and sinning man the arbiter of his own eternal destiny. What a day of revelation this would be! Armed at last with the true gospel, you would put your many resources to work dispensing it, at last alleviating the pain and despair you are now inadvertently forwarding.

But no. Nothing dawns on the man to date, and Dr. Dobson continues to spread the gospel of salvation by human willpower, whitewashing it as the gospel of grace. But to his credit, he does offer this advice toward the end of his letter:

We must continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will bring to life that which is seemingly dead and to bless us with a sweeping spiritual renewal in the years ahead.

There may well be a sweeping spiritual renewal in the years ahead. And indeed, it would depend (relatively speaking), on life brought to that which is seemingly dead. But what Dr. Dobson would shudder to understand (and no doubt reject forthwith) is this: that the answer to his prayer demands the exposure and possible destruction of the very system of religion that he himself currently and dearly espouses.

On March 8, 1983, there appeared before a lectern in Orlando, Florida, a black and white man. He was a driven man, with a moral passion that could only be described by one biographer as “a clean hatred.” He was not so much obstinate in the face of impossible odds as he was unable to comprehend the reason that challenges faith. Thus, he believed the way a child believes—ardently and absolutely. A writer once said of him, “Mock him if you will, but I’ve never known anybody with such an ability to reduce a situation to its simple essence.”

It was his desire, this day, to end his speech with a final point concerning the willingness of Marxist-Leninist leaders to sacrifice morality for the progress of their revolution:

I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are...Let us pray for the salvation of all those who live in that totalitarian darkness...the focus of evil in the modern world.

I urge you to beware the temptation...to ignore the facts of history *and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire*, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourselves from the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil.

The biographer Edmund Morris writes:

The reaction to Reagan’s speech was extraordinary, not only for intensity but the diametric opposition of conservatives who loved it and liberals who took it to be a declaration of rhetorical war. And that was just within the boundaries of the United States...In Europe, the President was variously perceived as the archetypal American *naïf*, an old actor moving from script to script, and a binary-minded simpleton who thought all issues could be reduced to check boxes marked YES or NO. The consensus of critics was that he had expressed coarse and confrontational sentiments that were bound to increase East-West tensions.

In an official response circulated by TASS, Yuri Andropov accused the President of being deliberately “provocative” and obsessed by a “bellicose, lunatic anti-Communism.” KGB agents were instructed to make a slogan of the phrase *Reagan eto voina* [Reagan means war]. Ironically, little attention was paid to Soviet domestic opinion. Not for years would evidence begin to gather that the word *evil* had penetrated the Russian soul. It was a word, however unspoken, guiltily familiar to every [Communist Party member]: the Party had, after all, killed more innocents than any despotism in history.

Western travelers who happened to be well connected and in Moscow at the time of the President’s speech remember a feeling of instant shock. “Within twenty-four hours,” one of them told me, “I was hearing of the reaction spreading through society—of self-disgust and self-acknowledgment.”

“Other Presidents had bad-mouthed Soviet Communism.”

“Yes, but never so directly, and in such plain language.”

Whatever you might think of him politically, Ronald Reagan’s “clean hatred” of Communism was legendary. Writes Morris:

Reagan had hated it for thirty-five years, on the simple grounds that it was not accidental but ideological: a doctrine perfected by a cynical minority to enslave—i.e., enforce labor from, and deny self-determination to—a terrorized majority.

Thank you, Melody, for buying me *Dutch* this past Christmas.

Friends, *Dutch* is the authorized biography of Ronald Reagan. It is the product of fourteen years labor by Edmund Morris, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*. God placed this book in my hands during a crisis in my life, when my enthusiasm for continuing this work was waning. As I read, God showed me the parallels between the doctrine of Communism and that of eternal torment. He caused to rise up within me a new resolve. He imparted to my work ethic a new practicality. You’re not just

dreaming, He seemed to be saying to me, but working toward a goal—a real goal.

At this point, some may be laughing to themselves at Martin Zender. “Not only does God talk to him, but he thinks an errant church doctrine resembles *Communism*. He thinks eternal torment is to be compared to the nuclear destruction of the world, a specter this nation faced during the Cold War. Next, will he be comparing himself to the President of the United States?”

I would not be so foolish. What U.S. president ever battled such covert forces as those which now drive the most subtly destructive religion on Earth? Nuclear warheads are like mustached dictators, all sitting like ducks at a shooting gallery; the obvious enemy. Can this be compared to a devil in a pulpit? A demon in gentle robes? Satan himself gilding crosses on a whitewashed steeple? One may threaten to destroy the world with nuclear weaponry, or one may actually destroy it (morally and spiritually) at the same time chanting, “Peace on Earth, good will toward men.”

Let us return to Orlando, Florida, on March 8, 1983. God talks to me, yes. He talks to me through people and events that intersect my life with surgical timing.

It was Edmund Morris who said of Reagan, “Mock him if you will, but I’ve never known anybody with such an ability to reduce a situation to its simple essence.” This is what Ronald Reagan did when he called the Soviet Union “an evil empire.” Caring little for political correctness, President Reagan saw through the layers and layers of diplomatic facade into the heart of a beast. Please read his words again, this time drawing the necessary parallel between the doctrine of Communism and that of eternal torment. Though one is worse than the other, both seek to bind the human spirit:

I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are...Let us pray for the salvation of all those who live in that totalitarian darkness...the focus of evil in the modern world.

I urge you to beware the temptation...to ignore the facts of history *and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire*, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourselves from the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil.

I speak now to you, my readers, my friends. You are influential people. You are influential in that you are among the very few in this world to whom God has given understanding. You understand, through the Scriptures, through able teachers, through the holy spirit, that God’s goal is to reconcile the world to Himself through the blood of Christ. But until now, many of you have not accepted an elementary fact of our enemy’s protocol, namely, that Satan is now transfigured into a messenger of light, and that his servants are being transfigured into apostles of Christ (that is, they are to be identified as Christians) and dispensers of righteousness.²

Satan is now using the Christian religion to turn the world from God. Yet many of you are removing yourselves from the struggle. Why? Because your friends are Christians. Because you don’t want to look “spiritually incorrect” exposing and rebuking a socially accepted institution. Because you want to ignore the facts of history, such as the evil wrought by the Roman Church in the middle centuries. Because you hesitate to admit that the doctrine of eternal torment, cleaned and accredited by its defenders, is yet “the focus of evil in the modern world,” keeping millions in spiritual darkness. Because you have been asleep to the aggressive impulses of an evil empire.

²2 Cor. 11:13-15

I now believe that the doctrine of eternal torment is, literally, *the* focus of evil in the modern world. Due to its subtlety, its alignment with an outwardly righteous religion, its almost universal acceptance in Western cultures, and the effectiveness with which it damages God's character and demoralizes mankind wherever it is preached, it has become Satan's premier weapon. It must especially gratify our Adversary to see how thoroughly his "dispensers of righteousness" (i.e. "good, Christian people") have unconsciously deceived and disarmed even the so-called "defenders of truth." These "defenders" (the few on Earth who actually know the gospel, and therefore the only ones able to identify and counter Satan's agenda) have become so afraid of "hurting good people" and "not walking in love," that they have abandoned two of the three necessary elements of evangelism, namely, exposure and rebuke. Satan is well pleased, for entreaty alone (the third element of effective evangelism), while able to nurture the few who already know truth, is insufficient by itself for evangelistic work. Satan is thus pleased that the most critical two-thirds of 2 Timothy 4:2 have been abandoned. What does he care if the already-mature learn more and more minute details of the true God? The last thing he wants is more people understanding the accomplishments of the cross.

You are reluctant to see a totalitarian power for what it is. I retain the word "totalitarian" without apology. The word speaks of "a centralized government in which those in control grant neither recognition nor tolerance to parties of differing opinion." It is my duty to report to you that the Christian religion is totalitarian in that it is now garnering its forces to spread its doctrine to every man, woman and child on Earth. (Perhaps you were unaware of Luis Bush and Billy Graham's *AD2000 Movement*—similar to Dr. Dobson's *Campaign for Righteousness*—formed in 1993, which promised "A church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year 2000." The movement failed, but "dispensers of righteousness" hatch new plots daily, attempting to "evangelize" the world with the most terrorizing message men, women or children could possibly hear.) It is totalitarian in that it grants neither recognition nor tolerance to parties of differing opinion. If you don't believe me, talk to my friend George Apic of Toronto.

For the past year, George has attempted to politely interject the truth of Christ's work into his church's weekly Bible studies. The pastor finally told him, "George, you will either quit talking about this or I will have to ask you to leave." I visited this church with George last May. I, too, attempted to speak truth during a question and answer session. The flash of anger from the pastor's eyes cut deep. The latest news from Toronto is that George has finally left the church, driven from a Christian house of worship by a regime that refused to tolerate, not just George's opinion, but his witness to truth. Will you tell me that the same thing would not happen in nearly every Christian church around the world?

And yet there are still people—friends of the truth—who consider my work, "nice, but too intense. Such grand goals, but what is all the fuss?" One man—an elderly gentleman who has supported my work on a monthly basis—wrote to tell me that I "should not be disappointed" if support for my labor wanes, and that it is "no shame to go out and obtain some practical employment." The slight was unconscious but telling: attempting to change the world's view of God is a noble pastime, but one can certainly be of more practical use delivering pizzas. The question that troubles me now is: how many more of you, deep down, feel the same way?

"Paul made tents," some have told me, "so you should be like Paul and do something on the side." In other words, "get a *real* job." What is not generally understood by those who say such things is that Paul, *as the inaugural member of the body of Christ*, was under intense scrutiny. So radical was his desire to be found unimpeachable that he wrote to the Corinthians, "it is my ideal rather to be dying than that anyone shall be making my boast void" (1 Cor. 9:15). Paul's boast was that he never used his rights (1 Cor. 9:12). Paul had the right to be living of the evangel ("for thus the Lord also prescribes that those who are announcing the evangel are to be living of the evangel"—1 Cor. 9:14), even as he had the right to take a wife, "even as the

rest of the apostles” (1 Cor. 9:5). But Paul stoically, even radically, refused his right to support, at least among the Corinthians. (Paul later admitted that he despoiled other ecclesias—2 Cor. 11:8—in order to minister freely among his pet church.)

Besides, Paul lived and worked before the apostasy (read 2 Tim., chapters 3 and 4). Once the apostasy set in (Paul compares it to a war—2 Tim. 2:4), Paul expected full time workers trained to contend with it, thus his charge to Timothy. Timothy was, like a soldier, to avoid involvement in the business of a livelihood, that he might please his Enlistor (2 Tim. 2:4). He was to fully discharge his service as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 4:5).

The most out-of-timing and slavishly superstitious thing I have ever heard concerns the truth-rich ecclesias in Europe that seem to take especial pride that “none of our people work full time in the gospel.” Nor do they allow it, I hear. Such a claim to fame! I hope none of them are married—Paul wasn’t! The apostle would turn in his grave to learn of this. No wonder evangelism has stalled; the people who actually know the gospel don’t get around to teaching it until they’ve finished their “real” jobs.

Ronald Reagan faced a similar prejudice from those who considered the arms race to be based on “a giant misunderstanding,” as if there really was no basic moral difference between Communism and freedom, as if Communism, after all, consisted of people just like you and me; as if, left to its own, the Communist regime would eventually walk itself into oblivion and all the bombs would suddenly disappear. Really, what *was* old Ronnie getting so worked up about?

I have heard the same sentiments from people who say that “Christianity is basically a *good* religion,” that there is basically no vital moral difference between those who teach God as the Savior of all (1 Tim. 4:10) and those who teach Him as the Damner of most. (“My friends believe that Jesus died for their sins,” one woman recently wrote me, “and that’s all that matters.” I wonder if this woman would say the same thing if her friends raped and murdered children. Probably not. But who cares if they rape and murder God’s truth?) Others suggest that if I would just “settle down,” the truth would spread in its own good time, and these doctrines of demons would someday simply “fizzle out.”

What do I glean from all these comments except that I have foolishly devoted my life to struggling against a nonexistent enemy? That I am nobly yet impractically employed? That I am loved but not necessarily needed? Those who deliver pizza or fix computers have *real* jobs, for the pizza won’t deliver itself and the sick computers require human intervention. Where is the killing fatalism *here*? For some reason unknown to me, it is reserved for those activities concerning God’s truth. Oh, if only evil contained *real* leaven. If only evil could be deleted from a hard drive.

Reagan had hated [Communism] for thirty-five years...Almost as much, he hated the reciprocal doctrine of détente, by which the Western world allowed the enslavement to continue, in the callow hope that Soviet Communism might contain itself.

Détente. It is what we, as believers, have been locked into for too many years. For too many years, we have allowed the enslavement of seeking souls to continue beneath the hand of a whitewashed, totalitarian evil, in the callow hope that it might contain itself. Détente. It is a French word that literally means “to relax.” It is the opposite of “struggle.”

For to you it is graciously granted, for Christ’s sake, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also, having the same struggle such as you are perceiving in me, and now are hearing to be in me. —
Philippians 1:29-30

For I want you to perceive what the struggle amounts to which I am having for your sakes and for those in Laodicea, and whoever have not seen my face in flesh, *that their hearts may be consoled*, being united in love, and to all the riches of the assurance of understanding, unto a realization of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed. —**Colossians 2:1-3**

For you yourselves are aware, brethren, that our entrance to you has not come to be for naught, but, though suffering before and being outraged in Philippi, according as you are aware, we are bold in our God to speak the evangel of God to you with a vast struggle. For our entreaty is not out of deception, nor yet out of uncleanness, nor yet with guile but, according as we have been tested by God to be entrusted with the evangel, thus are we speaking, not as pleasing men, but God, Who is testing our hearts. For neither did we at any time become flattering in expression, according as you are aware; neither with a pretense for greed, God is witness; neither seeking glory from men, neither from you, nor from others, when we could be a burden as Christ's apostles. —**1 Thessalonians 2:1-6**

Just what do you think Paul struggled against? To hear the woman who wrote me, he struggled against nonexistent demons. For what is the difference what one believes, as long as one names "Jesus?" But no! Paul struggled against the lies of the Adversary, dispensed through whitewashed sources. He struggled to free people from the bondage of law, instigated against the innocent by those who named Christ (Acts 15:5, 21:20). He struggled to deliver any human being who would listen from the bondage of religion, superstition and the traditions of men. He struggled to present truth wherever falsehood abounded. Paul struggled to present Christ *as He is*.

For twenty years, Americans had been content to relax while Russia built her military might. Many simply refused to recognize the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire. They considered the arms race a giant misunderstanding, and thereby removed themselves from the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil. This was *détente*, every minute of which kept millions enslaved and threatened the civilized world.

Demonstrably, since the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev had flouted that understanding (i.e., *détente*), crushing patriots under his tanks, threatening to do the same with pro-democracy trade unionists in Poland...all the while arming Cuba and treating three successive American Presidents to black-browed tirades against American "imperialism." Ronald Reagan had just as demonstrably, over the same period, made plain his intent not to be the fourth President so cowed.

At last came a man of insight and vision, a man of action and steel, a man whose childlike polarization of evil and good would, from humanity's point of view, alter the course of history. And what did he do? He identified the enemy, gave it a name, then challenged the civilized world to join him in his struggle to oppose it.

According to biographer Morris, Reagan waited no longer than his first press conference before assuring reporters that the days of polite East-West dialogue were over:

So far, *détente's* been a one-way street the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims...I know of no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution, and including the present leadership, that has not more than once repeated...that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state...The only morality they recognize is what will further their cause...I think when you do business with them, even at a *détente*, you keep that in mind.

I am here to tell you that the days of polite dialogue between truth-bearers and the bearers of evil tidings are over. So far, *détente* *has* been a one-way street. While we have talked among ourselves, relaxing our evangelistic struggles to the point of somnolence, enemies of the cross have seduced our friends, disquieted

our associates, lured members of our own families away from the faith. The present Christian leadership, including Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Billy Graham, have more than once repeated that their goal must be the promotion of their doctrines worldwide. That they ignorantly and sincerely call their evil tidings “good news” must never lessen our resolve to oppose them. Rather, it should strengthen it. For what could be more harmful? What could more violently jar the innocent seeker than to find the doctrine of eternal torment sitting beneath an umbrella marked “THE LOVE OF GOD?”

The days of cowering are over. Our friends need help, the enemies of the cross need stopped. And so, by the grace of God and your help, I am going to do something about it.

* * *

Let me share with you a vision of the future which offers hope. It is that we embark on a program to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat.....Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today.

What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack—*that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?*

I know this is a formidable, technical task, one that may not be accomplished before the end of this century. Yet current technology has attained a level of sophistication where it's reasonable for us to begin this effort.

My fellow Americans, tonight we're launching an effort which holds the promise of changing the course of human history.

And thus, on March 23, 1983, was born the Strategic Defense Initiative, or SDI. The initiative, which became derisively known as “Star Wars,” was lampooned by every political cartoonist who ever wielded a pencil. Many scientists considered Reagan's “shield in space” a cosmic joke, sheer techno-fantasy. It was vilified by the press. Even some of Reagan's closest advisors pleaded caution. After Reagan's speech, Secretary of State George Shultz told him, “I can see the moral ground you want to stake out. But I don't want to see you put something forward so powerfully, only to find technical flaws or major doctrinal weaknesses.” Morris writes of this exchange:

The Secretary's memoirs are typically mute here as to what Reagan said in reply. Very likely he just sat and listened. As Martin Anderson once remarked, his obstinacy was absorbent: he accepted criticism, but never reflected it back.

Stoic in the face of ridicule and doubt, Ronald Reagan doggedly embraced SDI as mankind's great hope. “We came here to change things,” he would say, “not to follow opinion polls.”

At least one person took Reagan seriously. Arnold Kramish, a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington and a veteran of the Manhattan Project, thought Reagan's SDI speech had been a historic pronouncement, and wrote a *Washington Post* Op-Ed piece to that effect:

....What he did turn toward is a goal, not a certainty, to try to erase the specter of nuclear retaliation and annihilation from the animus of the populations of the world. It is a bold and risky course, but why should anyone be faulted for any conceptual attempt to resolve these burning issues? How is it that...eminent scientists, betraying the scientific spirit of free enquiry, should dictate that humankind should not even *think* of ways to improve its condition? Where are the scientists of yesterday who were great through the virtue that they recognized that they were merely part of the human condition, sought to improve it, but knew their fallibilities?

Reagan's bend, to always be in there trying, at least dated back to his days as Governor of California. In

1971, Reagan submitted a radical program of welfare reform to the California Legislature. From *Dutch*:

“I want to know what each of you thinks of our chances of getting this thing through,” Reagan said to senior staff members. Winter sunlight slanted into his office. As usual, he sat with his back to the park view outside, diffused through more than a ton of armored glass: shaven lawns, camellia shrubs, and a gnarled and ancient elm.

Before him lay eighty proposed policy changes, exhaustively researched by a gubernatorial task force. There was a brief silence. Somebody answered, “None.”

Other voices chimed in. “We shouldn’t try.” “No way can you reform welfare in the state of California.”

Reagan gazed around his sun-filled office, unmoved by the pessimism on every face. “Well, we’re not going to get any reform *unless* we try.”

The California Welfare Reform Act finally became law on August 13, 1971. Reagan did not exaggerate when he called it “probably the most comprehensive such initiative in American history.” It would save three hundred million dollars a year through sheer operational efficiency.

Let me share with you a vision of the future which I believe offers hope. I wish to begin writing books that I believe will counter and perhaps even crush the spreading threat of the false doctrine of eternal torment. The pen is mightier than the sword, as has been amply proven throughout history. Strong and honest literature has, more than war, dramatically affected public and world opinion. Witness Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and, in more recent years, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago*.

I have struggled for ten years to develop a popular yet Scripturally-honest writing style. This is what has taken so much time. It is not writing that takes time, it is how to write that takes time. This is especially true when dealing with Scriptural themes. Because, as you know, it struck me around 1990 that every treatise I had ever read on vital truth was verbally impenetrable by the common man, and popularly unusable by *Oprah* or *Larry King Live*. From that time to this, it has been my goal to put the truth on a modern platter, to bring it alive to the modern mind, to reach a new generation with the truths of God before this gap in which I stand (the gap between the old believers and the new) narrows into nonexistence.

I know that what I have embarked upon is a formidable task. It is a task that may not be accomplished within the next year. But I will try. Who will fault me for at least a conceptual attempt to resolve these burning (what an appropriate word) issues? Let us no longer betray the evangelistic spirit of free enquiry, or attempt to dictate that one of our own should not even *think* of ways to improve the human condition. Bring forward, all of you, the evangelistic spirit of yesterday, embodied by men and women who were great through the virtue of recognizing that, though they were but part of the human condition, they could yet seek to improve it, holding all the while a realistic appraisal of their own fallibilities.

I believe that my current level of writing skill (honed through twenty years practice and experimentation) has attained a level of “common sophistication” where it becomes reasonable for me to begin this task of jumping the chasm between the conceptual and the actual. Friends in faith, today I am launching an effort which holds the promise of changing the course of human history.

* * *

Night fell over the elemental landscape around Reykjavik. In electing to meet Gorbachev here rather than in London, Reagan had unwittingly chosen a theater of epic symbolism. Iceland after dark, in October rain, is the world stripped to its essentials, geography reduced to geometry...Here, about halfway between Washington and Moscow, the North American and Eurasian land plates grind together and ram apart, in a rift clearly visible northeast of Reykjavik. At Thingvellir, on the very lip of the rift, the world’s first parliamentary republic established itself against the rule of the gods in A.D. 930. Now Reagan and Gorbachev were returning, more than a thousand years later, to argue essentially the same issues that had divided those early Christian and pagan chiefs: treaties versus weaponry, democracy

versus totalitarianism, human rights versus tribal values...

...The tension in the room was tremendous. Their respective airplanes had been on hold since noon. It had been a battering day of back-and-forth negotiation, with both principals and support teams (waiting equally tensely upstairs) aware that Höfði House was on the brink of becoming the most momentous Cold War site since Yalta. As matters stood, the two superpowers had agreed in principle to ten years of strict observance of the ABM treaty...As a bonus, Gorbachev had even offered to scale down the Warsaw Pact's huge conventional-arms superiority over NATO. Reagan thought to himself, *We have negotiated the most massive weapons reductions in history.*

But now, smiling, Gorbachev demanded something in return. "This all depends, of course, on you giving up SDI."

Reagan had been bracing for this ultimatum for more than twenty-four hours. What the General Secretary meant, in Soviet treaty parlance, was, "The testing of in-space components of anti-ballistic missile defense is prohibited, *except research and testing conducted in laboratories.*"

"I've said again and again the SDI wasn't a bargaining chip," Reagan said, annoyed by the smile.

"It's 'laboratory' or nothing," Gorbachev said at last. He reached for his briefcase.

There was a long silence. Reagan slid a note over to Shultz: *Am I wrong?* The Secretary whispered, "No, you're right."

"The meeting is over," Reagan said. He stood up. "Let's go, George, we're leaving."

Gorbachev—incredibly, still trying to look amused—accompanied him out of the study, while the hall staircase drummed to the shoes of hastily descending aides. Everybody could see from Reagan's clamped lips (and Shultz's utter dejection) that disaster had struck. They got into their raincoats under the chandelier.

"You planned from the start to come here and put me in this situation!" Reagan said.

"There's still time, Mr. President. We could go back inside to the bargaining table."

"I think not."

They strode out into a wet glare of television lights. Reagan headed straight for his car.

"Mr. President," Gorbachev said, no longer smiling, "you have missed the unique chance of going down in history as a great president who paved the way for nuclear disarmament."

"That applies to both of us."

"I don't know what else I could have done."

"You could have said yes," Reagan said.

* * *

Three years before, Reagan's "evil empire" speech had convinced Yuri Andropov more than any number of bombs ever could that the United States was morally ready to fight the century's ultimate war. In Reykjavik, it was Ronald Reagan's stubbornness over SDI, many believe, that convinced the Soviets they could never compete against a technically-superior U.S. arms program; they knew that our "Star Wars" defense system would render their offensive missiles obsolete. Reagan's tenacious holding to a high idea demoralized the Soviets.

"Ronald Reagan was tackling world gangsters of the first order of magnitude," said Genrikh A. Trofimenko, a former Brezhnev adviser and U.S. expert at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, in 1992. "Ninety-nine percent of Russian people believe that you won the Cold War because of your President's insistence on SDI." Also in 1992, Zbigniew Brzezinski was asked when the cold war was won. "This may surprise you," said Brzezinski, "but I think it was won at Reykjavik." In 1994, George Shultz wrote in *Washington Post Book World*, "Years later...I asked [Gorbachev] what he considered the turning point in U.S.-Soviet relations during his tenure in office. He answered without hesitation, 'Reykjavik.'"

The lesson here is that persistent application of what we hold to be effective—*will* be effective. If some of you still think that my plan to write books is "pie-in-the-sky," remember "Star Wars." If someone wants to put up a better plan, I'm listening. Or this: could it be that my books will one day incite a modern showdown between the traditional and the true picture of God? What if! One man's flinty ideology collapsed a

superpower and brought about fundamental world change. Why can't another man's rock-true theology do the same?

You say, "But Gorbachev helped. The time was right in the world, in Russia, for these things to happen. Reagan was the right man at the right time." I agree. Though some would later paint Gorbachev as a "flim-flam" man, his doctrines of *perestroika* ("reconstructing") and *glasnost* ("transparency, free speech") at least opened lines of communication. But look around you. See what is happening today. Unless you happen to be at a Christian Bible study, this is an unprecedented era of free speech.

I continually receive newspaper clips from John Krauss of Lansing, Michigan. John sees what I see, dreams what I dream, and sends me articles describing a fresh disdain in this nation for religious authoritarianism, and a new hunger for spiritual understanding. Admittedly, this hunger is often immature and misguided, but it is hunger nonetheless. These people can't help it that they've never read a book by Martin Zender. But you and I can change that.

"Baby Boomers are turning out like never before to devour books that promise insights into the meaning of life. 46 million of them believe the Bible's testimony concerning Jesus Christ, Savior."

—Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers; the Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation*,

"70 percent of moderates arrive at beliefs independently of church."

—*ibid.*

"We profess fidelity to traditional morality yet champion individual freedom and resist religious authoritarianism."

—*Newsweek*

While some observers squirm at the mass selling of religion, others see in the trend a profound searching for spirituality and the meaning of life.

"It's unprecedented," says Phyllis Tickle, an authority on religious publishing and author of two books on American's spiritual quests. In 1998, sales of books on religion grew 18.4 percent, more than any other category. There is a sense that Americans are beginning to look beyond the physical sciences to explain their lives and purpose.

"Strangely enough, even after the sex, language, and violence barriers were broken, the one last frontier was religion. We simply didn't talk about it," says Robert Thompson of the Center for the Study of Popular Television at Syracuse University in New York.

With attendance at church down and at movies up, it seems more people want to examine their spirituality on an individual basis. "When people en masse start searching for answers on TV rather than a church or synagogue," it makes one wonder, says Conrad Ostwald, professor of religion at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. "The fact that popular culture is so successful in dealing with questions suggests that organized religion is lacking in some way."

Young people are "highly relativistic in their form of religion," says Joel Martin, head of religious studies at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa. "They're seeking spirituality but they don't want to say they're involved in religion."

—*The Washington Times*

A revival is on its way, but for a phenomenon with Jesus at its center, it has surprisingly little to do with mainstream religion.

"People aren't really going back to church," said Peter Emberley, a philosopher at work on a book titled "Suspended Disbelief: The Spiritual Searches of Canada's Baby Boomers." "They're circling on the edges."

There is no question that readers are interested. Lorraine Symmes, director of sales in the trade division for

Random House, said books about religion and spirituality are growing more popular all the time. “Ten years ago, there was very little of this genre on the lists at mainstream publishing houses, but it’s increased steadily.”

“The activity is on the fringes of the mainstream” said Emberley, who also teaches at Carleton University in Ottawa.

All of this raises the question of what has sparked this flurry of spiritual shopping and why it’s happening now. One reason seems apparent: a culture-wide malaise.

“The people who threw off the mantle of organized religion in the 1960’s are now older with kids in an ambiguous world,” said Harry Maier, a Lutheran pastor. “They want stability. It’s a solution both for your current problems and for where you might go when you die.”

—*Toronto Globe*

God has not only blessed me with the truth of knowing what happens to people when they die, of the truths of the eons, of the purpose of evil, of the outcome of infinite grace and the goal of God for the universe, but He has, since I was a child, plugged me into popular culture. My parents were lovingly liberal and let me have fun; they let me explore, they let me tap into the times. I am a product of the ‘60’s, 70’s, ‘80’s and 90’s, *without* having been a product of the ‘50’s. See what an advantage that is for me today, in this world, for this generation. Then God:

- ❑ put me into the Catholic church to learn what religious bondage was
- ❑ instilled in me an early appreciation of poetry and literature
- ❑ showed me that truth lay outside institutional walls
- ❑ introduced me to a woman who would become my complement
- ❑ used my father-in-law to introduce me to the truths of the salvation of all
- ❑ taught me a work ethic during nine years at the Postal Service
- ❑ gave me professional writing experience with the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*
- ❑ put it in my heart to study and write on Scripture full-time
- ❑ convinced me it was practical to quit the Postal Service and work for His cause
- ❑ introduced me to Dean Hough, who kick-started my initial, critical subscriber base
- ❑ introduced me to Ted McDivitt, who encouraged me to speak publicly
- ❑ introduced me to Denise Telep, who gave me radio experience
- ❑ showed me the long-neglected KEY to effective evangelism: exposure and rebuke

Please note that this is a revolution, not a reformation. I have no desire to reform the Christian religion, nor is it my call to do so. This religion must be exposed—not reformed—for the benefit of those turned away by her hypocrisies. Thus, I seek to *revolutionize* the concept of God in the minds of people. Revolution, by definition, is “a complete, pervasive and radical change.”

* * *

While reading *Dutch*, it struck me that the Russians gave more credence to Reagan’s tough-guy stance than did Americans. Recall the air-traffic controllers’ strike of 1981. The controllers took a no-strike oath, then twelve thousand of them proceeded to walk off the job in defiance of federal law. Reagan? He fired them, inciting national outrage. Moscow, on the other hand, was impressed. An AP photograph appeared in their papers showing the leader of the air-traffic controllers’ union being taken to prison in chains. “*That*,” remarked Sovietologist Richard Pipes, “was the kind of image totalitarians understood. It showed that the President was no mere cowboy, but a sheriff capable of swift action.”

“Dammit, the law is the law,” said Reagan in a widely-quoted remark.

Well, it is. I feel the same way about Scripture. Truth is truth, and we better be defending it. I still take heat for my treatment of the Kent Debate, the now-infamous showdown in South Carolina between God's sovereignty and His almost-sovereignty. Yet it was my firm stance (some would say nit-pickedness) in Fairview, and later in Newport News, that helped others see the black-and-white truth. I received this in a letter from subscriber Pierrette Doyan of Canada:

If it hadn't been for your faithfulness to 2 Timothy 4:2 (exposure and rebuke), I'd still be on the fence about God's sovereignty.

And this from Don Stidham of Michigan:

The Sovereignty Series tapes have been played over and over again. I have recently been emboldened to share my convictions.

Return to page 6 and read again about the common Russian folk who were convicted of soul following Reagan's "evil empire" speech. It got to them. Reagan's exposure of their own flawed government bought them to a realization of the truth. And this, while Reagan's own countrymen were whining about him starting "a rhetorical war."

Exposure and rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2) are hard yet necessary elements of evangelism. If you can't do it, you can't be an effective evangelist. Not everyone can do it. But those who can't should at least stop criticizing those who can. Someday soon, perhaps millions of people will be grateful for my tough stance against doctrinal error, the same stance some of you, even, have criticized.

I don't know of anyone who wants to be on record as having fought progress.

* * *

Was I reading right? Was I really reading these words in a book written in 1890 by a long-forgotten man named Thomas Allin? Was there really such a man once existent who, believing in the full work of Christ, dared to envision that truth as a centerpiece of practical change? Today, scholarship and vision seem rare bedfellows. Yet here was a man—keen of intellect, deep of comprehension—who still opened the window to sniff the air, who still stopped along the highways of humanity to watch the people move—*all along, never forgetting the truth, never ceasing to wonder how the truth would affect these people if they were ever to hear it, never disallowing himself the joy of imagining something new over the horizon...*

I quote now from Thomas Allin's *Christ Triumphant*, the same book I quoted earlier in this letter:

Our day has seen a complete revolution in the ideas men form of punishment and its end: in few things has the advance been more marked over the past than in our recognition of the true object of penalty. But let me ask, to whom is due this marked change for the better in our ideas of punishment? Surely to God, Who guides and orders by His providence all human things. This being so, it is wholly incredible to assign to the divine punishments this very character of mere vindictiveness, which men have in all enlightened systems abandoned.

At length we are on the verge of a truer conception of penalty: we are beginning to dwell most of all on the amendment of the criminal. The main idea is not the wrong done to the injured person, nor the wrong done to the criminal himself by his crime. This is the reformatory age on which we are now entering with steady, if slow, steps. Need I add that the relation of all this to theology is the closest possible? When we seize on—as perhaps the central idea of sin—the wrong done by the sinner to himself, and not merely the offense against God, *true as that is*, we can better estimate the true function of punishment as retributive indeed, but in its essence *remedial*.

...The considerations just stated illustrate well the growth of morality. What of those ages in which war was

the chief occupation, and the chief glory of civilized (?) human beings? Men living in such a state were wholly incapable of rising to true christian teaching. They held half, or more than half, their neighbors in bondage as mere chattels. They tortured their criminals: they burned them, or boiled them alive, their foes they massacred.

Now precisely through such channels as these very much of current theology has filtered down: it is, in fact, an anachronism.³ But if our awakening be slow it is sure. Is it credible that, when torture has been banished from human justice, divine justice shall stand alone in consigning offenders to torture without any end? *A cruel Deity watching unmoved to all eternity the agonies, moral or physical, of His creatures, will seem to our children but an evil dream.*

Consider what Mr. Allin is telling us. He is rightly calling the doctrine of eternal torment an anachronism. Mankind has advanced in nearly every branch of human knowledge and endeavor, save that of God. Curiously, our knowledge of the Deity is stuck on medieval torture tables. We have rockets that travel to Mars, computers that talk, and machines that substitute for the human heart. We have *over*-developed in social and criminal justice, to the point of rewarding our shiftless and coddling our thieves. And yet our God (our God of tradition, not of Scripture) still straps His own children to the rack and burns them—*for eternity.*

My visual image of what Allin describes is that of a rubber band. I envision a rubber band, one end free, the other end thumb-tacked to an old, wooden wall. Progress is the head of the rubber band stretching forward. The rubber band stretches and strains as it progresses farther into the future. But the tack holding the other end of the band remains stuck to the board. This tack is the doctrine of eternal torment. It is the anachronism, the one part of the flexible structure that lags behind. But the pulling increases; it has to. Decades pass. Progress carries on. The tension mounts as the band becomes taut. Now, something has to give. The band cannot give, for it represents the human race, created in the image of God. As tension mounts, the outcome is now inevitable. The laws of physics murmur of a change. The tack begins first to vibrate, then to loosen. It is only a matter of time before it lets go completely of the wall.

I believe that we are going to see, perhaps in the lifetime of my most elderly reader, the tack of eternal torment let go of the wall. It is already beginning to happen, as more of our race reject religious authoritarianism for the fresh air of spiritual freedom. I do not expect this to happen for those inside tradition-locked Christian churches, for so darkened are their hearts that they will seek shelter in the tiny hole that the tack has vacated. I do expect, and am working to bring about, a change in society-at-large, in the thinking men and women of this world (those whom Allin calls “artisans”), who will be legislating our governments and our practical lives in the decades to come.

Allin’s sentence echoes in my head: *A cruel Deity watching unmoved to all eternity the agonies, moral or physical, of His creatures, will seem to our children but an evil dream.*

Why can’t this happen? I say it can happen. I share with you Thomas Allin’s words to show you that our vision has been cramped, our gospel contained. We have conceded defeat before our ship has left port. We have had one way of thinking, and it is this: “We are doomed to evangelistic failure in this life.” A marvelous attitude! A powerful creed! Is it any wonder the truth has failed to go forth with power in our day?

* * *

God understands the human psyche; He created it. And so God knows that fatalism (or, worse yet, a prophetic picture of failure), would crush the evangelist.

³That is, our current theology is “a thing that is chronologically out of place, especially belonging or appropriate to an earlier time,” in this case, a medieval time.

As a case in point, consider the question the apostles asked Christ shortly before His ascension, then note our Lord's response:

Those, indeed, then, who are coming together, asked Him, saying, "Lord, art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?" Yet He said to them, "*Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction.* But you shall be obtaining power at the coming of the holy spirit on you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in entire Judea and Samaria, as far as the limits of the earth."⁴

What should He have told them? "Sorry, men, but the millennial kingdom and the regenerated earth you're dreaming of, over which you will rule, is still hundreds of years in the future. Your testimony is doomed to failure in your lifetime. Nevertheless, go out and preach with conviction." Jesus would never have told them that. These men were human beings with human emotions. Such news would have certainly dampened their enthusiasm, if not outright depressed them. Remember, these men believed that the kingdom was nigh. They believed that they were perhaps days away from being seated on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.⁵

Our Lord is wise. He deftly avoids the topic of time, engaging them rather with the immediate future and the task at hand: "you shall be obtaining power at the coming of the holy spirit..."

Now consider the case of Saul/Paul. When the risen Christ called this man, He made sure not to tell him, "Saul, after a lifetime of preaching, everyone you speak to in Asia will eventually forsake your message." Of course not. But neither did he tell him, "Saul, you're going to eventually become the best-selling author in history. Two thousand years from now, people will still be poring over your personal letters, studying them in minute detail, organizing conferences around them and praising God because of your faithful testimony." No. God neither crushes the evangelist nor distracts him with limelight. So Jesus simply tells Saul: "I shall be delegating you afar to the nations. And you shall be God's witness to all men of what you have seen and hear."⁶

Perfect. Not too little, not too much. But certainly a grand enough task to get the man (yes, Paul was a man) off his feet and moving.

"Wow," Paul must have thought, "God has appointed me a witness to all men. A delegate to the nations." Paul knew he would also suffer for Christ's sake. But here was a grand promise that Paul kept in his heart throughout his life. Even first-century apostles, I believe, needed a grand purpose in life, something bigger than themselves to drive them out of bed in the morning.

All men. Meditate upon these words. These are the very words spoken to Paul by the glorified Christ. These are the words that gave Paul a mission in life. They kept him going in the swamp and in the jails. Paul believed these words literally, and they have literally become true; the Bible is the most widely-circulated book in history. And though Paul's words have not been generally understood, nevertheless they continue to bear witness to all men.

Now, what if Jesus Christ woke *you* up in the middle of the night and said, "You will be a witness to all men of what you know concerning the truth." Wouldn't you be motivated? Ready to get to work? In this modern

⁴Acts 1:6-8

⁵Matthew 19:28

⁶Acts 22:15,21

age, wouldn't you then expect to end up on television? Or on the radio? Or the author of a book? Now, Jesus Christ did not speak these words to me. But I believe He has spoken to the 600 of us, collectively, in an important verse of Scripture that has heretofore been unappreciated. I will be sharing this verse with you shortly.

Scripture and the motivation factor. Put the two together. Paul knew he was apprehended to fulfill Scripture, the same Scripture he had read as a boy, the same Scripture his forefathers had read before him. Hear Paul's testimony in Romans 15:17-21:

I have, then, a boast in Christ Jesus, in that which is toward God. For I am not daring to speak any of what Christ does not effect through me for the obedience of the nations, in word and work, in the power of signs and miracles, in the power of God's spirit, so that, from Jerusalem and around unto Illyricum, I have completed the evangel of the Christ. Yet thus I am ambitious to be bringing the evangel where Christ is not named lest I may be building on another's foundation, but, *according as it is written*, "They who were not informed concerning Him shall see, And they who have not heard shall understand."⁷

Paul knew that he was the man apprehended by God to fulfill a Scripture written seven hundred years before his birth by the great prophet Isaiah. Now pause. Could there possibly be a greater motivation for work than God calling one—in *one's lifetime*—to not only fulfill a portion of Scripture, but to bring understanding to those who have never heard truth?

* * *

Now this know, that in the last days perilous periods will be present, for men will be selfish, fond of money, ostentatious, proud, calumniators, stubborn to parents, ungrateful, malign, without natural affection, implacable, adversaries, uncontrollable, fierce, averse to the good, traitors, rash, conceited, fond of their own gratification rather than fond of God; having a form of devoutness, yet denying its power.

These, also, shun. For of these are those who are slipping into homes and are leading into captivity little women, heaped with sins, being led by various lusts and gratifications, always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth.

Now, by the method by which Jannes and Jambres withstand Moses, thus these also are withstanding the truth, men of a depraved mind, disqualified as to the faith. *But they shall not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all, as that of those also became.*

Now you fully follow me in my teaching, motive, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings, such as occurred to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra...

This is an excerpt from a letter Paul wrote to Timothy in the summer of A.D. 68.⁸ Keep in mind that, specifically, it is a letter written to a fellow-worker to whom Paul is, in this very letter, imparting a solemn charge. Also be aware that the first three paragraphs of this particular chapter (according to my grouping) are prophetic, including the final sentence (which is the only positive note in the entire passage): *But they shall not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all, as that of those also became.*

Paul is here prophesying of a time that he believes will exist in Timothy's day. This must be so, for Paul warns Timothy, personally, to "shun" those who have a form of devoutness but deny the power (a trait listed among those previous traits which will identify men of the "last days," when "perilous periods" would be present).

A few paragraphs after predicting perilous periods, Paul predicts his imminent death, telling Timothy that

⁷Isaiah 52:15

⁸Now preserved for us as 2 Timothy 3:1-11.

he has become “a libation, and the period of my dissolution is imminent.”⁹ Is not Paul linking the oncoming peril with his death? This is a reasonable conclusion, for Paul had prophesied a few years earlier to members of the Ephesian ecclesia:

Take heed to yourselves and to the entire flocklet, among which the holy spirit appointed you supervisors, to be shepherding the ecclesia of God, which He procures through the blood of His Own. Now I am aware that, *after I am out of reach, burdensome wolves will be entering among you*, not sparing the flocklet. And from among yourselves will arise men, *speaking perverse things to pull away disciples after themselves*. Wherefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I cease not admonishing each one with tears. And now I am committing you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to edify and give the enjoyment of an allotment among all who have been hallowed.¹⁰

Whether Paul’s “out of reach” refers to his imprisonment or his death, it hardly makes a difference. In Paul’s mind, his absence spelled the onset of apostasy:

For the era will be when they will not tolerate sound teaching, but, their hearing being tickled, they will heap up for themselves teachers in accord with their own desires, and, indeed, they will be turning their hearing away from the truth, yet will be turned aside to myths. Yet you (Timothy) be sober in all things; suffer evil as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus; do the work of an evangelist; fully discharge your service.¹¹

Again I say that Paul fully expected this era of apostasy to fall upon Timothy’s head. For you will notice that immediately after predicting these times (here, as well as in 3:1-8), he exhorts his friend, “*Yet you* be sober in all things; suffer evil as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus; do the work of an evangelist; fully discharge your service.” This would be a needless charge in an era of sobriety and good.

Which brings me to the unappreciated passage of Scripture, already quoted. It is 2 Timothy 3:9— *But they shall not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all, as that of those also became*. This was a purely prophetic utterance, and Paul waited for just the right moment to disclose it. It would have come as good news—and great motivation—for Timothy. If Paul’s scribe could write in bold, Paul would have demanded it here. This sentence is good news and great motivation for us, also, as you will soon see.

First of all, who are the “they” and the “their” of this passage? Return to the previous page and read the context. “They” are the ones who are “having a form of devoutness yet denying its power.” Such a trait can only characterize a religious entity, for only such possesses “a form of devoutness.” It is the same congregation of people Timothy is instructed to shun in verse 6. This group is further described (in verses 6-7) as “those who are slipping into homes and are leading into captivity little women, heaped with sins, being led by various lusts and gratifications, always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth.” They are also “withstanding the truth, men of a depraved mind, disqualified as to the faith (verse 8).” These are the most insidious of those comprising the “perilous periods,” the same who “shall not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all...”¹²

After telling Timothy that perilous periods were ahead, and that among the worst of men would be religious frauds who, posing as truth-tellers, would actually withstand the truth and captivate many with their falsehoods, Paul tells his friend the good news, namely, that these “shall not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all.” Immediately following, Paul exhorts Timothy, “Now you fully follow me in my

⁹2 Timothy 4:6

¹⁰Acts 20:28-32

¹¹2 Tim. 4:3-5

¹²A formal definition of “insidious” is helpful here: “operating or proceeding inconspicuously but with grave effect.”

teaching, motive, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings, such as occurred to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra: persecutions such as I undergo, and out of them all the Lord rescues me.”

What a perfect way to inspire an evangelist: **1)** present an oncoming situation that will require a well-trained evangelist, namely, religious fraud, and **2)** predict a time subsequent to this when the fraudulent “will not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all.” Now, what would young Timothy think—seeing as how Paul is throughout this letter charging him to strongly proclaim the evangel in the face of evil odds—*but that he would be instrumental in effecting Paul’s latter prophecy, that is, that he would be used by God to expose the folly of the religious frauds.* This scenario becomes even more probable as we note the following exhortation sandwiched between two descriptions (3:5-9 and 4:3-4) of religious apostasy:

I am conjuring you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus, Who is about to be judging the living and the dead, in accord with His advent and His kingdom: Herald the word. Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely, expose, rebuke, entreat, with all patience and teaching. —**2 Timothy 4:1-2**

When will this great event of 2 Timothy 3:9 take place? Did it occur in Timothy’s day? Proceed slowly here. The first thing we need to see is that it will happen prior to the conclusion of this eon. If this “folly becoming obvious to all” should be relegated in time to some august event subsequent to (or at the very conclusion of) this current eon, such as the former resurrection, the return of Christ to the earth, or the great white throne judgment—as one person has suggested to me—then Paul’s exhortation is instantly devitalized. Timothy already knew, surely, that Jesus Christ would one day subject all enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25). He already knew, through Paul, that God would one day become “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). How pale is the prophecy that “their folly shall become obvious to all” in light of these other truths—*until one takes into consideration the motivational effect of anticipated success.*

Never mind that one’s assigned enterprise might not immediately succeed, or that an interim failure may be part of God’s hidden counsel. God is not so mean as to dangle failure before His flesh and blood servants. Perhaps Jesus alone was able to endure the specter of immediate loss, sustained by the far-off goal of “all in all.” On second thought, God gave Him the assurance that He would rise to immortality only three days after His death. Moses went to Egypt knowing that he would successfully lead the people from Egypt (Exodus 3:8), so was able to see through and be encouraged during the intervening plagues and the resistance of Pharaoh. Likewise, Joseph knew he would be great in his lifetime, a fact that sustained him through many trials.

When Paul was in Corinth on a missionary journey (Acts, chapter 18), the Jews resisted and blasphemed him in the synagogue (4-6). Naturally, Paul was shaken. But the Lord said to Paul in the night, through a vision:

Fear not! but be speaking; and you should not be silent, because I am with you, and no one shall place hands on you to ill-treat you, because there are many people of Mine in this city (9-10).

The Lord could have told Paul, “Don’t worry. At the consummation, everyone in this city will be part of the ‘all in all.’” He could have said, “Don’t worry, Paul. You won’t always need to fear a beating, because someday your body will be changed to resemble Mine.” Wonderful comforts, but a tad distant for a good night’s sleep tonight. The Lord knew that. So rather than engage Paul with a rosy though distant horizon, the Lord comforts him with an agreeable landscape right before his eyes: “I am with you, and no one will ill-treat you in Corinth. I have many people here—*this night, right now.*”

Is it any wonder Paul decided to stay in Corinth a year and six months?!¹³

Now let us join Paul en route to Rome on an Italian ship. As the ship founders in the grip of a nor'easter, the Lord could have said to Paul, "Remember, as in Adam all are dying, thus also in Christ shall all be vivified." True enough. But the Lord, merciful to Paul in the night of his struggle, sends an angelic messenger to tell him that all on the ship will be saved through the storm. This gives Paul the courage and energy needed for the hour, and he delivers to the crew a revitalizing pep talk.¹⁴

I am thinking, too, of the words our Lord imparted to Martha, sister of Lazarus, after the death of her brother:

Jesus is saying to her, "Your brother will be rising." Martha is saying to Him, "I am aware that he will be rising in the resurrection in the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who is believing in Me, even if he should be dying, shall be living. And everyone who is living and believing in Me, should by no means be dying for the eon."

A.E. Knoch writes in his commentary: "Our Lord is seeking to comfort Martha by that best of all consolations, the vivification of all His own at His presence, long before 'the last day,' at the very commencement of the millennial eon."

Why is it that we believers today are so suspicious of good news and encouragement? Where God would comfort us today, we have trained ourselves to expect good only "at the end," when God has concluded His purpose of the eons. We sigh like Martha and say, "Well, God will certainly spread His evangel in the great blue beyond." Look at us. We are so consummation oriented, that is, our minds so far-flung to the future, that we miss good tidings (2 Tim. 3:9) in this current era. Scripture pictures for us a God Who encourages His soldiers by the hour, dangling success before them as they work. We picture a God Who intones, "Your work will be a practical failure."

We humans are easily discouraged, and God knows that. Paul was no exception to this rule, and neither was Joseph, Moses, Timothy, Martha—not even Jesus Himself. Are we, then, exceptions? Hardly. In Martha's case, Jesus not only gave her an early expectation of resurrection, He raised her brother that hour! God ever imparts motivation to go on, not that we might find strength to rise from the grave ten thousand years from now, *but that we might find strength to rise from our beds tomorrow!*

This is the purpose of Paul's prophecy in 2 Timothy 3:9. Like all that has gone before it in verses 1-8, it is a phenomenon to be expected in this eon. Timothy, I believe, expected it to occur in his lifetime. That it did not occur *in toto* would not have dampened his enthusiasm, because he expected it to occur.

I believe we are living in the era of the fulfillment of 2 Timothy 3:9. Further, I believe that we are the people God is prepared to initiate it. Paul sensed this day, Timothy sensed it, Thomas Allin sensed it. But these men were born out of season. How many of the prophets longed to see Messiah? Yet one prophet did live to see Him: John the Baptist. Today, the time is ripe and the players are set for the fulfillment of this prophecy. A day is coming, and perhaps now is, when all who have heard of eternal torment, or who have been affected for the worse by this awful teaching, will come to the realization that this teaching is false.

This realization will come through education. The education will come through popular literature, television, radio and newsprint. It will become common knowledge throughout all circles of the Christian religion and

¹³Acts 18:11

¹⁴Acts 27:21-26

among any who have heard of the Christian religion, that the doctrine of eternal torment is false. And thus the dream of Thomas Allin, that *a cruel Deity watching unmoved to all eternity the agonies, moral or physical, of His creatures, will seem to our children but an evil dream*, will come to pass in this eon.

This does not mean that these doctrines will cease to be stubbornly taught by those who know it to be wrong. It does not mean that those to whom the religious folly becomes obvious will become believers. I am not so naive, and neither should you be, to assume that some great revival lies ahead, or that millions will come to Christ. It may be so, but this is not the prophecy of 2 Timothy 3:9. The prophesy of 2 Timothy 3:9 is that the folly of religious hypocrisy will become obvious to all. Millions, in our lifetime, will come to roll their eyes at the medieval Torture-God, not out of mere disdain for the sheer ridiculousness of it, but because it has been proven wrong.

Many, I'm sure, will be tempted to turn to the book of Revelation to "disprove" the prophetic optimism of Paul in 2 Tim. 3:9. This must not be done. The events of the book of Revelation occur subsequent to the time Paul writes about. The body of Christ today acts as "the detainer" (2 Thess. 2:6), keeping great lawlessness at bay. The members of Christ's body are the only ambassadors of God's conciliation to the world (2 Cor. 5:18-21). As these members awaken to their charge, the prophecy of 2 Tim. 3:9 will come to pass. What will happen to the newly-educated world after the body of Christ is "snatched away" (1 Thess. 4:17) is not the concern of the body at present. The body has heretofore over-contemplated the "doom and gloom" prophecies of Revelation, making them cast a shadow across their own era. *This has been a terrible mistake*. Directly ahead for the body of Christ lies a time of unprecedented success in preaching. That this is followed by "doom and gloom" is not the fodder of present affection. Many must hear truth. Many more, I suspect, must come to realize their membership in Christ's body. Through God's spirit, we will accomplish this. Let us rise from our pessimistic malaise and put 2 Tim. 3:9 where it belongs: *before* the book of Revelation.

The results of people coming to disbelieve the doctrine of eternal torment will be profound. Recall the words of Thomas Allin, "Thus it is that by this shocking creed (i.e. eternal torment) the moral tone is lowered all round, wherever it is accepted." The reverse, then, must also be true, that where the shocking creed of eternal torment comes to be disbelieved, the moral tone will be raised all around. As already noted, this does not mean we will become a nation of believers. It does mean that we will become a nation that no longer believes in an insane God. This cannot *but* relieve the minds and improve the morals of those who understand it. Which brings us to this shocking conclusion: the success James Dobson desires (a moralistic nation) occurs as James Dobson fails (in his "evangelistic" efforts).

* * *

I used to think that heralding the evangel "inopportunistly" (2 Tim. 4:2) meant heralding it in the face of failure. Now I see that it means heralding it when success seems improbable. What a difference.

* * *

As the U.S. presidential campaigns consume world interest now and in the coming year, know this: As members of the body of Christ, we can do more than any American President to affect (and effect) morality in this world. We can do it through exposing religious hypocrisy and educating the world about God. If this is not practical, I don't know what is. You will excuse me if I do not quit this work to deliver pizza.

* * *

A man from California contacted me two weeks before Christmas and asked me what he could do to help "the cause." This man works in television and has great visions of this truth going forth through that medium. I told him that I shared his vision, and that we could eventually manipulate this medium to forward

truth. But I apprised him that the cause needed some literature first, and that I was planning on writing it. Then I told him that what the cause really needed right now was a roll of 33¢ stamps.

At that time last December, I was very much out of money, having \$39 to my name. I still had one or two outstanding bills for the month, and needed desperately to contact my readership. I had saved five rolls of stamps and needed one more. All I needed was one more roll of 33¢ stamps.

I got the feeling that the man didn't want to hear this. He wanted to do something exciting, something that would really "count." He did not realize that a roll of stamps was very exciting to me. He did not realize that, as improbable as it may have seemed, a lack of one roll of 33¢ stamps was, at that time, hindering the revolution.

Not too many people ask me specifically what I need. When they do ask, I tell them. This man asked and I told him. But I think he thought I was joking. I thought he might send the stamps anyway. He didn't. That's okay. Someone else eventually sent the stamps, or a check which bought the stamps.

The revolution was back on.

* * *

Melody was in the kitchen, sitting down and brooding. I was pacing the floor. It was July 8, 1993. I was three months away from quitting my well-paying job with the Postal Service. In three months, I would begin publishing an newsletter that had eleven subscribers.

"Where will the subscribers come from?" Melody asked.

I didn't know, exactly. But I knew they were out there. I told Melody, "There are people out there, living and breathing right now, who we are destined to meet. We are destined to meet them and know them, and they are destined to know us. We just haven't met them yet. But they're out there, and God has prepared everything and everyone ahead of time."

And they were out there. And we finally met you.

Now, I believe that there are many others "out there" who *we* need to meet, and who need to meet us. They are living and breathing right now, chosen to hear this truth, though not yet aware of it. How shall they be hearing apart from one heralding?

* * *

It was our eleventh wedding anniversary, October 15, 1993. It had been two weeks since I had begun working full time in God's employ. Melody and I were in a hotel room in Canton, Ohio. My sister was watching the kids.

We didn't own a television, and so we switched on the T.V. Ordinarily, we are "fun people" and enjoy being entertained. But God had something else in store for us this night.

As we watched the television, we saw many happy and animated people. But God was causing us to see beneath the skin of the people. Beneath the skin, we could detect the skulls of the people on the shows. This was nothing mystical. It's just that we were able to see a common humanity beneath the varying human

expressions. Beneath the happy exteriors, humanity was in pain. Beneath the flesh, everyone looked to me like they were screaming.

We turned off the television and lay in bed together. We both felt that God was shutting us into an ark. And I mean right then and there, in that hotel room. The ark door was shutting on us. Many people were outside that door, banging to get in. Some of these people were the people on the television shows. I told Melody, "We have to stay in the ark." Melody started crying. She said the people needed to hear the good news. I told her yes, but we had to go in the ark first, to learn more about God and become one. Then we could come back and help them. But something had to happen first inside the ark, something between God and us, and now was not the time to open the door.

We both began crying. We were hugging. Melody was very scared because of what we had seen on television. She felt very vulnerable for what the Lord was calling us to do. But I told her that she was not alone, that I was with her. And more importantly, God was with the two of us.

God was separating us, this night, for the work He would have us do.

Before we went to sleep, I got out of the bed and reached for my Scriptures on the dresser. I opened the book indiscriminately and read the first passage I saw:

How, then, should they be invoking One in Whom they do not believe? Yet how should they be believing One of Whom they do not hear? Yet how should they be hearing apart from one heralding? Yet how should they be heralding if ever they should not be commissioned? According as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those bringing an evangel of good.

I was crying before I had finished reading the passage. I was amazed that God had me open my Scriptures to this verse. After reading, I flung myself onto the bed.

The next six years were the worst years of our married life. There were times when I despised my own wife, and times when she despised me. There were times when death looked attractive to me. Satan did everything to pull us apart. But it was God who had brought us into this trial, to bring us into a deeper distrust of self and a deeper reliance on Him.

Melody told me there was a song that she always used to sing, something that went, "...draw me, I will run after Thee..." For six years, Melody could not sing this song. For reasons that are too complicated and personal to communicate, my own wife had become an enemy of the cross of Christ. She can tell you this herself; it is common knowledge in our ecclesia.

But then, this past December, a little before Christmas, Melody was standing alone in the kitchen. It was 11:30 p.m. Everyone else was in bed. Melody said it was as if God began to pet her head, to draw her head to His breast. He whispered to her, as only He can, a song....draw me, I will run after Thee....

Melody sang this song near midnight—and it was over. The six years were finally finished. Something heavy lifted from the heart of my wife. It has stayed lifted, and Melody sees the glory of the cross. She sees the rightness of our path. She is thankful for the ark, for Christ's care in the midst of trial. The door is open now, because husband and wife are one. Now we can help those outside of the ark, as God told us we would do.

God hurt Job and brought him through many things he never dreamed he would have to endure. Job did not

want a cross. Even Jesus, in His darkest hour, recoiled from the cross. Melody wanted to lift a cross from our shoulders, but it would not be lifted. Now she knows that the cross of Christ is freedom, not burden, and that the slave of Christ is the freest person of all.

Draw me, I will run after Thee. This is not a song to be sung lightly. To sing this song from the heart is to be a slave of Jesus Christ. “Everything was melty and gone,” Melody said. “People’s hearts can change this fast. After all they have been through, God will finally put their heads on His shoulder. The breaking will bring peace.”

* * *

Many people disagree with me about many things. But most of my readers agree on two major points: **1)** eternal torment is a lie, and **2)** man’s will cannot operate independently of God. These are the two doctrinal errors that have wreaked the most havoc among humanity. These are the errors I am exposing in my books.

The doctrine of eternal torment is the Achilles heel of the Christian religion. As this sad teaching even now begins to loose favor even among some conservative leaders of the church, let us band together now and push it hard over the brink of extinction.

Today, I call for a united effort among those of us who hold to the truth concerning God’s goal for the universe. Let us put aside our differences—at least in this public outreach—and work toward the common goal of acquainting our fellow men with a Savior Who saves until the last sheep enters the fold.

* * *

There comes a time in a person’s life when his vision crystallizes and he knows what he must do. For Ronald Reagan, this occurred only seventeen days after an assassin’s bullet nearly ended his life on a sidewalk outside the Washington Hilton on March 30, 1981. Recuperating in the White House following heroic, life-saving surgery, President Reagan summoned Terrence Cardinal Cooke of the Archdiocese of New York. Spiritual urges long dormant found Reagan’s surface, brought there—as God is wont to do—by trial, pain and the imminence of death.

The meeting ended with the President telling Cooke: “I have decided that whatever time I have left is left for Him.” Writes biographer Edmund Morris: “Which meant, among other things, a coming to terms with Evil.”

It was a telephone call from Melody that opened my gut. A friend of mine had been killed that afternoon on his bicycle. I did not come apart until my drive home.

I broke the steering wheel from pounding on it. In a sweat of tears, I promised God that I would do everything in my power to deliver people from the fear of death.

The year was 1992.

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In the parlance of Mount Everest, I am leaving Camp IV and going for the summit. Not everyone should leave this high camp. I want to take along only those who are prepared for the rigors of altitude, who want to see this trek to completion. If I have done nothing in this letter to inspire you to come, I need you to say:

“I’m going back.” I won’t be upset with you. But I need you to say it now.

I need to cull from the mailing list those who really don’t care. The business of staying in contact with you is expensive; the last mailing cost \$1000. This mailing will cost \$1200. I want you to come, but I can’t carry you if you don’t want to go. Between Camp IV and the summit, resources are precious. I am including a coupon in this package that will let me know you are no longer interested in climbing. **Please do me this favor.** I need you to tell me. You will do me a disservice *not* to tell me. At this altitude, personal feelings become irrelevant. This is about trimming for the push.

I am not going to quit publishing teaching material. But I am going to do it from a new perspective. No longer will you be sending money for material. Rather, those of you who do send money will be doing so to help me get this good news to those God has predestined to hear it. In return, I will send you booklets and tapes to thank you for your support. Many of you have already treated this outreach as a ministry and not a mail-order house. Even when you have ordered materials, you have given above and beyond the cost of the materials, enabling me to take this message to people who have never heard it. I am at a loss of words to describe my appreciation to you. And that’s saying something.

This does not mean I will stop serving those who only want materials and who could not care less about evangelism. I have promised to provide you with teachings on God’s Word, and I will continue to do that. I have promised to provide this material without cost to those who cannot afford to contribute, and I will continue to do that. But I cannot afford to keep carrying the casual bystander who just wants to see what the ministry is up to. Please send the coupon today and I will remove your name from the mailing list. You will be able to follow the ministry in *The New York Times* and on *Oprah*.

I apologize to those newcomers who signed up only to receive my newsletter. You were probably not prepared to be asked to join a revolution. This ministry has changed over the last three years and has taken many by surprise, myself included. Not everyone likes the change. But the change must come. If this is not what you signed on for and not what you want, please send the coupon and cancel your subscription. Of course I want to induce you to stay. If you would like to be a part of this, write and let me know; I need the encouragement. If not, please help me save my resources. Again, I apologize for any inconvenience this change of purpose has cost you.

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I am tentatively planning trips to places I have never been, to see, to encourage (and be encouraged by), to minister to those who have supported me and who share my vision. These are good days to be alive. Good days to see one another. Besides my annual visits to Michigan in the summer and South Carolina in the fall, I want to travel this year to: **Sudbury**, Ontario, Canada **Seattle**, Washington **Denver**, Colorado **Sacramento**, California.

There are significant numbers of believers in these areas who have expressed the desire to hold meetings. I am in the mood to go; I believe this is the leading of the spirit. I *did* visit Sudbury last Spring, and the meetings there went so well that I am returning. These other places I have never visited. If you live near these cities and would be interested in attending meetings (that we can discuss things of consequence face-to-face), then please contact me. As plans develop, I will let you know times and places. Tentatively, I will be in Canada around the first of May, Colorado in the summer, California and Seattle in the fall. Again, this is tentative.

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I have nothing more to say except to remind you that you are an influential group of people in this day, for this hour. *You* are the ones who can help bring about a real change in the moral landscape of America, and perhaps even in the world. It does not take a lot of people to change things. It does not even take a lot of people *intent* on changing things. It only takes a dedicated few who take seriously this age-enduring charge:

I am conjuring you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus, Who is about to be judging the living and the dead, in accord with His advent and His kingdom: Herald the word. Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely, expose, rebuke, entreat, with all patience and teaching.

God will take care of the rest.

I remain yours because of the grace of God,

Martin

That was The Manifesto of 2000. I believe the same way today. The calling is as alive today as it was then, only more so, because I have already published four books, with a fifth—the breakthrough book—on the way. Thousands more have seen truth since 2000, because of this outreach. I am re-energized myself, re-reading this so-called Manifesto. I hope it raises your zeal to a new level. The Manifesto is now written to you.

Please become an evangelist. *You* are the revolution. You can change the world a person at a time. Please order my materials and give them away. There have been so many times when I have been hesitant to give a copy of one of my books to someone, for fear of their reaction. But I have been amazed over and over again how unfounded my fears usually are. More times than I expect, the person says, “I’ve been thinking this all along.” You may be surprised how many people have “sneaking suspicions” about organized religion, but have been afraid to say so. Sometimes all it takes is someone to break the ice and say, “Here, read this.” And if you affect one person, you affect many down the line. A young person who comes to the truth will pass it along to his or her children—and on it goes. By touching one, you touch dozens. Be bold! Do the work of an evangelist.

God bless you all, and thanks for reading.

Martin