

A Report by Elder E. W. Wheeler

Some of the worst flooding in the Philippines in decades struck some of our churches on Luzon Island. Elder Cajanding’s church in Calamba was hit by three typhoons in one month, and his was the hardest hit of all the churches. They had not yet finished rebuilding after the flood of ‘06. We have twenty-four families displaced by the storm. Flood waters still stand in some homes. Besides losing most of their home furnishings and personal effects, these families now face the prospect of repairing damages caused by water standing in their homes for weeks.

We are so grateful for those who sent money to help with this great need. Bro. Wayne Schroader of Central City, KY; Bro. Scott Kerr of Canton, OH; and Bro. David Minton of Beckley, WV, visited the Philippines shortly after the flood, bringing much needed relief for the immediate needs of food and temporary shelter. We appreciate all their help.

In some cases, the water has receded enough to begin making repairs to the damaged houses (as you can see in the picture). We do not have enough money to get all these people back in their homes, but we will divide up the remaining funds and help these families as much as possible.

My doctor gave me permission to go back to the Philippines, but with strict limits on what I can do. We are scheduled to arrive January 2, 2010, and look forward to being with our people again. We will be overseeing the repairs to the flood damages.

May the Lord bless each of you for all you do for the work of God in Asia.



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Flooding in Calamba

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A Look At John 17:5—E. W. Wheeler

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. (John 17:5)

What does this phrase, “the glory which I had with thee before the world was” mean? First, let us examine the context. In the first verse of this chapter, Jesus said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:” The “man, Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5) was speaking in this passage. There is only one body in the Godhead. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). That one body was speaking as a man. Since God is a Spirit (John 4:24) the Flesh was speaking to the Spirit. One body and one spirit do not make two persons. If it did, each of us would be three persons— body, soul, and spirit.

The Flesh (verse 4) said He had finished the work that the Spirit gave Him to do. In verse six, the Flesh said He had manifested the Spirit’s name. We know the Flesh inherited His name from His Father (Hebrews 1:4). Therefore, the Flesh’s name was His Father’s name. Jesus means “Jehovah

Savior.” The Flesh manifested that name in the world.

What was the “glory” that the Flesh had with the Spirit in the beginning? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Verse fourteen informs us that the “Word was made flesh.” That “Flesh” was speaking in our text. “Word” here comes from “Logos” which Thayer defines as “a word which, uttered by the living voice, embodies a conception or idea.” In the beginning, the Flesh did not physically exist, it was only an “idea.” The Spirit had an idea for the salvation of mankind. The idea was that the Spirit would live inside the Flesh, to live, die, and redeem fallen mankind. As the Flesh was almost ready to be crucified, it said it had finished its purpose and would no longer be needed and was thus ready to just be an “idea” again. After that, the Spirit would no longer work in the world in that Flesh. This did not mean He would no longer reside in the hearts of men, but that He would no longer reside in that specific Flesh which was about to be crucified.

Now, our relationship is not with a physical being as was the case when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ walked this earth. Our relationship is with a Spirit that does not reside in a physical body in the same sense as it did when Christ was upon the earth.

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Mission Statement

Since our first publication in the early eighties, our mission has been to provide "doctrine and instruction in righteousness" to the churches in the Philippines (2 Timothy 3:16). By request, we are expanding our circulation, trusting that God will bless and use it for the benefit of His kingdom.



Apostolic Succession—Thomas Weisser

The Catholic interpretation of apostolic succession is the claim of an unbroken line of bishops stretching back to the apostles. The Roman Catholics claim Peter as the first bishop of Rome followed by the succession of bishops reaching to today.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has another interesting view of apostolic succession. It claims that apostolic succession was broken during the great apostasy, or falling away. It was restored in the early 1800's under the leadership of Joseph Smith in the United States.

There are many problems with both these groups. The biggest is that they both claim to promote apostolic doctrine. When you compare their concepts, for example, of the gospel with biblical apostolic teaching (Acts 2:38-42), you see a great deviation from the original. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, pronounces a curse on those who teach another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). Paul's concept of the gospel can be plainly seen in the conversion of followers of John the Baptist outside Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6). The original gospel includes repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the reception of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Both the Catholic Church and the Mormon Church do not recognize this basic gospel message even though Acts is replete with examples of it. Both groups place too much authority in changeable human leadership instead of the unchangeable Word of God. They both possess histories that are less than exemplary. Because they both deviate from original apostolic teaching, their claims to be the Church Jesus Christ is building, are false.

Among Oneness Pentecostals, there seems to be two general views concerning this topic. One view follows the model embraced by the LDS Church. It says simply that sometime after the first century the Church fell into apostasy and was not restored until the twentieth century. The big problem with this view is that God has either condemned millions of people over hundreds of years to hell, or another gospel was given during that time of darkness. Another gospel that is cursed of God, God forbid! The other view embraces a succession of believers, but, unlike the Catholic Church, it supports the concept of a faithful succession of apostolic teaching as opposed to a succession of bishops most of whom deviated from apostolic doctrine. This view has scriptural support (Matthew 16:18; Jude 3), and should be embraced by all Oneness Pentecostals.

The Lord's Church mentioned in Matthew 16:18 is built upon Christ and His apostles (Ephesians 2:19-22). It grows whenever people respond to the gospel as proclaimed by the apostles (Acts 2:38-42) and is manifested wherever people continue in the apostolic doctrine as opposed to the traditions of men (Acts 2:42). And is preserved by the power of God and His Word (Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 3).

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.
(Ephesians 2:20-22)

SINdromes—Jerry Trevino

We live in a world that is anxiously waiting for a chance to make excuses for man's sins. If you have a habitual vice, our world will name it a disorder and tell responsibility to hit the door. Everything from adultery to impulsive buying habits are being blamed on some mental deficiency. And being that nobody asked to be born that way, they certainly should not have to suffer repercussions from their actions, no matter how heinous they are.

I read in the news that a defense attorney says that a man who raped and brutally killed a nine-year-old girl was mentally retarded; therefore, he should not be punished to the fullest degree. Yet this same man reads the newspaper everyday and uses the library in prison to read law books. Oh, but he has a mental problem! So let's put justice in the back seat so emotion can take the wheel and drive us into a never land where humanity is believed to be basically good in nature. Then when things go horribly wrong, we can blame it on some aberration and call it a syndrome. Perhaps we should call it a SINdrome.

A woman is suing a car dealership because she claims to have a bipolar disorder that causes her to make impulsive decisions. She says that she was taken advantage of by the car salesman. Who hasn't been taken advantage of by a car salesman? Do we all have a bipolar disorder? No, we've got a car note. Suppose the car salesman says he has a bipolar disorder and it causes him to take advantage of people. Then what?

This plague among us started with the mental health community. Where they go wrong is in the basis of their philosophy. They believe all men are good and really don't want to do bad things. So when humans do things that are harmful to themselves and others they cannot accept the fact that these perpetrators meant to do what they did. When a man repeatedly steals, cheats on his wife, or physically abuses others, it confuses them. And they need a reason as to why man does bad things. The reason they finally decided on was mental disease; it was the perfect scapegoat. That way we have something (not someone) to blame.

The premise that all men are good is false and with a false premise everything else

that follows will lack verity. The truth of the matter is that we were all shapen in iniquity and in sin did our mothers conceive us. Human actions cannot be understood unless human nature is comprehended. When we lay at the foundations of our judgment that man is sinful, then we can make sense of some things. Sin is in us all, working to the destruction of body and spirit. When we understand that it is sin working, then we know people who constantly do wrong, like sin! They may not like where sin took them, but they did enjoy getting on the ride. How many times have you regretted getting on that roller coaster as it reached its apex? But it was too late, wasn't it? So you just hung oooon! And so it is with people when they get into a fix because of their actions, regret it. But it's too late then; sin has them for the duration of the ride.

When our misdeeds are labeled as sin, it brings responsibility into the picture because sin is a temptation yielded to and temptation can be resisted. However, many lack the scruples to resist and thus fall into wickedness. But remember, it was a choice and our choices have consequences. A consequence is the logical result of an action. Would to God our society still believed this! How crime and malfeasance could be curbed if we taught our nation this one principle again.

If we are not careful, we in the ministry are going to be taken up in this whirlwind of psychiatric nonsense. We need to be wary of the "experts" that so desperately desire to show us the way more perfectly. Was it not an expert who told us not to spank our children some decades ago? He has since changed his mind. Was it not the experts who told us free love was okay? They have since changed their minds. The experts also told our women that they were wasting their lives being homemakers, and now statistics show they were wrong. What did the experts say of the bold line between masculinity and femininity? Look what the feminizing of the American man has done to our society and families. God told Israel in Isaiah, *Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels*. These counsels were the experts of the day. God then told them to go ahead and depend on those experts to save them from the judgment (sin's results) that was to come. The obvious point was that only God could save them. Are we not yet wearied in the multitude of our counsels? Our only hope is to adhere firmly to the precepts of God's Holy Word. The Bible still is the answer.

So before we adopt the syndrome excuse let us try a good old-fashioned message of repentance and responsibility and see what God will do.

Is There Coming A Worldwide Caliphate?—William Chalfant

A world leader, Vladimir Putin, announced in 2002 at Brussels, that he believed there was a coordinated international push by radical Muslims to establish a “worldwide caliphate” which would be a world government controlled by Islam. He felt that Al-Qaeda, for example, already had access to nuclear weapons. Since these weapons may have come from the former Soviet Union, Putin possibly was speaking with some authority. He also believed that acts of terror perpetrated by radical Muslims (e.g., the Twin Towers in New York, the American Embassies in Africa, Moscow, Bali, Bombay [Mumbai], and the recent slaughter at Ft. Hood) would increase. Their goal is to establish a powerful worldwide caliphate. At first, non-Muslim countries would not have to join, but would have to pay a “tax” or suffer military action.

In 2003, Hizb-ut-Tarir (“Liberation Party”), a Sunni Islamic group illegally based in Jordan (originally founded in 1953 by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani in Jerusalem), and widespread in Central Asia with adherents in more than forty countries, declared that when a worldwide caliphate came to power, Sharia law would be imposed upon all nations and other religious groups would be banned except possibly Jews (not Israel) and Christians might be allowed to exist in “pogroms” under tribute and wearing special identifying clothing. These radical Muslims enjoin mothers to encourage their sons to become suicide bombers (shahid). All male members from the age of fifteen are expected to have military training in preparation for *jihad*. The USA, the United Kingdom (where Hizb-ut-Tarir is very active), and Israel are “of the work of the devil.” In their opinion, the European democracy is a farce. They’ve already called for Sharia law in Great Britain.

This same group also established itself in Yemen in 2003 when the Palestinian Emir of the party, Ata Abu Arashta announced, “we are near the establishment of a caliphate.” The leader of the Yemeni branch, Nasir Allahbi, told the *Yemen Observer*, “the party is seeking the creation of a caliphate and the enforcement of Allah’s Sharia.” He told the *Observer* that the party was becoming international, holding conferences in the U.K., Sudan, and Uzbekistan, and gaining ground in Europe. The party believes that only by re-establishing the gold standard can the power of the American dollar be destroyed. Arabic should be the only language of the Islamic state, and any Muslim who renounces Islam should be put to death.

In 2006 adherents of the Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) in Pakistan vowed to establish a global caliphate, beginning in Pakistan, according to a leader, General Zaheerul Islam Abbasi. SSP is known to have close links with Jaish-e-Mohammad, a militant group fighting in Kashmir, with links to Al-Qaeda. According to Abed al Tahawi in 2005, a militant with ties to Osama bin Laden, this was one of the main goals of Al-Qaeda: the creation of an Islamic caliphate, where Islam would be the “source of law”, and a caliph (Muslim leader) would rule.

These are but glimpses of the tip of the iceberg. This coming “caliph” reminds one of the “king of the north” who represents the Antichrist in Daniel 11. He will be someone who will not regard the “god of his fathers” (vs. 38), but instead will honor “the god of forces”. I cannot think of a god whose worship implies the favored use of force any more than that of the radical Muslims, who purposely blow themselves—along with women and little children—into pieces, in order to establish their worldwide “caliphate,” and force their religion upon others by political and military means.

Surely, only the return of the Lord Jesus Christ at Armageddon will bring such demonic madness to an end. I do not believe that the majority of hard working Muslims approve of terrorism and the violent establishment of a worldwide caliphate; but as long as they remain silent, they become consensual partners with the jihadists. When will the Muslim world rise up and speak out against such insanity? We need to pray that the God of peace will overcome the “god of forces” through the love of Jesus Christ. In the end, it is the only answer.

The Challenge—D. S. Garza

The following piece is by C. J. Sodergren, a Lutheran minister whose writing style is an example of clarity and deep insight. His approach made the subject at hand easy to comprehend. And in an era muddled by deep theological confusion, he wrote about the identity of Jesus Christ without all the convoluted creedal nonsense that is usually associated with it.

His challenge to those that believe in a Godhead that consists of three persons with three wills, etc., is a profound one: “a mental conception that cannot stand mental analysis is no conviction, only a persuasion from without.” This challenge is a good one. And it works for other doctrinal positions as well. Our doctrinal views should be able to withstand mental analysis—in other words, does it make sense? And more importantly, it must stand up to a biblical analysis. So that our persuasion is not from without. So that our beliefs are not derived from another source.

Trinitarians (unwittingly?) use non-biblical terms like “Eternal Generation,” “Eternal Son,” “Eternally Begotten,” etc., like a magician uses a shell game to deceive the crowds. The challenge is clear, we must use the Bible alone to define and explain our beliefs. If not, we may (unwittingly?), like the Trinitarians, use the “sanction of orthodoxy” and “ban those who hesitate about falling down and worshipping our definition.”

To the analytical mind it is evident that if God is to be God for human thought and human hearts, God must be a Person in the sense in which we understand the term to-day. He must be an individual—that is, a self-conscious and self-determining being—with reason and will so definitely conceived that we cannot speak of three reasons and three wills in the Godhead.

If then God is “Person” in this modern conception of the term, as we are “persons,” and if the Father is “the only true God,” is then the Son not God, but only man, or at most a higher being, a sort of middle being with divine attributes? Or if, on the other hand, the Son is God, without any modification or limitation, is He then the same God as the Father and therefore “the true substance of His nature?”

It may indeed be objected that it is dangerous to enter this realm. Then we make bold to reply that we ought to enter this realm, because a mental conception that cannot stand mental analysis is no conviction, only a persuasion from without. And we need not fear the consequences to faith, provided that it is a living faith and not mere tradition. We are addressing such as know the revealed God in Christ, and not those who have never questioned their own merely intellectual knowledge or second-hand information about God.

To comprehend God is indeed not given to mortals. Such a possibility is not even thinkable. But this does not imply that we may construct a doctrine of God which insults and outrages all understanding. It does not imply that we may define God in language that makes all sane thought about Him impossible to a divinely illuminated reason and then threaten with the ban those who hesitate about falling down and worshipping our definition. God himself is no contradiction, and faith does not require of us to create a contradiction. Rationalism is no less rationalism because its man-made structure may happen to have the sanction of orthodoxy. The deeper intuition of faith may leave it equally far below the truth in Christ Jesus.

—C. J. Sodergren