

# **EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM**

---

**FRANCIS NIGEL LEE**

**With the author's kind acknowledgments**

**to**

**CHRISTIAN STUDIES CENTER**

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Egbert Bosman Publications**

**Postal Address**

**© F.N. Lee – March 2001 AD**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD (BY DR. P.Y. DE JONG) .....	i
COMMENDATION (BY DR. C. VAN TIL).....	iii
INTRODUCTION (BY THE WRITER) .....	v
FREE WILL? – OR FREE GRACE!.....	1
1. THE FIRST GOSPEL PROMISE .....	3
2. PREACHERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE THE FLOOD.....	11
3. ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF ALL BELIEVERS .....	17
4. MOSES THE MEEK.....	25
5. ELIJAH THE PROPHET .....	31
6. JOHN THE BAPTIZER .....	37
7. JESUS CHRIST THE LORD .....	43
8. THE APOSTLE PETER .....	49
9. THE APOSTLE PAUL .....	55
10. THE APOSTLE JOHN.....	61
CONCLUSION .....	67
SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.....	69
ABOUT REV. PROF. DR. FRANCIS NIGEL LEE.....	71
BOOK REVIEW.....	73



## FOREWORD

With growing apostasy and immorality of our day, the churches apparently are arousing themselves more vigorously to the grand task of "preaching the Gospel to every creature."

Much of this, however, seems to fall short of Biblical standards, in both message and method. With such a truncated proclamation we can only expect disappointment. God honors those who honor Him according to all the words which He has spoken.

**RENEWAL** is pleased to present a series of articles on "Effective Evangelism," by Dr. Francis Nigel Lee, Scholar-in-Residence in the Christian Studies Center at Memphis, Tenn.

In the light of Scripture he exposes much of the shallowness of present-day efforts to bring the message. Clearly he shows from the Bible that covenant-church-kingdom are "perspectives" which God gives us to preach His full counsel. To reduce the message to individualistic soul-saving or to cater to the flesh in the use of methods, robs the sovereign God of the glory which is His due.

We trust our readers will be stimulated and instructed also by this series, keeping them for future re-reading and reflection.

Rev. Dr. P.Y. de Jong,  
Editor of RENEWAL,  
Sioux Center, Iowa (who first published these articles there in 1974-75)

[Dr. De Jong, formerly President of Calvin Theological Seminary,  
was later also a Professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary]



## COMMENDATION

Dear Dr. Lee,

*Effective Evangelism* arrived in the post 11 a.m. At 2:30 p.m., I have already greedily absorbed it.

As I love the sovereign electing grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord – I cannot help but rejoice in the fact that with many a midnight lamp, you have given a careful exegesis of what constitutes effective evangelism.

May the Lord bless thee and keep thee! May He cause His face to shine upon thee, and give thee peace! May He lift up his countenance, and give the Shalom in Christ Jesus!

Your brother in Christ,  
Cornelius Van Til, 2/14/'80  
6 Rich Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118





## **INTRODUCTION (BY THE WRITER)**

Evangelism is once again in the crucible of Christian discussion. Uppsala, Urbana and Lausanne are just three of the many recent conferences either actually dedicated (or claiming to be dedicated) to exploring new and more effective ways of evangelizing the world. And the ferment of the ideas expressed at these meetings will doubtless continue to make itself felt through years to come.

However, conferences on evangelism and even great evangelists themselves (like John Wesley, Billy Sunday, and D.L. Moody), come and go. So do their varying evangelistic methods. But the cardinal question about evangelism and evangelists always remains: "What saith the Scripture?" (Rom. 4:3) The answer to that alone is of genuine and immutable value – even for evangelism today.

It is the thesis of the present writer, then, that only that evangelism which is thoroughly Scriptural will prove to be really effective and of enduring value. Accordingly, we have here studied the creed and conduct of the ten greatest evangelists mentioned in the Bible itself. Moreover, we have attempted to extract normative principles therefrom, applicable to evangelism in any period of history and therefore in our own day too.

"Thy Word is truth," said Jesus to His Father (John 17:17). May He whose Word is truth be pleased to use this study for the evangelization of precious souls, for the edification of Christ's Church, for the expansion of His Kingdom, but above all for the glorification of the Name of our one true Triune God!

Francis Nigel Lee



## FREE WILL? – OR FREE GRACE!

**BEFORE** the fall, the Word of God announced His **good news** to man: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth...Of every tree of the garden (except one!) thou mayest freely eat..."

**This** was the good news to unfallen man: **Go ye** into all the world...and **subdue** the earth...and **freely** eat! (Cf. Gen. 1:28 & 2:16f & Matt. 28:19) And man could obey or disobey this command **of his own free will!**

But **AFTER** the fall, man did indeed "surely **die!**" Now, **even his will** became unfree (Gen. 2:17; 6:5, 12; 8:21; Prov. 16:1; 21:1; Jer. 10:23ff; John 1:13; 6:44; 15:5,16; Rom. 9:15-16; 10:20; Eph. 4:17-24; Phil. 2:12-13; Tit. 1:15). So that unless a man be born again by the Spirit of God, he cannot even see – much less enter into! – the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-8).

Hence, **this** is the good news to **fallen** man: **God** opens his eyes (Gen. 3:7); **God** calls him by His Word (Gen. 3:9); **God** promises to save him (Gen. 3:15); **God** clothes his naked sinfulness (Gen. 3:21); and **God** again commands and gives him the grace to be fruitful and to multiply and to subdue the whole earth to His Own glory (Gen. 3:16, 23 & 9:1-7).

Fallen man does not therefore come to Christ and save himself of his own free will – for fallen man **has no** free will! The **Sovereign Christ** saves fallen man – by Himself coming to him of His Own **free grace!**

Francis Nigel Lee



# 1

## THE FIRST GOSPEL PROMISE

When is evangelism really effective? When dramatic altar calls are made for conspicuous public decisions? When the masses are exhorted to come forward and "confess Christ" in city-wide "revivals" lasting for several weeks? Or when the good news of the whole counsel of God is faithfully proclaimed – **irrespective** of the outward and alleged verifiability or visibility of the response?

Much light is shed on the correct answer to these questions by examining several of the key passages of Scripture dealing with evangelism (that is, dealing with the preaching of the **evangel** of the Christian gospel or God's "good news") relative to the saving implications of the historical death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:1-4). The first such passage we propose to examine is the **protevangeli**um or the first gospel promise ever given to man right after the fall (Gen. 3:15f).

First, it should be noticed that this **good news** was preceded by the **bad news**. God Himself had solemnly warned our first parents that the day they ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17 & 3:3). This is in strange contrast to much modern pseudo-evangelicalism, which would lure its "victims" to come to Jesus with promises of a pie-in-the-sky bye-and-bye rather than solemnly warn them to flee from the wrath which is to come (cf. Matt. 3:7). If

the gospel is really to be good news, it must presuppose knowledge of the bad news and also proceed from a hearty desire to turn man from the bad to the good.

Second, it is to be understood that the very first human sinners were brought to the clear **legal acknowledgement** that the bad news (that their sinful condition was to be severely punished) was fully merited. It is precisely by the preaching of the law that a knowledge of sin, and God's righteousness in punishing it, is aroused in the depraved human heart (Rom. 3:20), inasmuch as sin **is** the transgression of the **law** (I John 3:4). The moral law of God, later to be embodied in the ten commandments, was very clearly implied in the test prohibition against man's eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For Adam was not to covet and steal it (Gen. 3:6), thereby murdering himself and his descendants by dishonoring his heavenly Father (cf. F.N. Lee: *Are The Ten Commandments Relevant Today?* in *Blue Banner*, Beaver Falls, Pa., Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 38ff.). How different is the approach of many so called "evangelical" churches today, which pride themselves in being "free from the law" – churches in which the decalogue is never even recited! Note by way of contrast Calvin's Strasbourg liturgy!

Third, as Calvin points out (*Institutes* II:8:8-10), the negative prohibitions in the ten commandments also include and

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

imply their opposite **positive injunctions** (relative to the **dominion charter** – **Gen.1:28**). For example, the prohibition against adultery implies the opposite injunction to be loyal to one's wife and to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 1:27f & 2:24); the prohibition against murder implies the opposite injunction to preserve life (Gen. 1:26 & 2:15,19); and the prohibition against sabbath-breaking implies the opposite injunction to subdue the earth six days per week (Gen. 1:28 & 2:1-5). Hence, it is not surprising that the test prohibition (Gen. 2:17) and the dominion charter (Gen. 1:28) not only presuppose one another, but also both presuppose the moral law of God (cf. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q. 20). What **is** surprising, is that some so-called "evangelicals" have now declared war against what a leading fundamentalistic preacher has denounced as "the deadly menace of the cultural mandate" (by which he means the **dominion charter**). However, what God hath joined together (the dominion charter and the first gospel promise) let no man put asunder!

Fourth, it is obvious that the first gospel message, the test prohibition, and the dominion charter, are all interrelated aspects of the same **covenantal promise** of unlosable everlasting life made by God to Adam and his descendants (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:17; 3:14-22; 5:1-8; Isa. 24:5; 42:6; 49:8 and especially Hos. 6:7 margin). If Adam as their federal head had not lapsed, neither would his children. When Adam fell, his children fell; when Adam died, his descendants died (Rom. 5:12f & I Cor. 15:22). Conversely, when Christ

the Second Adam died and rose again, all His children in principle died and rose again too (Rom. 6:1f & Gal. 2:20). Moreover, when adult Christians are sanctified, their unborn children are sanctified too (Ezra 9:2; Rom. 11:16; I Cor. 7:14). Consequently, effective evangelism will always be covenantal. It will not merely address itself to individuals, but also to the children of such individuals (Gen. 17:4-27; Deut. 30:1-2; Josh. 24:15-25) – even as Peter did in his great evangelistic address on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41 cf. 10:24-47). What a far cry from the atomistic "sawdust trail" and the "mourner's bench" and their modern Arminian equivalents!

Fifth, it is clear that God Himself conducted the first gospel service. He did this exclusively through the agency of the **Word of God**, not through the word of man. For God told man to subdue the earth; God threatened man with mortal punishment; and God Himself announced the *protevangelium*! (Gen. 3:15) Indeed, it was the voice of God Himself which Adam and his wife heard while cringing and creeping away from Him as He walked in the garden – not the voice of a human evangelist walking down the aisle to meet his eagerly responding listeners after giving the invitation. In contrast with this solemn divine monologue in Eden, both the humanistic dialogue of modern ecumenical evangelism and the illustrations-packed experiential monologue of modern revivalism are clearly revealed as thoroughly man-centered **counterfeits** of the gospel.

## 1 – THE FIRST GOSPEL PROMISE

Sixth, God's first act of evangelizing fallen man was **sovereignly to call dying man back to life** (Gen. 3:9). Only the sovereign and humanly unsolicited and irresistible voice of God quickens the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). Only the sovereign Word of the Lord can effectively arouse the totally depraved and totally disinterested sinner dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Modern pseudo-evangelicalism does not really believe that unregenerate men are really dead in sin, but merely sick and in fact eagerly waiting to co-operate with Jesus of their own free wills if only they are given the chance to come to Him. With its erroneous clichés, teaching that "the latch is on your side of the door" and "sinner, won't you let Him in?" – modern evangelism is thus a perversion of the true evangel of salvation through God-given faith alone. It is therefore "another gospel" utterly foreign to the one and only true gospel of God's sovereign grace (Gal. 1:7-9).

Seventh, the protevangelium is **antithetic**, not inclusivistic. God does not feebly appeal to Satan and his children to "only believe" and be saved. To the contrary, God condemns the devil and his reprobate seed as unsaveable. They are objects of the Lord's everlasting wrath, outside the scope of the limited atonement held forth in God's effective evangelism! "I will put enmity," He told the devil, "between thy seed and her seed." (Gen. 3:15) Any faint resemblance between this antithetical declaration of the gospel and the modern pseudo-gospel of God's equal

saving love of all men, is purely coincidental.

Eighth, God's first gospel promise is **effective**. It is no mere declinable invitation. It does what it says! "**I will** put enmity" between the children of the devil and the children of God, and the Messianic Seed of the woman "**shall** bruise thy head," God told the serpent (Gen. 3:15). God's Word does not make salvation barely possible for all. To the contrary, it makes salvation absolutely certain for some – namely for the many that He has chosen and foreordained unto everlasting life (Acts 13:48). God's Word becomes a savor of death unto death in the ears of the reprobate who hear it (II Cor. 2:13f & 13:5f).

Ninth, the true gospel of Jesus is also **destructive**. It centrally crushes and destroys the very head of the serpent and of the seed of the serpent. This includes the human children of the devil (I John 3:8-10). It does not attempt – as does much of modern ecumenical evangelism – to bring about the reconciliation of all men everywhere, but it rather comes to separate Christians from the world and unto Christ (John 17:9-16 & I John 2:15-17).

Tenth, the protevangelium is **thoroughly God-centered**. It is not in any way dependent on man's "co-operation" for its success. Nor indeed is it primarily concerned with man's well-being. "**I will** put enmity...; **I will** greatly multiply thy sorrow...; because thou hast...eaten of the tree which **I** commanded thee" not to do (Gen. 3:16-17). **I, I, I**, says God! Thoroughly

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

**theocentric!** How conspicuously all this contrasts with many of the extremely man-centered evangelization campaigns of our present age with their highly personalized presentation of the human evangelist himself, even above the gospel he is supposed to be preaching!

Eleventh – and flowing from the previous point – we discover **no synergism** or human co-operation with God in the first gospel promise. God does not invite man to "do his part" and "assist" or even "allow" God to save his soul. To the contrary, salvation in evangelization is all from the Lord alone. God commands with a vitalizing call and demands a conscious response – thus Himself giving what He requires, albeit through responsible human agency (Rom. 4:5; Heb. 11:1-6; Eph. 2:8). God demands, and elect man obeys! No mere "invitation" is given by God, whereby man is coaxed "of his own free will" to come to Jesus and be saved. Rather, God "monergistically" or one-sidedly promises that He shall send Jesus and that Christ shall crush the serpent and save His own elect "seed of the Seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53:10) independent of any "free (?) choice" our first parents or their children may make or have made and certainly without any contribution on their part. In the light of this, the modern semi-Pelagian evangelists' pleas to their hearers to "give God a chance to clean up your lives" are completely without foundation in the Scriptures.

Twelfth, it is very interesting to note that the protevangelium – unlike the modern counterfeit brands of evangelism

– does **not promise man instant happiness and perpetual sunshine** if he will "just let Jesus come into his heart." To the contrary, even after our first parents' repentance and faith in the coming incarnation of the Mediator, their remaining years here on earth, said God, would remain a struggle! Unto the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." And unto Adam He said, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, 'Thou shalt not eat of it!': cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:16-19) In spite of their turning back to the Lord, all Adam and Eve were here promised during the remainder of their earthly lives, were: sorrow, subjection, tribulation, exertion, expulsion, and death (Gen. 3:16-24). When (if ever!) do the vast majority of modern evangelists stress these things? But such punishments are most fitting – for God must be served for His own sake, and not for the sake of any benefit we can derive from Him by way of a reward in return for our faith. Even our faith is not of ourselves; it is in fact a gift of God! (Eph. 2:8)

Thirteenth, this first example of gospel-preaching was nevertheless highly



## 1 – THE FIRST GOSPEL PROMISE

effective, involving as it did **covenantal or family evangelism**. For Adam believed the gospel and "called his wife's name 'Eve'; because she was the mother of all living" (not the mother of all dying – Gen. 3:20). Eve too believed. She gave the Lord Himself the glory when she bare her first children (Gen. 4:1-26). Moreover, Adam and Eve received God's forgiveness when they "put on" their "sacramental" God-given clothes as a sort of primordial baptism. They put them on their infant children too in following the divine directive (Gen. 3:21 & 4:1 cf. Gal. 3:27). Thus also, really effective evangelism today will result particularly in the converts' family lives reflecting their corporate family acknowledgment of the centrality of the Triune God in all their ways, rather than restricting that acknowledgment merely to their own private or public profession of Christ as personal Savior (but not as their family Savior). For the Lord solemnly promised to be the God of both Abraham **and** his seed after him, commanding that his whole household from tenderest infancy through ripe old age be circumcised and believe the gospel (Gen. 17:7-14, 24-27 & Rom. 4:11-12). Paul's words to the Philippian jailor unquestionably guarantee the same blessing which we too should appropriate by faith: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And he "was baptized, he, and all his." (Acts 2:38-41 & 16:31-33 cf. Col. 2:11-13)

Fourteenth, family evangelism of itself, however, does **not automatically guarantee the salvation of all covenant children**. As a result of the first gospel

promise, Abel (Heb. 11:4) and Seth (Gen. 4:26) were undoubtedly saved, but Cain – although the covenant child of believing parents – after growing up repudiated the Lord, and sadly is now in hell (Jude 6,11,13). This clearly demonstrates that he was not truly of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15-16 cf. I Tim. 2:9-15) but rather of the seed of the serpent (I John 3:8-15). Cain's apostasy from the covenant of grace required the application of stern discipline, thus separating him from the covenant-keeping people of God (Gen. 4:12f,26). Interestingly, when this separation between the believers and the unbelievers was later obscured by the increasing apostasy of the believers, resulting in alliances between the lost and the saved, society became increasingly violent. Then God found it necessary to cleanse the earth catastrophically (Gen. 6:1-7). How reminiscent this is of our present "evangelical" churches with their abandonment of ecclesiastical discipline in the interests of ecumenical "relevance," the reader can himself decide!

But fifteenth and lastly, this first gospel promise was not only "spiritual." It also involved **comprehensive material blessings**, such as food and clothing and vocational careers. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them," and "the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Gen. 3:21,23) Nor were these benefits limited to the adult Adam and Eve. Also their infant children were fed and clothed by their laboring parents. Similarly, children today are to be nourished both physically and spiritually

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

in the Lord (Eph. 6:4), clothed both bodily and spiritually by putting on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:27). The covenantal promises of the gospel are to believers and to their children (Acts 2:38-39). All attempts to separate adult parents and their infant children – as for example evidenced in the attempt to separate "sacred" blessings from "secular" blessings or "eternal" blessings from "temporal" blessings, as in modern pietistic revivalism, are clearly out of harmony with God's first gospel promise! One may distinguish the above blessings, but never oppose them to or even divorce them from one another.

**Effective evangelism** today, then, will impress upon sinful man his original covenantal obligations to keep the comprehensive dominion charter. It will declare all ten commandments of the cosmos-embracing moral law of God as man's permanent rule of life. This declaration will help make the sinner conscious of his own sinful condition. It will bring the bad news that the wages of sin is death, that unreconciled sinners are surely on the way to everlasting damnation. It will also declare not only the sinner's covenantal solidarity with his forefather Adam, but also his present and future descendants' covenantal solidarity with the sinner himself.

Effective evangelism will powerfully present the Word of God, and not the word of the evangelist. It will depend only on God sovereignly to call His unsaved people, and avoid all rabble-rousing religious sales pitches. It will not fail to stress the antithesis between the Kingdom

of God and its citizens and the kingdom of Satan and its citizens. Nor will it fail to call for a militant struggle of the former against the latter.

Effective evangelism will confidently assume that it is being effective – even when sealing the doom of such of the listeners who ultimately prove to be reprobate. It thus destroys the devil and his children, together with their works, and ensures the final triumph of Christianity in our world. Effective evangelism is thoroughly theocentric and not man-centered in its **origin**, its **methods**, and its **goals**. It therefore has no use for synergism, whereby impotent man is falsely assumed to be able to co-operate with God in accepting the gospel offer. It does not falsely represent conversion to be a panacea for all earthly problems, but it does insist on influencing the entire family without thereby guaranteeing that all covenantal children will automatically be saved. Nevertheless it addresses itself to the needs of the entire man (food, clothes, career) and his entire family and descendants. It knows nothing of separating the gospel from these "secular" benefits and restricting them to some imaginary "sacred" sphere irrelevant to real life.

These, then, are the characteristics of the highly effective evangelism of the Lord Himself in His very first gospel promise. It is **fundamental** to all subsequent examples of evangelism mentioned in Scripture. May God grant that all Christian churches in their laudable attempts to convert sinners will return to this Biblical **foundation!**

\* \* \* \* \*



## PREACHERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE THE FLOOD

In our previous article on effective evangelism, we dealt with God's first gospel promise. We saw that the **protevangeliu**m (Gen. 3:15) involved: the dominion charter, the ten commandments, the preaching of everlasting death, covenantal solidarity, God's infallible Word, divine sovereignty, antithetic non-inclusivism, confidence in its effectiveness, destruction of evil, consistent God-centeredness, anti-synergism, realism about problems, family involvement but not automatic family salvation (hence the necessity of individual church discipline), and the total needs of man.

Now we shall see how these and other principles operated in the work of the two most famous human evangelists before the great flood – namely Enoch and Noah.

First, Enoch the Sethite was a **faithful covenantal descendant of the faithful Adam** (Jude 14). This in itself is significant. Enoch's name bears great resemblance to his faithful ancestor Enos, in whose days men corporately (but covenantally and ecclesiastically) began to call upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26 & 5:21). This represents perhaps the earliest example of the way in which theological and evangelical gifts are often manifested down through the covenant-keeping generations, as for instance, was also the case with the Erskines and the Haldanes in Scotland, the Voetius and the Kuyper families in The Netherlands, the

Murrays and the Du Toits in South Africa, and so too the Edwards's and Hodges in the United States. Indeed, so strong are the blessings bestowed upon godly covenant-keepers that God shows mercy unto thousands (of generations) of them that love Him, and keep His commandments (Ex. 20:5-6).

Second, it should be noted that, quite apart from his covenant-keeping ancestors, **Enoch himself was a dedicated believer in his own right. Every aspect of his walk of life – in spite of the wicked days in which he lived and the evil influences** which would have destroyed him (Jude 15) – manifested his dedication to the Lord. For "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:22). Unbalanced hyper-Calvinists all too often claim that God's Word preached by the evangelist will not return void even when the evangelist or theologian himself (like the famous Johannes Maccovius) is not living a very dedicated life. The fact is, however, that the life of such an evangelist – unlike that dedicated walk of Enoch's – often preaches louder than (and in conflict with!) his fine words!

Third, Enoch fearlessly **denounced the overwhelming sins and social evils of his day**. Though surrounded by an ever-increasing godlessness which threatened to extinguish the light of the gospel, Enoch resolutely prophesied against it with great power. He declared that "the Lord cometh (both in temporal judgment

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

at the time of the flood and later in final judgment at Christ's second advent) with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds (or breaches of the ten commandments) which they have committed, and of all their hard speeches (or blasphemies) which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts (or adulterous desires); and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration (by way of flattering sycophancy) because of advantage." (Jude 14-16) May we then, like Enoch, bravely set ourselves against the swelling stream of blasphemy, adultery, and sycophancy in our present existentialistic and atheistic (yea, "godless"! ) age, and preach both the certainty of God's imminent temporal judgments poured out over the children of our age **and** the certainty of the ultimate and final judgment yet to come!

Fourth, after faithfully divesting himself of his prophetic "burden" (cf. Mal. 1:1) regarding God's necessary condemnation through him of the sins of his age, **Enoch received the testimony that he had pleased God** (Heb. 11:5). Without faith it is impossible to please the Lord (Heb. 11:6). Hence we know that Enoch must have been a man of great confidence in God, especially in the faithful way in which he so relevantly preached against the besetting sins of the antediluvians. And if evangelism is to be effective today, modern evangelists must, like Enoch, preach the whole counsel of God with particular reference to the

burning issues of the day – if they would receive the seal of the testimony of God's approval on their work.

Fifth, the result of this was that, **like the witness of Abel, the testimony of Enoch "yet speaketh"** – even after the end of his earthly life (Heb. 11:4-5 & Jude 4, 14). In this sense, all true evangelists are "immortal." Their examples are "translated" down to subsequent generations as examples to follow (Heb. 11:5,39 to 12:1). So the names and lives of great Christian evangelists, such as Paul, Timothy, Savonarola, Whitefield, Wesley, Vander Groe, Billy Sunday, etc., have become immortalized as examples for us to **follow**.

Sixth, coming now to Enoch's exemplary great-grandson Noah, we find that he too "**walked with God**" (Gen. 6:9) in the covenantal paths of his similarly exemplary ancestors (Gen. 5:21). This teaches the further covenantal principle of recurring highpoints in the history of redemption, even as the godly Hezekiah and Josiah represent later covenantal climaxes reminiscent of their ancestors David and Asa (I Chron. 29 & II Chron. 14,32,34). Let us take heart that God will again raise up new theological and evangelical giants in the covenant line of Paul-Augustine-Anselm-Calvin-Voetius-Kuyper-Bavinck-Hodge-Dabney-Edwards-Warfield-Machen and many others, knowing that the tide of church history, currently sadly ebbing (at least in large parts of the West) – must soon change and prosperously flow again, so that the Earth may yet become filled with

## 2 – PREACHERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE THE FLOOD

the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9 & Hab. 2:14).

Seventh, Enoch's descendant Noah lived a life of great piety, even while living in the time of **lowest public morality ever witnessed in the history of the world**. "And God saw that the wickedness of men was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." (Gen. 6:5-12) This surely shows us that we should never think that our own times are too wicked for a genuine revival of Christianity! Indeed, how dark was Geneva in Switzerland prior to the sudden advent of John Calvin, and yet: "**post tenebras, lux**" – after the darkness, (came) light!

Eighth, it should be understood that Noah, perhaps even more than his faithful ancestor Enoch, was **a faithful preacher of righteousness**. He raised his evangelical voice like a trumpet against the prevailing iniquity. Finding grace in the eyes of the Lord, Noah became a just man made perfect in his generations (Gen. 6:8-9), yes, a proverbial example of human righteousness (Ezek. 14:14, 20). His life preached before his mouth did, and this enabled him to become "a preacher of righteousness bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." (II Pet. 2:5) His righteous descendant Lot vexed his soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds of the people of Sodom

and Gomorrah (II Pet. 2:6-8). But Noah was not only vexed with the immoral miscegenation of his own day; he preached against and opposed it with great power! Like Enoch before him, he warned of impending judgment to come (Jude 14-15 & II Pet. 2:5). May we, too, by God's grace, personally be righteous in our own generation, clearly denouncing the lawlessness of our own day, upholding God's ten commandments as the everlasting and unchangeable standard of public and private righteousness, and warning men of the sure advent of both temporal and eternal punishments meted out by the Lord against all law-breakers!

Ninth, together with his stern judgment preaching, Noah also preached the tender **mercies of Christ**. Not only did the prophet of the flood (as did all the later messengers of God) prophesy about the grace that would later come to the world at the Redeemer's incarnation, but the Spirit of Christ Himself was in Noah. He testified beforehand about the sufferings of the Savior and the glory that should follow at His resurrection (I Pet. 1:10-12). Noah not only testified to his contemporaries about the immutability of God's temporal and everlasting promises to covenant-keepers and their children and His temporal and everlasting threats against covenant-breakers and their children (Gen. 6:18 cf. Isa. 54:8-13); he also prophetically foretold the coming death and resurrection of Jesus by which alone they could be redeemed – as foreshadowed by the ark of the covenant inside of which alone they could be saved (I Pet. 3:18-22 cf. II Pet. 2:5). Effective evangelists today will tell their

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

contemporaries that there is absolutely no salvation for them and their children outside of faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38f & 4:10-12).

Tenth, Noah's oral preaching and the message of his righteous or law-abiding life was rigorously undergirded by **holy labor in the sweat of his face**. Obedient to the dominion charter (Gen. 1:28), with his own special gifts as a great engineer Noah obediently constructed the ark according to the exact mathematical specifications and physical materials needed (Gen. 6:14-16). This was not only a haven for the living beings he was to subdue but also an ecological protection and preservation in respect of the birds of the air and the beasts of the field and every living thing that creepeth upon the earth (Gen. 7:2-8). Would to God that modern evangelists, like the rabbis of old, would not only preach with their mouths but could also be adept in some manual profession to help keep their religion relevant and down to earth (cf. Gen. 2:15 & 3:23). Paul, you will remember, was a tentmaker by trade as well as a preacher!

Eleventh, it was perhaps **precisely this nontheological yet deeply religious work** of Noah in building the ark which made his life's message relevant to his contemporaries and particularly to his successors. Had Noah only preached in word but not also in deed, humanity (and even all the animals) would have been wiped out totally. His work of building the ark, which probably lasted a whole century (Gen. 5:32 & 6:3,14 & 7:11), must have made at least as deep an

impression on his contemporaries as his oral warnings. Even his father, the prophet Lamech the Sethite, had felt that his son's work would be highly relevant to the everyday needs of suffering mankind. For "he called his name 'Noah' (meaning: 'rest' or 'comfort'), saying, 'This same (Noah) shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.'" (Gen. 5:29) May the gracious Lord give more of our modern evangelists a similar compassion for the earthly needs of the masses of our age!

Twelfth, the **finished result of Noah's construction of the ark itself preached the gospel!** After the door was shut and the great deluge commenced, the drowning unbelievers themselves clearly understood their dire situation as they saw the ark lifted to safety while the wicked were perishing in their sins. In this way the gospel was then preached by Christ in His Spirit, through Noah, to those who are now dead, some of whom, like the dying thief on the cross at a later date, may even have savingly repented in their last moments as the flood waters rose (Luke 23:39-43 cf. I Pet. 1:10, 12 & 3:18-22 & 4:6 and II Pet. 2:4-5). May we so understand that our so-called "secular" work is not to be disconnected from testifying about Jesus (unto our hearers' salvation or damnation, II Cor.2:15-16), but rather is to manifest our own total religious sincerity! (Cf. I Cor. 2:10-17; 10:26-31; Heb. 3:1-14)

Thirteenth, Noah's witness clearly demonstrated **the vital connection between evangelism, covenantal**



## 2 – PREACHERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE THE FLOOD

**baptism, and the dominion charter.** Confronted by the mammoth cultural structure of the ark of salvation which was sprinkled by the falling rain in a "covenantal baptism" to save Noah and his children safely inside that ark, the unbelievers and their children were totally submersed because of their unbelief, unto temporal and eternal death (Gen. 7:4-24 cf. I Pet. 3:18-22). Would that all of our modern evangelists too were preaching not only the evangelistic implications of covenantal baptism (Mark 16:15-16 & Acts 2:38-41), but also the cosmos-embracing implications of baptism as such (Acts 1:5-8 & 2:17-21) and the absolute necessity of all baptized Christians serving the Lord according to their several gifts in every area of endeavor by virtue of the indissoluble relation of Christian baptism to the dominion charter (Matt. 28:18-20 cf. Gen. 1:26-28).

Fourteenth, Noah was a **future-oriented evangelist**. He did not press for instant decisions with all kinds of salesmen's gimmicks, as do many modern revivalists. He did not ask for "rededications" and "hand-raisings" and sentimental "just-as-I-am" choruses with every head bowed and every eye closed. To the contrary, he went on with his daily work, while sternly warning the largely unrepentant world of the impending holocaust. Meanwhile he prepare for a brighter future on this same earth thereafter. "By faith Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became the **heir** of the

righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. 11:7) O, that more modern evangelists would abandon their existentialistic mentality – and cease collecting souls like little boys assembling postage stamp collections!

Fifteenth, **Noah loved life and all its fullness!** Alas, many modern evangelists despair of the possibility of improving our present age, being themselves sick unto death and devoid of any comprehensive plan for the Christian reconstruction of modern society. Noah was determined to live, and to let live! (cf. Hab. 1:12 & 2:14 & 3:2) He built the ark for the salvation of himself and his family. And when nobody else would enter through the door (I Pet. 3:20 & II Pet. 2:5), he did not regard his work as a preacher as a failure. In addition to his family, he also saved some of the animals (Gen. 7:1-9) – and thus performed a vital role as an ecologist (Gen. 8:6-11). After the flood, he renewed the covenant (Gen. 9:9-11), rededicating himself to the execution of the dominion charter (Gen. 9:1-3). He developed according to God's revealed will, a system of human government and criminal procedure (Gen. 9:5-6). He even learned a new trade – that of a farmer (Gen. 9:19). In all this early history, how far we are from the arrogance of many modern pietistic evangelists who regard preachers alone as being in "full-time service" of the Lord and, apparently, regard all Christian "laymen" as being only "part-time" servants of **God!**

Sixteenth and lastly, Noah – the evangelist, and the engineer, and the ecologist, and the criminologist, and the

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

farmer – understood **the continuity between this present earthly life and the future heavenly life**. This helped to make his preaching relevant. It enabled him to see the everlasting value of all God-honoring work performed on earth here and now! Noah faithfully embraced God's promises of favorable climatic conditions for man and beast after the flood and even unto the end of the world (Gen. 8:22 & 9:11-16). And, as sealed by the rainbow as the sign of that covenant, the duration of those benefits in the rainbow-crowned Christ are truly of cosmos-embracing significance (Rev. 10:1-6). For they point not only to the rainbow-encircled heavenly throne in the life to come after our death (Rev. 4:1-11

cf. 5:5-13), but, conceivably, even beyond that to the ultimate consummation of that heavenly life on the rainbow-coloured new earth to come in this very world of ours in the far-distant future (Rev. 21:11-21 & 22:3-5)! Only when modern evangelists become as relevant as this – by preaching in the deepest eschatological perspectives as to the permanent significance of the totality of man's present earthly life – will their ministry be really effective.

May Almighty God grant a rebirth of this comprehensive style of antediluvian evangelism, so that "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37) particularly in **this respect!**

\* \* \* \* \*

## ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF ALL BELIEVERS

It may seem strange to include Abraham among the great evangelists of history, seeing we are nowhere told as we are of Enoch and Noah before him (Jude 14f & II Pet. 2:5) that he ever specifically "preached" the gospel to his godless contemporaries. Closer inspection, however, reveals that Abraham – the father of all Christians (Rom. 4:12 & 4:16) – is one of the most evangelical figures who ever lived.

For first, almost immediately after introducing him, the Bible goes on to declare that in Abraham "**shall all families of the earth be blessed.**" (Gen. 12:3) Although Abraham was raised in idolatry on account of the apostasy of his forefathers (Josh. 24:2), and although God called upon him to leave the house of his own father, he was nevertheless predestined by God to become a blessing to many (Gen. 12:1-2). As such, Abraham was destined to be a blessing to his own immediate relatives (Gen. Chs. 13 & 14 & 24), to his neighbors (Gen. 19), to strangers (Gen. 18), to his own children (Gen. 17), to all nations in the world (Gen. 22:18), and even to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). Hence, we see that his very separation from unbelievers (even from his unbelieving relatives) was all predestinated for the final purpose of his ultimately becoming a blessing throughout the earth. May the same be the case with us as God's twentieth century people!

Second, we are next told that **everywhere Abraham went, he publicly testified to his faith in the Lord.** He erected conspicuous altars in Shechem among the Canaanites (Gen. 12:6-7), between Bethel and Ai near the Gibeonites (Gen. 12:8 & 13:3-4), in Hebron in the plain of Mamre where he greatly influenced some of the Amorites (Gen. 13:18 & 14:13), and in Beersheba as a testimony to Abimelech the king of Philistia (Gen. 21:32-33). Even among the godless Egyptians and Philistines, Abraham, in spite of some inconsistencies in his testimony, was used by God to confront and to be a blessing to these heathen (Gen. 12:10-20 & 20:4-18). May we so erect conspicuous places of worship as a testimony to our faith in God – witnessing even to powerful godless political leaders about our trust in God, as Abraham did!

Third, because Abraham openly served the Lord, God blessed him economically. Abraham's very economic situation in turn became **a testimony to the Lord by virtue of his honest financial dealings with others.** Abraham became very wealthy; he acquired much livestock (sheep, oxen, asses, and camels); many servants; great riches of silver and gold (Gen. 12:16 & 13:2 & 20:14). Yet, although older and therefore more worthy of priority than his nephew Lot, Abraham gladly gave him the choice of the best grazing land in the Eden-like plain of Jordan, while himself being contented

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

with drier territory (Gen. 13:6-11). Later, Abraham refused to accept the freely proffered spoils of war, choosing rather to tithe it himself unto the Lord, while insisting that the rest of the spoils be paid out to all the other members of the victorious war party (Gen. 14:21-24). Again, he would have been happy to have his faithful slave Eliezer of Damascus inherit his whole estate (Gen. 15:2 & 24:1f). And later still, he scrupulously paid the fair market price for a burial site for his wife, although it had been offered to him free of charge by his well-disposed heathen neighbors (Gen. 23:4-16). No wonder all his acquaintances respected Abraham and the God he served!

Fourth, although Lot was in no way an exemplary believer, he was nevertheless a true worshipper of Jehovah (Gen. 19:7-22 & II Pet. 2:6-9), no doubt to a large extent on account of **his uncle Abraham's influence on him** and the latter's care for his welfare (Gen. 12:5; 13:8f.; 14:12-16; 19:27-29). Similarly, we should advance the interests and contribute toward the spiritual welfare of all our kinsmen. In this way, we will promote the expansion of the true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fifth, Abraham was no pacifist, as are some today who think that a militant stance frightens away (absurd expression!) "potentially savable" souls. To the contrary, he not only entered into a military alliance with some of his neighbors, but, when not his own interests but rather the person and property of his kinsman Lot were threatened, he did not hesitate to wage war against the

aggressors and slaughter them until full restitution was made (Gen. 14:13-17). Far from engendering the hatred of all, Abraham's **righteous acts of war resulted in checking the warmongers and commanding their respect**. Thus the claims of the God of Abraham were impressed even on the godless king of Sodom (Gen. 14:18f.). In our day, if modern religious leaders would for once insist on all aggressors being forced to make full restitution, the criminal element in both national and inter-national society would be greatly restrained and the gospel thus much promoted (I Tim. 2:1-4; Rom. 13:1-7; II Thess. 3:1-4).

Sixth, Abraham's testimony to the Lordship of Jehovah spoke loud and clear to his heathen contemporaries, particularly when **he tithed his income to God and told them so** (Gen. 14:20-24). And, with his teaching of this practice to his son Isaac (Gen. 18:19 & 26:4-5), it is not surprising that his grandson Jacob also gladly paid his tithes unto the Lord in acknowledgment of all the divine blessings (particularly temporal!) that were bestowed upon him (Gen. 28:19-22 & 35:3-15). Effective evangelism today will include our recognition of the Lord's claim over all our possessions. This in itself will greatly impress our neighbors whom we seek to win for God, for they must themselves also be told to tithe unto the Lord (Mal. 3:8f & Matt. 23:23b).

Seventh, Abraham's strong faith in God's promise that his covenantal descendants would inherit the (spiritual and temporal) promises of God (Gen. 15:1-18), **did not cause him to restrict**

### 3 – ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF ALL BELIEVERS

**the gospel to his own offspring alone.**

To the contrary, as already seen, he also testified to his kinsman Lot, to his confederate neighbors (Gen. 14:13-24), and to such enemies of the Lord as the pharaoh of Egypt and the king of Sodom. Is it any wonder, then, that all Abraham's blood descendants, such as the children of Ishmael and probably even those of his sons by Keturah, should share in the promise that they would become great nations (Gen. 17:18f & 25:1-18), even as his more remote descendants Jacob and Esau in their turn became the fathers of the Israelites and the Edomites? (Gen. 35-36) Yet Abraham also desired that even his slaves, not related to him by blood but yet professing personal faith in the true God Jehovah, should be multiplied into nations (Gen. 15:2-4 & 17:23-27). In this way, he longed that all nations – even those not physically descended from himself – would be blessed: namely blessed through the gospel promises regarding Christ, the coming Seed of Abraham in whom he believed and encouraged others to believe (Gen. 22:18; John 8:56; Gal. 3:6-8,16-18). And indeed, as we Christians today progressively disciple the nations (Matt. 8:11; 28:19) and prepare the international bride of Christ to inhabit the new earth to come (Rev. 21:1-2, 24-26), all nations will surely be blessed!

Eighth, Abraham believed and planned to become not only the father of many nations, **but also the father of many kings** (Gen. 17:6). Abraham himself was subject to Almighty God, the King of the universe (Gen. 17:1-3 & Pss. 96-98). The patriarch was a kind of "second Adam," a

viceroy under God and over the whole earth. As royal father of all his descendants and indeed even of all believers, his children too were royalty. His son Ishmael was appointed the father of twelve princes (Gen. 17:20), his grandson Esau became the father of many dukes (Gen. 36:40f), and particularly his grandson Jacob became "Israel" – a "prince of God" (Gen. 32:28). His great-grandson Joseph became viceroy of Egypt (Gen. 41:40f.). His later descendants, David and Solomon and their descendants, became kings of Israel (II Sam. 1 to II Chron. 36), and their glorious descendant (Matt. 1), Jesus Christ, the greater Abraham (John 8:58) and the greater David (Matt. 23:42f) and the greater Solomon (Matt. 12:42), became King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:13-16). This Abrahamic Seed, Jesus Christ (Matt. 1), has appointed all Christians as kings over the earth, both in this life and in the world to come (Rev. 1:5-6 & 21:34-26). Today, our evangelism will be effective only when we also dare to tell converts that they are actually **princes under God** – and that they must therefore act accordingly!

Ninth, **Abraham's gospel promises were very earthy and very earthly.** They applied to life on this present earth, here and now. God promised that Abraham and his faithful descendants would inherit the land of Canaan and ultimately the entire earth (Gen. 15:7-21 & 17:8 cf. Rom. 4:13). Moreover, Abraham believed this promise, and God actually prospered him and his in that land (Gen. 13:2-6). It is true that Abraham looked beyond that earthly Canaan to the

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

heavenly Canaan above (Matt. 8:11 & Heb. 11:16). It is also true that he looked even further beyond that intermediate and temporary heavenly state after death to the permanent heaven-on-earth state of the "new earth Canaan." This is, in fact, the deepest prophetic fulfilment of Abraham's own "earthly Canaan" (Gen. 17:6 & Rev. 21:24-26). Accordingly, we must beware of limiting "the heavenly Canaan" to the post-mortal region of the "bosom of Abraham" where disembodied spirits rest in bliss until the resurrection. That post-mortal "heavenly Canaan" is itself only a temporary stage on the believer's way to the "new earth Canaan" which will follow and incorporate it into the final state of heaven-on-earth forever (Luke 16:22-31 and Rev. chs. 21 & 22). In actual fact the expression "heavenly Canaan" generally means not so much the post-mortal Church in glory, but rather the Church of God on this earth here and now – the (essentially invisible) Church which Abraham entered into after leaving Ur of the Chaldees and coming into the earthly Canaan (as the visible picture of that invisible Church). This "heavenly Canaan" we too enter during our present life here and now at the time of our regeneration. And, having once entered, we never leave it, not even after death. Because we are **already** in the heavenly Canaan, or the city of God, or the true Christian Church (Gal. 4:22-31 & Heb. 11:8-16 & 12:22-23) and will continue to experience unto all eternity its concrete materiality and ultimate materialization after the final resurrection on the "heavenly" new earth to come (Rev. Chs. 21 & 22), effective evangelism today will emphasize the importance of serving God

in every sphere of life here and now. This Abraham did in his "earthly Canaan," because he knew it to be the first stage of his "heavenly Canaan" yet to come.

Tenth, and flowing from the last point, Abraham appropriated these promises by **obediently being fruitful, and multiplying, and seeking to have dominion over the earth** (cf. Gen. 1:26-28). In faithful response to this perpetual command as repeated to his forefather Noah (Gen. 9:1-17), Abraham was fruitful and multiplied (Gen. chs. 17 & 25) and set about continuing faithful man's subjugation of the cosmos. Like Adam, Abraham cultivated a grove of trees (Gen. 21:33). He "subdued" the earth by pacing the land of his inheritance (Gen. 13:15-17) and by increasing his flocks (Gen. 13:5-6). He "subdued" the birds of the air while bringing his sacrifices to God (Gen. 15:9f). And precisely by doing all these things, Abraham promoted and extended the gospel. Let us, my Christian friends, learn to do the same today!

Eleventh, these gospel promises were for Abraham and for all his seed. **At the risk of breaking the covenant, his children were to bear the sign of the gospel blessing from infancy** (Gen. 17:11-14 & Gal. 3:6-29). Today even in some supposedly Reformed circles, the propriety of infant baptism is sometimes questioned. The Bible, however, makes it quite clear that children of believing parents are to be baptized in infancy, inasmuch as "unbloody" baptism, the post-Calvary evangelical sign of the covenant, has evidently replaced "bloody" circumcision as its pre-Calvary

### 3 – ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF ALL BELIEVERS

predecessor and as circumcision in its turn was administered in tenderest infancy (Gen. 17:11f; 21:2f & Col. 2:9-13). Abraham feared to break the covenant of grace by withholding the seal from his infant descendants (Gen. 17:14; 21:2-6; Ex. 4:20-26; Josh. 5:2-7). And, inasmuch as Abraham clearly saw the faith-connection between the gospel promises to his descendants on the one hand and their receiving of the sign of the covenant on the other (Rom. 4:9-13 & Gal. 3:6-29) – he also publicly confessed this connection also before the world, to his and their great blessing (Gen. 17:24-27 & 21:1-6).

Twelfth, **Abraham trained his children from their birth in the nurture and admonition of the Lord** (Gen. 18:19; 21:2-8; 22:7-8; 26:1-5). Today, however, even many "child evangelists" address themselves only to such listeners as they believe to be "capable of understanding the gospel." They ignore those who, in their opinion, have not yet "reached the age of accountability" – whatever that apocryphal phrase may mean in the light of the Adamitic guilt of even babies (Job 15:14-16; 25:4-6; Rom. 5:12f; 9:11f). Indeed, sadly, many modern evangelical Christians only start taking their children to hear the official proclamation of God's Word in church long after they have been weaned. However, only when we evangelize **covenantally** from birth onward – as did Abraham – can we expect God to give us the maximum blessing (Prov. 22:6; Joel 2:16, 28f; Acts 2:16f, 38f; I Cor. 7:14; Eph. 6:4).

Thirteenth, Abraham was not only a friend of God, but **also a friend of man**. Even when three strangers suddenly visited him during the hottest part of the day in the plains of Mamre, he instantly arranged for their feet to be washed, offered them a place to rest, and had the best meal possible prepared for them (Gen. 18:1-9). Perhaps referring to this very event, the New Testament now enjoins us: "Let brotherly love continue! Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"(Heb. 13:1-2). In Abraham's case, this deed actually facilitated his own covenantal blessing and the deliverance of Lot (Gen. 18:9 to 19:29). May we today follow this fine example of hospitality – and similarly be blessed!

Fourteenth, **Abraham compassionately prayed for the conversion of even the most hardened sinners**. What more iniquitous people ever lived than the inhabitants of Sodom? (II Pet. 2:6-17 & Jude 7-10). Yet Abraham was kind to their cowardly king (Gen. 14:10-23), and even entreated God not to destroy (righteously!) their awful city (Gen. 18:20-33). How easily do frozen "chosen" pseudo-Calvinists prayerlessly wash their hands of this wicked world! Dare we expect our evangelism to be effective unless we, like Abraham, sincerely intercede for the wicked, cordially desiring their conversion?

Fifteenth, **everyone knew that Abraham's faith was sincere, and his God real**. Small wonder that Abimelech with Phichol came to him, observing that

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

"God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now, therefore; swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me; nor with my son, nor with my son's son." (Gen. 21:22-23) They knew that the God-fearing Abraham would not dare to break an oath made by him in the name of his God! That promise was sealed when Abraham "called there upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." (Gen. 21:33) What an example for us to follow in our commercial contracts and international treaty obligations! What a wholesome evangelical testimony proceeded from this deed of Abraham to the benefit of his society! Can we expect the same blessing today, if we anabaptistically refuse to swear oaths in order to promote confidence and goodwill? (cf. Heb. 6:13-16)

Sixteenth, **Abraham loved the Lord more than he loved his only son.** When asked to sacrifice Isaac, he instantly set about obeying, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead" (Heb. 11:17-19). And when God spared the boy, sacrificing a ram in his place as a prefiguration of the Calvary-death of the Lamb of God (John 1:29 & 3:16 & 8:56f), He swore that He would use Abraham to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 22:18). O, that modern evangelists would love God more than anyone or anything else in the whole world! Then would their evangelism be effective indeed – even unto the ends of the earth and all its nations!

Seventeenth, **Abraham gave his son Isaac all that he had and the best bride possible** (Gen. 24:3f & 25:5). Firmly

obeying the provisions of the dominion charter to be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it (Gen. 1:28), and knowing that the world was to be blessed precisely through his covenant-keeping descendants, he determined to spare no effort, either through prayer or through gifts, to secure a God-fearing wife for his son (Gen. 24:2-53). Thereafter, ready to die, he made provision for an ample inheritance for this covenant-keeping son, giving him all his possessions wherewith to expand the influence of the Kingdom of God still further.

Lastly, Abraham **knew that he was destined to become heir of the world.** Unlike many modern pessimists who believe that our world is about to be overcome by the devil and his agents – as if the devil has not been active, yet condemned, ever since the fall, and crushed and bound ever since Calvary – Abraham was confident as to the universal triumph of the gospel here on earth in God's good time. "For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was...to Abraham... through the righteousness of faith... Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations... He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform!" (Rom. 4:13,18-21) Modern evangelist, do you, like Abraham, really believe this staggering promise that Christianity shall yet triumph in a world such as ours?



### 3 – ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF ALL BELIEVERS

Lord, increase our faith in Thee, the God who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not, as though they were (Rom. 4:17). For Thou art the God that can still turn communists into Christians and even pornographers into preachers! (I Cor. 6:9-11)

\* \* \* \* \*



## MOSES THE MEEK

Moses, we are told, was the meekest man who ever lived upon the face of the earth (Num. 12:3). Hence, inasmuch as the meek shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5), Moses was the meekest of the meek. But though meek, he was also the strongest of the strong. And Moses' strength, like that of so many who are meek, lay far more in his actions than in his words. Indeed, Moses was no great orator, and he knew this (Ex. 4:14-16). Yet God appointed him to be a great evangelist – a bringer of glad tidings on the mountains (cf. Rom. 10:9-15; Isa. 52:7; Heb. 8:5f; 9:19f). Moreover, he was nothing less than **the** mediator of the Old Testament (Gal. 3:19-20; cf. Heb. 11:24-26; 12:18-24).

First, it should be noted that **Moses was a man of great learning and practical ability** – as evangelists become even today, when they take the dominion charter seriously (cf. Gen. 1:26-28; I Cor. 10:31). For Moses was not only raised by his own mother in the ways of the covenant of the Lord and of the coming Christ, but he also became thoroughly grounded in all the wisdom and treasures of Egypt and even in the lore of the Sinaitic desert (Ex. 2:2, 9-10, 15-19; Acts 7:20-30; Heb. 11:26). Two-thirds of his life was spent preparing him for his vital role in delivering his people from the evils of Egypt. Let us learn to understand that erudition and experience and maturity are among the standard requirements needed for delivering people from sin!

Second, **the impulsive Moses had to learn much patience**. By nature he was not very longsuffering. He hastily slew an Egyptian slave-driver (Ex. 2:11f), frustratedly broke the first tablets of the law (Ex. 32:15-19), and disobediently struck the rock with his staff (Num. 20:7-12; Deut. 31:2). But by grace, he learned patience while tending Jethro's sheep for a third of his life (Acts 7:23-30 cf. Deut. 34:7), while waiting for God finally to redeem His people only at the very end of the ten progressively more perilous plagues (Ex. 5-12), and while leading the people for forty years in the wilderness (Pss. 90 and 95). May we learn such patience today, so that we can also effectively deliver our people!

Third, **Moses was absolutely convinced that God would have him redeem His people**. He himself had felt so as a young man (Ex. 2:11). But during subsequent years, he had settled down to a quiet life with his wife and family in the desert of Midian. Then, forty years later, the Angel of the Lord (or the pre-incarnate Christ of God) suddenly and unmistakably told him to go and deliver His people from the land of Egypt (Ex. 3:2-10f; Mal. 3:1 margin; Jude 9; Deut. 34:5-10 and 18:15-18 cf. Acts 3:22-26 and Rev. 12:7-11). Only Moses' certainty that God Himself had called him to his onerous task kept him faithful as the deliverer of his people (Num. 12 and 16). Only a similar knowledge will make

## EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

comparably-called evangelists today both faithful and effective.

Fourth, **Moses told the people exactly what God had told him to tell them.** Through Aaron, Moses told the elders of Israel what the Lord had spoken (Ex. 4:29f). Repeatedly he himself told Pharaoh that God had commanded him to tell that monarch to let His people go (Ex. 5-12 & 14:1f *etc.*). Only if modern evangelists will similarly declare the Word of God, and not their own spiritual experiences, can any real blessing be expected!

Fifth, **Moses was careful to give God alone all the credit for the deliverance.** After God had used him to lead the Israelites through the Red Sea, Moses taught the people to sing: that not he, their human leader, but the Lord had triumphed gloriously; that the Lord was his strength and salvation; and that the Lord would reign for ever and ever (Ex. 15:1-2,18). So too in connection with the manna (Ex. ch. 16), the quails (Num. Ch. 11), and every other remarkable occurrence. Let modern evangelists meekly and humbly do the same, rather than allowing themselves to be given the star billing. Only so can they – and we – expect to be permanently effective.

Sixth, **Moses was a man of constant prayer.** He prayed to God continually prior to the exodus (Ex. 4:10,31 & 5:22f. & 8:8f, 28f & 9:28f), during the exodus (Ex. 14:10, 14, 21, 27; 15:6f), and after the exodus (Ex. 15:25 & 17:4). He prayed throughout the time Israel was battling the Amalekites (Ex. 17:9-12). He prayed throughout the episode of the giving of

the law on Mount Sinai and that of the worship of the golden calf (Ex. 19:19f; 32:11,31f.; 33:15f.; 34:6f.). Also he prayed at Taberah, at Kibroth-Hattaavah, at Hazeroth, at Kadesh, and in connection with the insurrection of Korah, the brazen serpent, the appointment of Joshua as his successor, and his song and blessings at the very end of his life (Num. 11:2, 11f & 12:13,16 & 13:26 & 16:15f & 21:7 & 27:16 & Deut. 9:18f,25f & 10:10 & 32:1f cf. Ps. 90:1f). May our lives be characterized by prayer and success, as was that of Moses! (Rev. 15:3-4)

Seventh, and flowing from the above, **Moses had enormous compassion for sinners.** Although they were grievously guilty, he prayed God to forgive the sins of Aaron, of Miriam, and of all the people (Ex. 32:31f and Num. 12:13 & 16:22). Do we? If not, no wonder our evangelistic efforts are ineffective!

Eighth, **Moses was utterly self-sacrificing.** Rather than see his people perish, he himself would have preferred to die (Ex. 32:32). He was happy for them to enter into Canaan, even when he himself could not (Num. 20:12f & Deut. 31:1-3). Time and again, he interceded for them on account of their sins (Num. 16:22), ever pointing forward to that Creator-Mediator-Redeemer Jesus Christ as the only refuge for sinners (Num. 21:7f & John 3:14f & Heb. 11:26). Do our modern evangelistic efforts so unselfishly exalt the Lord alone – or is Christ sometimes eclipsed by the personal luster of our own efforts?

Ninth, **Moses insisted on the punishment of sin and crime.** He

#### 4 – MOSES THE MEEK

himself frequently sat to judge the people in respect of their civil obligations toward one another. He also appointed other lesser magistrates to help him do this (Ex. 18:13,16,25-26). He sat in judgment and meted out punishments for transgressions of criminal law (Ex. 32:26f & Num. 15:32f). And he furthermore attempted to develop and apply the principles of godly international law in his dealings with foreign countries (Num. chs. 13f & 21 & 25-26, 31 and Deut. 20-21). The modern pietistic conception that only preaching may be considered "full-time service" of the Lord, was foreign to Moses' thinking. Though also a great soul-winner, he was not **just** a soul-winner. He was never ordained as a full-time priest, as was his brother Aaron, but Moses served the Lord particularly in the civil field as a (nearly!) "full-time" godly lawyer. Another great lawyer, the equally ecclesiastically unordained lawyer-preacher John Calvin, once remarked: "No man can doubt that civil authority is, in the sight of God, not only sacred and lawful, but the most sacred, and by far the most honorable, of all stations in mortal life." (*Inst.* IV:20:4 cf. Ps. 82:1, 6 and Rom. 12:8 and 13:1, 3). Would to God that our modern evangelists would quit calling upon Christians to become exclusively preachers or missionaries (or the wives of preachers and missionaries!) and at least sometimes call upon Christians to offer themselves, wherever suitably gifted, to the total service of Christ as full-time Christian politicians!

Tenth, and flowing from the last point, **Moses preached the ten commandments.** Here he clearly

enjoined love toward God (and also toward man as the image of God) by legislating against idolatry, image-worship, blasphemy, sabbath desecration, civil disobedience, murder and violence, theft and robbery, adultery and immorality, false witness and perjury, and covetousness. Although he motivated the validity of the decalogue particularly on the basis of God's creative control over us, he also advocated it on the secondary basis of neighborly love (Ex. 20 esp. v. 11, and Deut. 5 esp. v. 15). Moses knew that it is precisely reconciliation with God which produces love for one's fellow man, and that it is the preaching of the law which produces the conviction of sin and the desire to plead for mercy to be reconciled with God, inasmuch as sin **is** the transgression of the **law!** (Rom. 7:2f.; I John 3:4) Oh, that modern evangelists would proclaim the law of God in all its cosmos-embracing scope! Then indeed would their evangelism be effective! For by the law is the knowledge of sin! (Rom. 3:20 cf. v. 31).

Eleventh, Moses did not preach the decalogue abstractly; **he actually applied the law to concrete situations in the life of the people.** What are often called the "judicial laws" (as opposed to the temporary and ritualistic "ceremonial laws" now fulfilled in Christ) can be delineated in terms of one or more of the commandments of the decalogue (cf. *Heidelberg Catechism* Q. 91-115; *Belgic Confession* art. XX; and esp. *Westminster Confession* XIX:1-4). Examples include returning pledges and restoring lost property, as concrete applications of the eighth commandment (Ex. 22:26 & 23:4);

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

the condemnations of transvestites and seductions understood in terms of the seventh commandment (Deut. 22:5,28); and the erection of free cities for the relief of involuntary man-slaughterers as opposed to premeditated murderers, comprehended in terms of the sixth commandment (Deut. 19). Also in New Testament times, the apostles made similar concrete applications of the law to illustrate the required Christian behavior (I Cor. 9:8-10 & 14:34 and Eph. 6:1-4 and Jude 23 cf. Lev. 13-15). Without becoming legalistic, Christians have no right to be **less** casuistic than is the New Testament itself! When modern evangelists, living as they do in a time of great theological confusion, proceed to apply God's law concretely to the burning issues of the day, they like Moses will prove to be really effective.

Twelfth, although never himself a "full-time" ecclesiastical officer as was Aaron (Ex. 29), **Moses was nevertheless vitally interested in promoting the official liturgical worship of Almighty God.** He supervised the construction of the tabernacle, the appointment of the artisans, and the consecration of the priests in this connection (Ex. 25-31,40). All too frequently, modern evangelists concentrate only on bringing the so-called "saving truths" of the gospel as opposed to promoting the construction of Scripturally-designed churches and the edification of Scripturally-elected officers' for the conduct of the Scripturally-required regular worship services. Small wonder, then, that modern evangelism is often superficial and ephemeral. God wills to have Himself worshiped with the

regularity of the quartering of the moon, rather than with the unpredictability of occasional revivals which quickly fizzle out like a meteor, or, like the comet Kohoutek, never even get started!

Thirteenth, **Moses' enthusiasm for real and sustained revival was infectious.** After the people broke the law of God by worshiping the golden calf, Moses returned to the Mount and again received the law from the Lord to deliver it to the people (Ex. 32-34). Moreover, when Moses appealed to the people to contribute toward the building of the tabernacle, so great was his earnestness that their hearts were stirred to bring their jewelry and precious clothing, their spices and oils, their noble metals and valuable wooden goods to him for that purpose (Ex. Chs. 25 & 35-36). When Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, Moses could only exclaim: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:27-29) Oh, that our evangelistic enthusiasm today would be as sincere as was that of Moses – not artificially worked up for the sake of duty, as it so often is!

Fourteenth, **Moses insisted on strict sabbath observance.** Six days God's people were to labor in terms of the dominion charter, but the seventh day they were to rest and to do no work (Gen. 1:28 to 2:3 cf. Ex. 20:8-11). Consequently, Moses warned them to keep the sabbath: in the Sin wilderness when God gave them the quails (Ex. 16); again at Horeb when God gave them the law (Ex. 19-20); particularly even when

#### 4 – MOSES THE MEEK

they were constructing the tabernacle (Ex. 31 and 35); and later still, in the desert near Kadesh (Num. 15). This emphasis enhanced the sanctification of God's children. Evangelically it foreshadowed to them Jesus Christ as their perfect rest (Heb. 3-4). Let our modern evangelists follow Moses in this respect, instead of compromising the sanctity of the Lord's day and thereby earning the just derision of the world!

And last of all, **Moses' sabbath-keeping had broad ecological and eschatological implications.** His evangelical message, geared as it was to the dominion charter (Gen. 1:28-2:3 cf. Ex. 20:8-11), was truly cosmos-embracing in its scope, both in time and in space. In time, he established the Christ-foreshadowing sevenfold cyclic calendar, stretching out from the seventh-day sabbath to the seventh sabbath-yearly jubilee, down to the seventh millennium (Lev. 23, 25 and Gen. 2:1-3 cf. Ps. 90:1-4 and Heb. 4). In space, he explained that the sabbath years and the jubilees involved sabbath liberation for slaves and for the ground, as well as for all debts incurred by God's people (Lev. 25). In both time and space, he warned the people of the sevenfold blessings and curses which would affect every aspect of their lives, even their total environment for

good or for evil – and that depending on whether they served or slighted the Lord their God (Lev. chs. 26-27). Oh, that our modern evangelists would preach such an all-encompassing and all-demanding gospel! Then they would offer their listeners the total blessings of God as the result of embracing the cosmic Christ – and the total curses of Jehovah as a result of rejecting Him! In this way the glorious promise of the apostle John would begin to be realized in its eschatological fulfilment, namely:

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And **they sing the song of Moses** the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? For Thou only art holy: **for all nations shall come and worship before thee**; for Thy judgments are made manifest." (Rev. 15:1-4)

\* \* \* \* \*





## ELIJAH THE PROPHET

In our last article, we dealt with the prophet Moses. In this article we shall deal with the prophet Elijah. Without doubt, these two believers were by far the most evangelistic figures in Old Testament times. Malachi ended the Old Testament by telling God's people, as they waited for the Messiah, to remember the law of Moses and to watch for the return of the prophet Elijah (Mal. 3:1f & 4:1-6 cf. John 1:17-21). Jesus was identified with the promised prophet like unto Moses (Deut. Chs. 18 & 34 cf. John 6:14 & Acts 3:22f), and He Himself identified His own forerunner John the Baptizer with Elijah (Matt. 11:7-14 & 17:10-13). On the Mount of Transfiguration prior to His death and glorification, Moses and Elijah appeared and talked to Jesus, whom they both prefigured (Matt. 17:1-9). And in the very last book of the Bible, there are implicit references to the permanent influence of the twofold witness of Moses and Elijah down through future New Testament times (Rev. 11:3,6). In every way, then, Moses and Elijah are **key figures** in the history of the evangelization of the world!

First, we should understand that **Elijah the Tishbite was above all a man of great prayerfulness**. We are enjoined by the New Testament to follow him in this. The apostle James tells us that "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." (Jas.

5:17) During the drought he earnestly prayed that the spirit of the son of the poor woman of Zarephath, whose breath had left him, should return – and it did (I Kgs. 17:9,17-22). On Mount Carmel, he prayed God to make fire fall from heaven to confound the priests of Baal – and it did (I Kgs. 18:24,36f). Thereafter, "he prayed again," supplicating that the drought be broken – "and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (Jas. 5:18) Fleeing from the evil queen Jezebel, he prayed in great agony of body and of soul – and the Lord strengthened him (I Kgs. 19:4-7). Arriving at Mount Sinai, he spoke to God conversationally (I Kgs. 19:9f), as had Moses there before him (Ex. 19-34f). And just before the termination of his earthly ministry, he twice called down the fire of God from heaven (II Kgs. 1:10f). Small wonder, then, as the apostle implied (Jas. 5:14-20), effective soul-winning and healing (today too!) can only be achieved by following the example of Elijah, the man of prayer!

Second, **Elijah was always obedient to the Word of the Lord**. When God told him to go and hide "by the brook Cherith," he went (I Kgs. 17:3-5). When God told him to go to the widow of Zarephath, he went (I Kgs. 17:9f). When the Word of the Lord told him to go and show himself to the tyrannical king Ahab at the very height of the drought, he went (I Kgs. 18:1). And so too, when God so commanded him, Elijah went: to the awesome Mount Horeb (I Kgs. 19:7,11);

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

to the dangerous heathen king Hazael in Damascus (I Kgs. 19:15); and to Samaria to inform the idolatrous monarch Ahaziah that he was doomed (II Kgs. 1). Similarly, only as modern evangelists today obey the Word of the Lord may they expect to be effective.

Third, and flowing from the last point, **Elijah had no fear of denouncing the evil deeds of political leaders.** He did not hesitate to tell Ahab the king, to his face, that it would not rain for some years. Then later, at the height of the drought, when there was a price on the heads of all the prophets of Jehovah, he did not flinch from going back to Ahab and again accusing him of apostasy! (I Kgs. 17:1 & 18:2-4,18) Without hesitation he later returned to Ahab and Jezebel to announce their doom for robbing and murdering Naboth (I Kgs. 21:17f). Similarly, he had no fear of going to Damascus and meeting the wicked Syrian king, Hazael, the enemy of God's people (I Kgs. 19:15,17 & II Kgs. 8:12f). Nor did he fail to inform the murderous Ahaziah that the God of Elijah would destroy him as king of Israel (II Kgs. 1). What a courageous example for our modern evangelists to follow!

Fourth, **Elijah believed in the God of the miraculous.** During the drought, he left civilization and lived in the desert, being fed by the ravens (I Kgs. 17:6). Going to Zarephath, he faithfully assured the widow, who was down to her very last reserves of food, that God would wonderfully sustain her and her son throughout the rest of the drought (I Kgs. 17:13f). Later, he was instrumental in remarkably reviving that child after his

soul had left him (I Kgs. 17:17-22). On Mount Carmel, he was convinced that God really would send down fire and rain from heaven (I Kgs. 17:24,32-38,43-44). And during the reign of Ahaziah, he knew not only that God would send fire down from heaven again (II Kgs. 1:10f), but also that the Lord would send His chariot and take His prophet up to heaven in a whirlwind after he himself had struck the Jordan with his mantle and crossed over it on dry land (II Kgs. 2:1-11). It is true that Elijah lived during a time of mighty miracles and before the completion of the inscripturation of the Bible. But, as Dr. A. Kuyper has pointed out, miracles will again occur when the time of Christ's second coming draws near (*Van de Voleinding*, Kampen. Netherlands. J.H. Kok, 1929, II: 312). And, while certainly condemning all dogmatic interpretations and applications of the "signs of the times" as utter presumptuousness – should not modern evangelists, like Elijah, at least expect "great things" from God in confirmation of their messages today? (cf. Rev. 11:3-12)

Fifth, **the prophet also addressed himself to the needs of the desperately poor.** Himself living barely above the bread-line during the great drought (I Kgs. 17:5-9) – as commanded by the Lord, he went to the widow of Zarephath. She was so impoverished, that she barely had enough food left for one inadequate meal before she and her son would die of starvation. Yet Elijah assured her that God would feed them each day until the drought was broken (I Kgs. 17:14). Like John the Baptizer as the second Elijah

## 5 – ELIJAH THE PROPHET

(Matt. 11:7-14 cf. 3:3-6 & Luke 3:11-15), Elijah the Tishbite loved the common people, and particularly the poor prophets of the Lord (I Kgs. 18:4; 19:10 cf. II Kgs. 2:1-3,7 & 4:38-44). On Mount Carmel, he pleaded that all the tribes of his people would acknowledge Jehovah (I Kgs. 19:31-37). At the risk of his own life, he defended the property rights of Naboth even against the wicked and powerful king (I Kgs. 21). Are we also willing to take this kind of a stand?

Sixth, although loving his own people Israel greatly, **Elijah was no xenophobe, and so he also ministered to the needs of heathen.** Jesus made it clear that the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah greatly helped, was not an Israelitess (Luke 4:24-26 cf. I Kgs. ch. 17). Similarly, the prophet did not neglect to anoint the heathen Hazael as king over Syria (I Kgs. 19:15f). After he trained Elisha as his successor to walk in his footsteps (I Kgs. 19:16-21 cf. II Kgs. 2:1-12), it is significant that Elisha helped the heathen leper Naaman the Syrian (II Kgs. 5 cf. Luke 4:27) and tenderly fed even the Syrian soldiers who came to capture him (II Kgs. 6:8,12f,21f). Still later he compassionately assisted even the cruel king of Syria (II Kgs. 8:8f). Oh, that our modern evangelists would always reveal a similar interest in those outside the covenant, as well as in seeking to minister to those inside the covenant – as did Elijah!

Seventh, **Elijah was not only a man of words, but also a man of action.** He stretched himself upon the boy of Sidon and revived him (I Kgs. 17:9,21). After

going to Samaria (I Kgs. 18:3), he climbed Mount Carmel to repair its dilapidated altar with his own hands – digging a trench around it; stacking it with wood; cutting and placing pieces of bullock on it; and filling the trench with water (I Kgs. 19:19,30-35,42). He traveled all the way from Carmel past Beersheba and even unto Sinai – where he, like Moses, met Jehovah (I Kgs. 19:3f). Then he went back to Shaphat to ordain Elisha as his successor (I Kgs. 19:19f), and to Samaria to announce the doom of King Ahab (I Kgs. 21:17f). And finally, he went from Samaria via Gilgal and down to the Jordan prior to his dramatic journey into heaven on the chariot of fire (II Kgs. 1-2). He was not afraid of hard labor in the sweat of his brow. He sought in every way to fulfil the dominion charter even in his prophetic work (Gen. 1:26-2:5 cf. I Kgs. chs. 18-19). He lived a strenuous life – a life of deprivation (I Kgs. ch. 17) and exhaustion (I Kgs. ch. 19), yet a life of consecrated activity in the service of the Lord. May we learn to do the same today!

Eighth, **Elijah was not afraid to be in the religious minority.** After Jezebel slew his fellow prophets of the Lord (I Kgs. 18:4-13), Elijah was not afraid to stand alone on Mount Carmel and do battle against the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the groves, while surrounded by an apostate people (I Kgs. 18:19f). It actually seemed to him that he alone had remained faithful to the Lord, for, practically until he met Elisha, he knew nothing about the other seven thousand believers who had not bowed unto Baal (I

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

Kgs. 19:18f). Even when the three captains of fifty came to arrest him, he stood there alone, and had no fear of all those soldiers (II Kgs. 1:9f). Like Martin Luther, Elijah – in spite of temporary despondency – well knew that with God on his side he was more than a match against all the rest of the world. Would to God that all our modern evangelists were men of this caliber too!

Ninth, **Elijah was a covenantal evangelist**. On Mount Carmel, he repaired the covenantal altar which had been broken down. He took twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and called upon the covenantal God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob to hear his prayer (I Kgs. 19:30-36 cf. Ex. 3:24 & 19:5 & 20:25 & 29:21). At Horeb, where God had given His covenant of the law through Moses, Elijah confessed to the Lord that his people had forsaken the covenant (I Kgs. 19:10,14). And according to Malachi, God would again send Elijah to preach judgment and repentance before the coming to earth of **The Angel of the covenant**, Jesus Christ (Mal. 3:1 cf. 4:5 cf. Isa. 40:1-5 & 42:6 cf. Luke 3). Oh, that God would raise up covenantal evangelists today to call for a corporate and covenantal repentance of all of God's people rather than just for an individualistic show of hands!

Tenth, **Elijah was a man who himself met with the Lord – repeatedly!** He met Him in Samaria, at the brook Cherith, while at Zarephath, on Mount Carmel, and especially at Mount Sinai (I Kgs. 17:1,9,20; 18:37f; 19:9f). Yet the Lord manifested Himself differently to Elijah at

different times – sometimes in the fire from heaven; once as an angel while the prophet was asleep; and once as a still small voice (I Kgs. 17:38f & 19:5,11 and II Kgs. 1:10f). Effective evangelists today will meet the Lord repeatedly and in varying circumstances, so that their preaching may reflect this freshness and variety and never become stereotyped.

Eleventh, **Elijah was a prophet of judgment**. Although he longed for the conversion of his people – it was chiefly condemnation, on account of their transgressions, which he preached. He proclaimed God's judgment upon Israel for her sins – in the form of a blistering drought (I Kgs. 17:1; 18:5). He pronounced the judgment of death upon the unrepentant prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (I Kgs. 18:40). He anointed Hazael as king of Syria in order to visit the Israelites with God's vengeance (I Kgs. 19:15-17). He pronounced a fearful doom upon King Ahab for murdering Naboth (I Kgs. 21:19). And he insisted that King Ahaziah would be sick unto death as a punishment for his idolatry (II Kgs. 1:16). Let our modern evangelists, like the Spirit-anointed Elijah, preach sin and righteousness and temperance and judgment to come! (John 16:7-11 cf. Acts 24:25) Then indeed will their work be effective.

But twelfth, amid all that judgment preaching, **Elijah was eminently merciful**. The prophet Habakkuk later supplicated the Lord in His wrath to remember mercy (Hab. 3:1). And Elijah before him tempered his own stern

## 5 – ELIJAH THE PROPHET

denunciations of sin with tender manifestations of undeserved graciousness. His people had apostatized from the living God. Yet Elijah interceded for their conversion (I Kgs. 18:24,30,37). He was merciful to the captain and his third fifty who came to arrest him – for he spared their lives (I Kgs. 21:27-29). And, at the instance of the Lord, the execution of his judgment-preaching even against wicked Ahab himself – was postponed because of the king's superficial repentance (I Kgs. 21:27-29). So, if even Elijah the preacher of judgment could be so tempered – dare we today be less merciful?

Thirteenth, **Elijah did not seek to monopolize the evangelistic scene.** There were still at least one hundred Old Testament prophets of Jehovah in the land whom Obadiah had hidden from the fury of Jezebel (I Kgs. 18:3f,13). Probably one of these other prophets later instructed Ahab to slay the Syrians and later condemned the king himself (I Kgs. 20:13f,42). It was not Elijah but the prophet Micaiah who warned king Jehoshaphat and prophesied the imminent death of Ahab while in battle (I Kgs. 22:8,17f). And, quite unselfishly, Elijah spent much time training the prophet Elisha as his own conspicuous successor (I Kgs. 19:16-21 & II Kgs. 2:1-13). Oh, that all our modern evangelists would remember that proclaiming the good news should never be a one-man show, but that they are all merely "fellow elders" under the same Chief Shepherd! (cf. I Pet. 5:1-4)

Fourteenth, like Abel, **Elijah, though no longer personally here on earth, "yet**

**speaketh"** (Heb. 11:3,35,38). His oral prophecy concerning the future death of Jezebel spoke hard – even in its later fulfilment after the prophet's departure (I Kgs. 21:23 cf. II Kgs. 9:10,35f). His written prophecy about the plague which would smite the people of Judah in the days of King Jehoram was, in God's good time, fulfilled to the very letter (II Chron. 21:12f). And the permanent influence of both his desert appearance and his fearful judgment messages lived again in the life of John the Baptizer (I Kgs. 17:3f; II Kgs. 1:8; Mal. 4:5; Matt. 3:3f; Luke 1:17 & 3:3f). Moreover, his influence will be with us throughout the New Testament dispensation, particularly in times of apostasy and judgment (Rev. 11:3-6,12 cf. I Kgs. 17-19 & II Kgs. 1-2). So, too, the influence of godly evangelists will live on after them and be a constant inspiration to their successors!

But fifteenth and lastly, like the message of Moses, **the message of Elijah was thoroughly eschatological and Christocentric.** His was a work of eschatological importance, for he preached that Christ would come and restore all things (Matt. 17:11) when with Moses he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration in conversation with the Savior at the temporary glorification of the Lord Jesus, prior to His death and His permanent glorification beginning at His rising from the dead (Matt. 17:3,9). Whence it can be implied that both the death of Moses (pointing toward the ultimate resurrection of all the dead in Christ) and the living translation of Elijah (pointing toward the immortalization of the saints alive at the time of Christ's final

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

coming) were foreshadowings of the One who was then Himself about to rise from the dead. This throws the life of both those two Old Testament evangelists into strong Christocentric and eschatological relief (I Cor. 15:42-57 cf. I Thess. 4:13-17 & Jude 9,14 & Rev. 11:3-15).

May our modern evangelists so preach with the fire of Elijah, and glorify our now-reigning and coming-again Saviour even in the manner of their demise!

\* \* \* \* \*

## JOHN THE BAPTIZER

Our last two articles, on Moses and Elijah, assume sharp focus together with further development and partial fulfilment – in the life of John the Baptizer. He was not a submersionist like the Baptists, but a sprinkler like his predecessor Elijah the Baptizer who poured water over the stones representing all of the tribes of Israel together with their children (I Kgs. 18:30-24 & 19:16f and II Kgs. 9:1-3 cf. Mark 1:4-8 and Luke 1:17,41-44,72-80 & 3:4-8f). Therefore even the Pharisees of John's day wondered whether he was not perhaps the anointed and promised prophet like unto Moses, or the Elijah spoken about by Malachi (John 1:19,21 cf. Deut. 18:15 & Mal. 4:5). Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself declared that John the Baptizer was more than a prophet; more than a second Elijah. He was in fact the greatest man ever born of a woman – before Christ's Own revelation at the formal inauguration of the New Testament dispensation of the Kingdom of heaven here on earth (Matt. 3:1-17 & 11:7-14 & 13:11f & 16:18-19 and Acts chs. 2 & 10).

First, we should notice that John the Baptizer was a **real child of the covenant, the holy seed of believing forebears** (I Cor. 7:14 cf. Ezra 9:2 & Neh. 9:2). Born of righteous parents (Luke 1:6), he was sanctified from his very conception (Luke 1:15,41) and raised from birth in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Luke 1:67,76 cf. Eph. 6:1-4). As such, he was the prototype of the many

blessed evangelists down through church history who themselves received a strict covenantal upbringing, such as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and Andrew Murray. May Almighty God give us such effective emissaries in our present age!

Second, John the Baptizer **for many years disciplined himself in a life of dedication to the Lord's service**. Not only was he born into a discipl(in)ed covenant family, but he himself, as he "grew, waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 1:80a). This undoubtedly indicates not simply a life of piety coupled with the consciousness of God's nearness (cf. Eph. 6:10-14 & Rom. 10:5-10), but also a life of self-denial for the sake of the gospel. Hence, like Elijah before him, he wore rough clothes and ate simple food (Matt. 3:4). For years he lived "in the deserts till the day of his shewing to Israel" (Luke 1:80b), until God called him to start preaching the gospel in the fifteenth year of Tiberias Caesar (Luke 3:1-3). Would to God that our modern evangelists might learn such voluntarily imposed self-denial, to make their ministries more effective!

Third, John the Baptizer was **constantly aware of the leading of God's Holy Spirit**. Filled with the Holy Ghost from his very conception (Luke 1:15), he not only leaped up in his mother's womb three months before his birth, when Mary had conceived Jesus and was visiting John's mother Elizabeth

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

(Luke 1:35-44). Indeed, John himself continued after his birth to grow up strong in spirit (cf. Luke 1:66,80a). He was conscious of the Spirit-inspired prophecies which foretold his own and the Savior's advent (Matt. 3:1-3 cf. Isa. 40:3-7,13 & Mal. 3:1-4:5 & Luke 1:13-17). Consequently, when Jesus came to him in manhood, John, when he saw the Spirit of God descending on Him – knew that here was the One who would Himself baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matt. 3:11,16 & John 1:32-34), and who had been given the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). If more of our modern evangelists were similarly sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, they too would radiate the reality of Christ in their lives more convincingly.

Fourth, John was **thoroughly trained in the Messianic Scriptures**. Jesus described him as a prophet and as the last of the prophets. (Matt. 11:7-15) John knew both the law (cf. Matt. 14:4 to 19:4) and the prophecies (*e.g.* Luke 7:22 cf. Isa. 42:7 to 61:1f) from the Old Testament Scriptures. Consequently, he understood his own role (Mal. 4:5) – as well as easily recognizing the Savior (Mal. 3:1) when He came (John ch. 1). Accordingly, he was able to preach Christ to others too, both before and after His advent (Matt. ch. 3 & John ch. 4). Oh, that today's evangelists all knew the Word of God so clearly – and could impart it to their listeners to the same degree!

Fifth, John was **determined to magnify not himself but only the Lord Jesus Christ**. Before his birth, his parents had been told that John would go out

before the Messiah of the covenant, preparing His way before Him. They doubtless instructed John about this great ministry of his as he was growing up (Luke 1:13-17,76-80 & 3:2-4 cf. Mal. 3:1 & 4:5). Even as he started preaching to great crowds, John enjoined them not to look to himself but only to the coming Savior, whose shoes he was unwilling to bear (Matt. 3:11). When the Pharisees inquired whether he was the Christ, or "the prophet," or even only Elijah, he firmly denied all these honors. He pointed them only to the coming Christ (John 1:19-27), saying at a later time that "He must increase, but I must decrease!" (John 3:30) Let our modern evangelists so exalt the Lord Jesus – rather than themselves!

Sixth, John was a **covenantal preacher**. He knew that his message was the fulfilment of the "holy covenant" made to Abraham (Luke 1:67,72f, 80). Doubtless he sensed the connection between the Old Covenant sign of circumcision (Gen. ch. 17) and the New Covenant sign of baptism (Col. 2:11f). Thus, John preached salvation in Christ to God's covenantal people – that is, to all penitents – and baptized them (Luke 1:69,71,76-79 & Mark 1:4-5). As such, it may be noted that John the Baptizer of households did not indiscriminately baptize infants – yet still less was he an antipaedobaptist (Luke 3:2-7,16-17 & Acts 1:5 & 2:1-4,16-18,38-41 & Mark 1:2-8 & Matt. 11:7-14 & Mal. 3:1-2,10). For John the Baptizer was neither an individualizing and household-splitting Baptist nor an indiscriminately-baptizing Roman Catholic – but a household-baptizing covenantal Presbyterian. May



## 6 – JOHN THE BAPTIZER

more of our modern evangelists learn to understand and preach the covenantal promises – and the connection between the benefits thereof and baptism as its sacrament!

Seventh, even though preaching to the covenant people as a whole, John stressed the **necessity of personal repentance**. Mark tells us that "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea; and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark 1:4-5) Matthew tells us that John started his preaching by saying: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matt. 3:2) Luke tells us that John the Baptizer demanded the fruits of repentance from the multitudes that came to him before he would baptize them (Luke 3:7-8). Jesus tells us that John truly baptized with water (Acts 1:5) – that is to say, he demanded from his converts public confession of both their sins and their justification by God through repentance and baptism (Luke 7:28-30). And Paul tells us that "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance" (Acts 19:4). Truly, if more of our modern evangelists would stress the necessity of repentance rather than their concept of a divine "Father Christmas" or "Santa Claus" offering God's you-take-it-or-leave-it free gift (if you will) – we might see true revival!

Eighth, and flowing from the previous point, **John refused baptism to the unrepentant, irrespective of their covenantal pedigree!** When the

multitudes of the children of Israel came forth to be baptized while only superficially claiming to be children of Abraham, John righteously told them first to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. He reminded them that God did not need them at all, but could easily raise up for Himself children unto Abraham out of the very stones (Luke 3:3,7-8,18). When the "strictly kosher" Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, John spelled out the needed condition of personal repentance so clearly that they then "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him." (Matt. 3:7f & Luke 7:30) Oh, that our modern pastors and evangelists would have the courage to refuse baptism even to so-called "covenant people" – whenever they clearly show no signs of repentance! Then indeed would we see vast improvement in the quality of Christ's Church.

Ninth, John **preached Christ and Him crucified**. Before Christ was Himself baptized, John, like a burning and shining light, bore witness of the Savior. He enjoined his listeners to "believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:4 & 13:25 cf. John 1:6-8 & 5:33-35). At Christ's own baptism, John evangelically cried out to those present: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29); and "all things that John spake of this man, were true" (John 10:41). After Christ's baptism, John continued preaching: "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36) He spoke as the "friend of the Bridegroom," desiring only to draw attention to Him Who has the bride (John 3:23). Let our evangelists

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

today also exalt only the Lamb, and not themselves!

Tenth, **John built no evangelistic organization.** He did not establish "John McZachary's Revivals, Inc." – or any such personal empire. To the contrary, from the very beginning of his work he labored to phase himself out and to phase Christ in. The Savior would establish a **different** "organization": the Kingdom of God (Matt. 11:11-13). John stoutly resisted employing any personal charisma he may have had (John 1:19f). He pointed not to his own diminishing baptizings, but to God alone as the source of Christ's expanding Kingdom (John 3:27-30 & 4:1). He insisted that the only reason he had performed his ministry was so that Christ should be made manifest to the people (John 1:31). And he looked only to Christ's exaltation, while correctly regarding himself as altogether expendable (Luke 7:19). Oh, that many of our modern evangelists would scrap their own tin-pot "organizations" – and rather conduct their activities through the Church of Jesus Christ!

Eleventh, John not only offered salvation in Christ to the penitent, but he **also proclaimed hell-fire and damnation to the unregenerate.** "O ye generation of vipers! – that is, 'O ye seed of the serpent and children of the devil!' (Gen. 3:15 & I John 3:10) – who hath warned **you** to flee from the wrath to come?" Thus he told the unrepentant crowds; Pharisees; and Sadducees (Luke 3:7; Matt. 3:7). When the Jewish priests and Levites later approached him to get his theological opinion about the

peripheral niceties of ritualistic purification, he abruptly warned them that "he who [like them] believeth not the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 1:19-20 & 3:25-28,36). All unfruitful trees, proclaimed John, would be hewn down and cast into the fire. For Jesus Christ would "thoroughly purge His threshing-floor, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. 3:10-12) How rarely do we hear such evangelistic messages today – and how rarely are today's evangelistic campaigns truly effective!

Twelfth, unlike many modern evangelists, John did not encourage his baptizees to claim to be saved automatically – merely because "they had decided to follow Jesus." Rather did he, like the Puritans, enjoin them to **lead a life of righteousness in their own jobs in the future.** So would they make their calling and election sure (cf. II Cor. 13:5f & II Pet. 1:10). "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance!" he thundered (Luke 3:8). When the people asked him what this required in practice, he told them to clothe the naked and to feed the hungry (Luke 3:11). When the publicans asked him a similar question, he replied to those receivers of revenue and income tax: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you!" (Luke 3:13) When soldiers inquired what they should do, he warned them against unnecessary violence and false accusation – and told them to be content with their wages rather than to steal booty (Luke 3:14). And when Herod the tetrarch married Herodias, wife of his own brother Philip (Luke 3:19), John told him that it was not lawful for

## 6 – JOHN THE BAPTIZER

him to have her (Matt. 14:4). Here was the call to lifelong repentance after the exercise of true faith and as a necessary fruit thereof. Ps. 51:12-17; Acts 2:37,38; II Cor. 1:1-8 & 7:8-10; Luke 15:11 & 17:21,32; *Can. Dordt* V:4-9; *West. Conf.* chs. 12-18. Here was no modern doctrine of cheap grace! I Peter 1:3-5,21-25 & Acts ch. 5. Here was the whole counsel of God and the necessity of keeping the ten commandments in godly living throughout life. This was to be shown in the believer's daily vocation as a Christian tax collector, a Christian soldier, or a Christian anything else!

Thirteenth, **John was quite prepared to die for asserting his godly convictions.** He knew that he was a true prophet, and so did everyone else – even Herod! Accordingly, he was not afraid to denounce that powerful tetrarch to his face for living in sin with his brother's wife Herodias (Matt. 14:5). Arrested and awaiting his "sentence" in Herod's prison, he testified of the righteousness of God whenever that ruler sent for him – and thus he even greatly moved that wicked governor to consider the righteousness of the Kingdom of God (Mark 6:20,26). At another time, John sent from prison to learn more about Jesus Christ the Savior, the supreme subject of his preaching (Matt. 11:2f). But with all that, John never denied the faith and gladly gave his life for the sake of the Gospel when Herodias had him beheaded (Matt. 14:6-10).

But fourteenth, John was not only prepared to die for Christ but – harder still! – to live for Him, **to present his**

**whole life as a living sacrifice to the Lord.** To this end he baptized his disciples and thoroughly instructed them to follow not himself but Jesus (John 1:35f & 3:22-4:2). To this end, he disciplined himself and refrained from eating bread and drinking wine (Luke 7:33). To this end, he taught his disciples how to pray – which prayers lingered on long after his death (Luke 9:7 & 11:1 and Acts 18:25 to 19:4). And to this end, he willingly laid down his life (Mark 6:17-20f). In every way, then, his whole life was one long sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:2). Is this true of us too?

Finally, like the godly Abel, **John, being dead, "yet speaketh"** (cf. Heb. 11:4,35-37). Even after his death, when Herod heard about the mighty works of Jesus (Matt. 14:2) he said that "John the Baptizer was risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him" (Mark 6:14). For Jesus, like John the Baptizer before Him, was then preaching repentance. Surely, no greater compliment could be paid to the great evangelist John the Baptizer! After John had laid down his life as a witness to Jesus, the wicked Herod desired to see Jesus Himself on account of John's previous testimony. And finally, as John himself had also previously prophesied, not only Herod, but indeed "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ as preached by John the Baptizer which continues its triumphant course throughout the world (II Thess. 3:1; Ps. 72:7-11).

\* \* \* \* \*

## JESUS CHRIST THE LORD

It is with some trepidation that we analyze the earthly life and evangelical testimony of Jesus Christ. After all, He is so much more than man, and therefore so much more than an evangelist. He is pre-eminently the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity (John 1:1f & Matt. 28:19) and the sinless Son of God (Matt. 3:14f & II Cor. 5:19f). Yet inasmuch as Jesus is specifically called an "Apostle" and a "Bishop" (Heb. 3:1 & I Pet. 2:25), and really is both of these **too**, although being so much more **as well** – He can surely also be termed the supreme "Evangelist." Accordingly, we shall give a summary, however selective and inadequate, of the elements of effective evangelism in the earthly life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First, inasmuch as Christ **is** the Gospel, even prior to His official anointing to preach the good tidings of the Kingdom – **His whole life from conception onward revealed the salvation of Jehovah.** At His Spirit-filled conception, He was given the Name of "Jesus" because He would save His people from their sins (Luke 1:31f cf. Matt. 1:18-21). At His birth, the angel of the Lord brought the evangel of "good tidings of great joy...to all people." (Luke 2:10). When He was brought to the temple a month later, the prophet Simeon described Him as the **Salvation** prepared by Jehovah before the face of all people to enlighten both Gentiles and Jews (Luke 2:30-32). Growing up through childhood, He "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God

was upon Him." (Luke 2:40) At the age of twelve, He gave clear evidence of being about His heavenly "Father's business" (Luke 2:49), that of undertaking the work of saving and restoring all His children (John 4:34 & 5:10-17f & 17:4-20). And thereafter, from puberty through manhood, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Moreover, inasmuch as His human life, though unique, is an **example** for us to follow as much as we can (John 13:15 & I Pet. 2:21) – modern evangelists would be well advised to do so.

Second, Christ was **officially appointed to His task of preaching the gospel.** Although set aside for this task from all eternity – and although prepared for this task throughout His infancy, childhood, and youth – it was only when He, the perfect man, was about thirty years of age, that He was in fact officially anointed to His ministry (Luke 3:21-23 and 4:1,14,18 cf. Num. 4:3 & II Kgs. 2:9-12 & I Sam. 16:13). Only after this, did He begin to preach about the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4:17). Indeed, it is significant that He appointed the twelve to continue that work officially (Matt. 10). May we also, then, put great stress on long preparation for and the official ordination of our modern evangelists to their high and holy office! (cf. Acts 13:2f; I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6; 4:2-5)

Third, Christ's was an **all-round gospel ministry as prophet, priest and**

## EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

**king.** As prophet, He was sent to declare the whole counsel of God (cf. John 6:15 and Acts 20:27). As priest, He served and gave His life for His sheep (Heb. 3:1 & John 10:15). And as king, He ruled and still rules His people to their own benefit (John 18:36-37 & 19:10,15,19). Inasmuch as He appoints us as prophets, priests and kings (I Pet. 2:9 & Rev. 1:5-6), modern evangelists too should cultivate such an all-round ministry.

Fourth, this means **covenantally integrating the dominion charter and the great commission, as did Jesus.** As will appear particularly **in this article**, now – in enjoining that the nations be discipled and baptized and that His sheep and His lambs be fed and instructed in all that He had commanded – Jesus commissioned the restoration of man to his original estate (Matt. 28:19 & John 21:15-17 cf. Gen. 1:26-28). As the Second Adam (I Cor. 15:22,45-47 & Rom. 5:12f), not only was He a first-rate carpenter (Mark 6:3 cf. Heb. 3:3), but He also resolutely set about subduing the earth and the sea and the sky to the glory of God even while preaching the gospel (Gen. 1:26-28 & Ps. 8 & Heb. 2:5-10). Consequently, He cursed the fig tree on the earth and tamed the waves of the sea; and, in His ascension, subdued the clouds of the sky – all as integral parts of His life's work (Mark 11:12-28 & Luke 9:22-25 & Acts 1:8-11). Nor would He have us do differently. For Jesus has poured out His Holy Spirit upon His Church which He, her ruling Head, now directs in her subduing of all things to His glory (John 14:12-16f & I Cor. 15:25-28 & Eph. 1:13-23). Are we and our modern evangelists

part of this comprehensive extension of Christ's Kingdom? If not, small wonder we are ineffective!

Fifth, **Jesus was always filled with the Spirit.** This does not mean that He ever "spoke in tongues" (of which there is absolutely no indication!) but rather that He was always consciously desirous of yielding Himself to the service of God. Overshadowed by the Holy Ghost even at His conception (Luke 1:35), and strong in Spirit during His growth from infancy to manhood (Luke 1:40), He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Luke 3:21f). Being full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit, He returned in the power of the Spirit unto Galilee, where He announced that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him (Luke 4:1,14,18). Even though God gave Him and no one else the Spirit without measure (John 3:34) – nevertheless, we too are enjoined to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18), albeit "with measure" or limitedly. Such a "spiritual" condition is surely a vital qualification for all official preachers, even today! (cf. Acts 4:8; 6:3, 5,11 & 7:55 & 8:29f & 9:17 & 13:4,9 *etc.*)

Sixth, **the Spirit-filled Jesus (never could! and) never did capitulate to Satan.** Many were the temptations to which He was subjected (Heb. 4:15 & 5:2,7) – in the desert near Jericho (Luke 4:1-13); by Peter in Caesarea-Philippi (Matt. 16:21-23); in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36); and even while dying on the cross (Matt. 27:40-42). But He stoutly resisted all of them (I Cor. 5:21). He was made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10; 5:9). Although

## 7 – JESUS CHRIST THE LORD

merely human evangelists, unlike Jesus, offend in many things (Jas. 3:1-2) – they too will nevertheless be more effective, as they learn to hate sin and cultivate the mind that was in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5f & I Pet. 2:21-22).

Seventh, **Christ's first sermon illustrates the cosmos-embracing scope of His message.** Shortly after His baptism and temptation by the devil – He stood up in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth, opened the prophecy of Isaiah, and declared: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And He said to them: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:18,21) This was Christ's "Declaration of Independence" from slavery to the devil. This independence Christ offered to His listeners by His "proclaim(ing) liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Lev. 25:10 cf. Isa. 61:1-2). Oh, that our modern evangelists too would preach to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, visit the prisoners, give sight to the blind, liberate the bruised, and preach the advent of the (already-arrived and cosmos-embracing) "jubilee" year of the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection with all its implications for the whole of human life! (cf. Matt. 25:31-40)

Eighth, **Jesus' messages were thoroughly grounded in the Scripture.** His first sermon, as we have just seen,

was rooted in Isaiah and more fundamentally in Leviticus, and He promptly illustrated it thereafter from First and Second Kings (Luke 4:25-27). Just before that, He thrice rebuked the devil by appealing to the Holy Scriptures (Luke ch. 4). Evangelizing Nicodemus, He referred to the book of Numbers (John ch. 3). In His Sermon on the Mount, He repeatedly referred to the Mosaic law (Matt. ch. 5). To the disciples of John the Baptizer, He quoted from the book of Proverbs (Matt. ch. 11). He reminded the Pharisees of Jonah and David and Solomon, and the Sadducees of Moses (Luke chs. 6 & 11 & 20 and Matt. ch. 22). He quoted freely from all sections of the Old Testament, and particularly from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophets (*e.g.*, Matt. ch. 19 and John chs. 10 & 12). After His resurrection, He took pains to explain – both to the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:27) and to the Jerusalem disciples (Luke 24:44) – passages in the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Prophets which concerned His own Messianic importance. Oh, that all of our modern evangelists would do the same!

Ninth, and flowing from the previous point, **Jesus believed in the absolute authority of the Bible.** He categorically asserted the historicity of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, of Noah and Lot, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the burning bush, of the manna in the desert, and also of Jonah inside the great fish (Matt. 10:15; 12:40; 19:4-5; 22:29-31; 23:35; 24:37-38; Luke 17:28-29; John 6:31). He not only believed in the plenary verbal inspiration of the whole of the Old Testament, but even in the **jot and tittle**

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

**inspiration** of each letter of each word thereof (John 10:30; Matt. 5:17-19). May God grant that our modern would-be ministers will follow the Master they claim to serve – in this respect too!

Tenth, **Jesus taught the permanent authority of the ten commandments**. In the Sermon on the Mount, He reaffirmed the binding power of the third, sixth, and seventh commandments (Matt. 5). In evangelizing the rich young ruler, He enjoined him to keep the whole second table of the law – that is, commandments five through ten (Matt. 19:17). The first table, requiring loving God with all our heart, He commended to the inquiring lawyer (Matt. 23:34f.). The fourth commandment, demanding weekly sabbath-keeping, He sedulously taught to His disciples (Luke 4:16 & 23:56 and Matt. 24:20). Oh, that many of our modern evangelists – whose sabbath observance is often frankly sub-Christian, and whose Gospel campaign advertising is sometimes frankly even more false in its testimony – would do the same!

Eleventh, **Jesus was, of course, a man of great prayer**. He taught His disciples to pray daily (Matt. 6:9-11), and He Himself regularly prayed from early in the morning and until deep in the night (Mark 1:35). Before choosing the twelve, He spent the whole night in prayer on the mountain (Luke 6:12f). He enjoined His followers to pray always and never to faint (Luke 18:1). He Himself prayed most earnestly – for the resurrection of Lazarus; in His own high-priestly prayer; and especially in the garden of Gethsemane, where He sweat great drops

of blood (John 11:41f & 17:1f & Luke 22:39-46). Dying on the cross, He first prayed for His persecutors and then prayerfully commended His own spirit into the hand of His heavenly Father (Luke 23:34,46). His whole life and death was one long prayer. Would not our evangelists today be much more effective, if they more closely followed Jesus as their model for prayer?

Twelfth, **Jesus preached the forgiveness of sins**. He assured the paralytic of Capernaum, in the presence of the scribes, that his sins were forgiven him (Matt. 9). He forgave the sin of the woman taken in adultery (John 8). He forgave the transgressions of the dying thief on the cross (Luke 23). And He commissioned His representatives to grant remission of sins in His Name (Matt. 18:15-20; John 20:21-23). May our preachers of today never forget that it is only through faith in Him that forgiveness of sins may be guaranteed, and that it is only through such an assurance that modern man can ever begin to cope with his consuming problem of guilt.

Thirteenth, **Jesus exorcised demons**. Through the mighty power of God, He cast devils: out of the man with the unclean spirit in Capernaum (Mark ch. 1); the grave-dwellers of Gadara (Matt. ch. 8); the man who was blind and dumb (Matt. ch. 12); the lunatic at the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke ch. 9), the daughter of the Syro-Phenician woman (ch. Mark 7), the lame daughter of Abraham (Luke ch. 13) – and He even cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9). We are not recommending the casting out of



## 7 – JESUS CHRIST THE LORD

demons as a **modus operandi** in evangelism today. But inasmuch as the Savior's own disciples (including Paul) sometimes did this (Luke 10:17 & Mark 16:17 & Acts 16:18 & 19:11-12), it may be suggested that our modern bringers of good tidings would be more effective in their ministry if they took this phenomenon of demon activity more seriously than many of them often do.

Fourteenth, **Jesus performed many healings**. Confining ourselves only to the shortest Gospel, that of Mark, we find that He healed many. These included: Peter's mother-in-law; many people around Capernaum with many kinds of sicknesses; the leper near the mount; the paralytic youth; the man with the withered hand; Jairus' daughter; the anemic woman; the deafmute of Decapolis; the blind man in Bethsaida; and the blind man of Jericho (Mark 1:31,34,41 & 2:12; & 3:5 & 5:29-42 & 7:31f & 8:22 & 10:46). Here again, we are not suggesting that modern evangelists try to become medical doctors. But we are recommending that they (and we!) take the apostolic injunction to the Church of all ages rather more seriously! (Jas. 5:13-18)

Fifteenth, **Jesus insisted on fruit-bearing**. Here was no cheap grace! The ten lepers were told to be thankful and to manifest their gratitude (Luke 17:12f cf. 5:13). He Himself cursed the unfruitful fig tree, a symbol of the apostate nation of Israel (Mark 11 cf. Luke 13). And in the Sermon on the Mount, He insisted that every tree which does not bear good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire (Matt. 7:19). Oh, that particularly the

**pseudo-Calvinistic evangelists** – with their devilish doctrine of "once you've made a decision, you're saved forever" – would heed the real teaching of the Savior! Then indeed would the embarrassing phenomenon of such widespread backsliding after "revivals" – be trimmed down to its Scriptural dimensions.

Sixteenth, **Jesus preached dire punishment to the disobedient**. It is surely most striking that precisely Jesus warned His listeners more against the agonies of Gehenna than did any other person in the Bible. In His blessed Sermon on the Mount, three times He warned about the punishment of hell (Matt. 5:22-30). In the Gospel of Mark, three times did He warn about many of the awful terrors of the inextinguishable fire reserved for those who cause others to stumble (Mark 9:42-48). And six times He warned about the furnace of fire, in the parables (Matt. 13:42,50 & 22:13 & 24:51 & 25:20,41,46). Truly, those modern evangelists who insist on telling unregenerate man that God loves him and has a wonderful plan for his life, are far removed from the true teaching (and from the effective evangelism?) of the Savior!

Seventeenth, **Jesus was an open-air evangelist, but not a circus barker**. His greatest addresses, such as His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. chs. 5 to 7) and His Olivet Discourse (Matt. ch. 24), unlike His great Temple addresses (Matt. ch. 23 & Mark ch. 11), were out-of-doors sermons. However, our Lord was no exhibitionist. Firmly condemning vain repetitions of words in public prayers on

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

street corners, in favor of private prayers in one's own room (Matt. 6:2-7) – He did not strive nor cry out for attention nor did any man hear His voice on the streets, even as He was sending forth His judgment unto victory even among all the Gentiles (Matt. 12:19-21). May we too exhibit the same good taste in our presentation of the Gospel today!

And finally, **Jesus' evangelism was sanely prophetic!** He insisted that the Gospel of the Kingdom shall first be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations – before the end would come (Matt. 24:14). He enjoined His listeners always to be ready, for the Son of man would come at an hour such as they would not expect (Matt. 24:44). He commanded them to invest all their talents – including their money! – while He went away on a long journey (Matt. 25:15,19f cf. Luke 16:7-11). And He told them to

preach the Gospel to every creature, to christianize all the nations, and to instruct them to observe all His commandments (including the dominion charter!) before they should expect the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20 cf. Gen. 1:26-28). Oh, that modern evangelists – instead of promising their listeners "a pie in the sky bye-and-bye (for the end is nigh!)" – would rather entreat them to serve God all their days in **this** life here and now! (cf. Eph. 6:3)

Dear reader: Is **your** view of evangelism really "Christ"-ian? For only if it is, will your efforts ever be really effective! We need to encourage one another in this. Let us then remember what the apostle Paul wrote to one of the congregations (I Cor. 11:1): "Be ye imitators of me – even as I also am of Christ!"

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE APOSTLE PETER

In a certain sense, it was particularly the apostle Peter to whom Jesus gave the keys of the Kingdom of God. At Caesarea Philippi, when Peter confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus promised that He would give him the keys of the Kingdom to bind and loose on earth as in heaven (Matt. 16:19). And although the other apostles received similar authority (Matt. 18:1,18 & John 20:20-23), it was particularly Peter who, by using the "keys" of his gospel preaching, opened the door of the New Testament Church for the first time (after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost) to the first Jewish converts (Acts 2:1-14f) and later to the first Gentile converts (Acts 10:34f cf. 11:15-18 & 15:7-8). Accordingly, Peter occupied a "key role" in the evangelization of the world – a role which we as later wielders of those gospel keys, would do well to be acquainted with.

For first, though sinful and fallible (Luke 5:8 & 20:31f, 54f & Gal. 2:11-14), **Peter never doubted that Christ had called him to preach the gospel.** Already when he first met Jesus, he forsook all and followed Him (Luke 5:10f). At Caesarea Philippi, he was made very much aware of the key role he was to play in helping to establish Christ's Church (Matt. 16:19). Again, just before Gethsemane, Jesus reminded Peter that he was to strengthen his brother apostles (Luke 22:32). After Jesus' resurrection, the Savior left him in no doubt as to his duty to feed the Lord's

sheep (John 21:17). And even at the very end of his life, Peter remembered that Christ Himself had appointed him to his office (II Pet. 1:1). Would that today we too would always be conscious of the same holy calling!

Second, **Peter deeply loved Jesus.** Not only did he forsake all to follow the Savior (Matt. 19:27), but Peter also even ventured to walk across the stormy waters just to be near his Master (Matt. 14:24f). His love for the Savior made him horrified when Jesus first announced His own forthcoming death (Matt. 16:22). For, as later appeared, Peter was ready to lay down even his own life for the Lord (John 13:37) – and indeed, at the risk thereof, shortly thereafter he did publicly attack the high priest's servant in seeking to defend Jesus from arrest (John 18:10). When he realized that he had denied the Lord, Peter wept bitterly (Matt. 26:75), and later he sadly told the Lord three times that he really did love Him notwithstanding (John 21:15f). Ultimately, Peter in his own later death glorified the Christ he loved (II Pet. 1:14). No wonder his evangelism was so effective! Ours will be too – when we so love Jesus!

Third, **Peter's enthusiasm was contagious.** He greatly desired to build three tabernacles for Jesus and Moses and Elijah on the mount (Matt. 17:4). He pushed ahead of John into the Lord's grave to confirm that it was empty (John

## EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

20:4f). He leaped into the sea and made for the shore when he recognized the resurrected Christ (John 21:7f). And with great gusto did he preach the Pentecostal sermon, resulting in widespread conversions (Acts 2:14f). Today too, if evangelists desire to activate their Christian brethren and to lead others to the Savior, they must first be stirred up themselves. For as Kuyper once remarked in his *Onze Eeredienst* (or *Our Divine Worship*): he who would move others, must first himself be moved!

Fourth, Peter's enthusiasm was heightened and sanctified when **he was endued with power by the Holy Spirit**. On the day of Pentecost, when all the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter lifted up his voice and preached a dynamic sermon about the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:4,14,17f). Later, before the Sanhedrin, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, boldly confronted them (Acts 4:8f). While giving a report of what had happened, at a Christian prayer meeting thereafter, Peter and all present were again filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 4:31). Indeed, it was precisely when the first heathen converts were later themselves filled with the Holy Ghost, that Peter realized that God would have him evangelize the Gentiles (Acts 11:15f). Oh, that we today who try to win others for the Lord would not only be thoroughly regenerate and truly baptized by God's Spirit into His Church (I Cor. 12:3,13) – but also constantly keep on being filled with that Spirit to enable us to continue our evangelism effectively (Eph. 5:18)!

Fifth, the **Spirit-filled Peter was given a good grasp of Spirit-inspired Scripture**. On the day of Pentecost, he correctly discerned the existential and prophetic significance of the book of Joel (Acts ch. 2). Shortly thereafter, in the gate of the temple, he recognized that Jesus was indeed the Prophet like unto Moses foretold in the book of Deuteronomy (Acts ch. 3). Next, he explained to the members of the Sanhedrin that in crucifying Jesus, they had fulfilled Psalm 118 (Acts ch. 4). In the episode with Cornelius, Peter understood that the dietary laws of Leviticus had now been fulfilled in the finished work of Christ (Acts chs. 10 & 11). And in his later Epistles, Peter constantly referred not only to the Old Testament prophets such as Noah and Lot and to all the writings of the Old Testament (I Pet. 1:10f. & 3:20 and II Pet. 1:20 & 2:5 & 3:4), but claimed that the New Testament Scriptures of the apostle Paul too were just as authoritative for all matters of faith and conduct (II Pet. 3:15f). Oh, that we today had the same discernment and love for God's Word!

Sixth, Peter also **loved preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself**. On the day of Pentecost, he boldly described the details of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly session (Acts ch. 2). In the gate of the temple, he explained how God had glorified His Son Jesus and would continue doing so until the restitution of all things (Acts 3). Before the Sanhedrin, he asserted that there is absolutely no salvation outside of faith in the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and he refused to be silent about

## 8 – THE APOSTLE PETER

publicizing this material. To the eagerly interested Gentile Cornelius, Peter related the chief events in the life and death of the Savior and their great saving significance (Acts ch. 10). And in his later Epistles, Peter was still reminding his addressees of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount (II Pet. ch. 1) and His sufferings and exaltation from the dead (I Pet. chs. 2 & 3). "Sir, we would see Jesus!" the Greeks had requested of Philip (John 12:21). And Peter was determined that the world would so see! Are we?

Seventh, Peter preached the **forgiveness of sin**. Christ had given him and all the other apostles the right of binding and loosing in His Name (Matt. 16:18 & John 20) and also instructed them to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations (Luke 24:47). Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, Peter enjoined his listeners to repent and to be baptized in the Name of Jesus for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Thereafter in the gate of the temple he entreated the Jewish crowds to repent and be converted, so that their sins might be blotted out (Acts 3:19). To the Sanhedrin he testified that there was no salvation for anyone outside of faith in Jesus (Acts ch. 4), for it was through Him that Jehovah would give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31). And to Cornelius he insisted that all the prophets testify that it is through the Name of Jesus that whosoever believeth on Him should receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43). So often we lose sight of this central emphasis in our evangelization today! Is it any wonder, then, that we often lose our effectiveness?

Eighth, **Peter's Gospel was Church-related** and not "interdenominational" or "independent." Christ had told him that He would build His Church upon the rock of the apostolic testimony (Matt. ch. 16). After the selection of another apostle for the Church to replace Judas Iscariot, it was indeed during a sustained prayer meeting of the Church that the Holy Spirit was poured out (Acts 1:14f & 2:13f cf. 12:5,12). When Peter used the first gospel key, it was to the Church that the Lord daily added such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). And after the Sanhedrin had brandished its threats, it was: the Church that was shaken and filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 4:3); the Church that was furnished with deacons (Acts ch. 6); the Church that was the legitimate continuation of the Old Testament assembly (Acts 7:38); the Churches of Judaea and Galilee and Samaria which Peter helped edify (Acts 8:14 & 9:3 & 9:32 & 9:41); and the whole Church Universal in its synodical stature (at its first General Assembly in Jerusalem) which had to make important decisions for the welfare of the whole body of Christ (Acts 15:7f). If evangelism is really to succeed today, it must similarly be Church-related.

Ninth, Peter was a **man of prayer**. With the Church, he prayed for ten solid days before the day of Pentecost (Acts ch. 1). Again with the Church, he prayed for strength to remain true to his evangelical calling after being threatened by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:29f). The first deacons were appointed precisely so that Peter and his fellow apostles could give themselves fully to prayer and to the ministry of the

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

Word rather than to the ministry of mercy (Acts 6:4-6). When Peter prayed, the dead Dorcas revived (Acts 9:40). While he was praying in Joppa, he was summoned to lead the first Gentile converts to the Lord (Acts 10:9f). Oh, that we today would also be such men of prayer! Then indeed would our evangelism similarly be successful!

Tenth, **Peter expected great things from God**. He knew that the Name of Jesus had the power to heal the cripple (Acts ch. 3), to expel evil spirits (Acts 5:16), to heal Aeneas of the palsy (Acts 9:33f), and even to raise Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:37f). Again, we would emphasize that we are not suggesting the performance of miracles as a **modus operandi** for modern gospel preaching. But we are most decidedly calling for a greater faith in the power of the living God to act remarkably even in the world today.

Eleventh, it should also be remembered that Peter **did not fail to preach about the judgment of God** as well as about His mercy. On the day of Pentecost, he exhorted the crowds to save themselves from that untoward generation which had crucified the Lord of glory and which faced the judgment of outer darkness on the coming Day of the Lord (Acts 2:20,23,40). Later, he pronounced the death penalty to Ananias and Sapphira on account of their sin against the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:3-10). He consigned Simon the sorcerer and all his money to perdition, in the event of his not repenting, when that magician sought to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts

8:20). May we, too, never become sentimental in our love of sinners – but also always clearly present them with the sure judgments of God, should they not heed the gospel warnings!

Twelfth, Peter was a **covenantal evangelist**. Jesus had told Him to care for the sheep and the lambs of His Church (John 21:15f). On the day of Pentecost, Peter assured the penitents that the promise of redemption was for them and their children and for all that were afar off (Acts 2:39). Later, on entering the house of Cornelius, the apostle did not hesitate to evangelize the whole household (Acts 10:24f). Even in his later Epistle, he insisted on the covenantal solidarity of the household (I Pet. 3:1,20 & 5:1-5). If we follow his example today, we will have similar success with our evangelism.

Thirteenth, and related to the above point, Peter **strongly stressed the evangelical significance of baptism**. Jesus had told him and the other apostles, and in them also their successors, to go into all the world, to turn all nations into His disciples, and to baptize them in the Name of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19 cf. John 4:1-2). Jesus had also promised that He would baptize them with the Holy Ghost not long after His ascension (Acts 1:5-8). This occurred on the day of Pentecost, when Peter entreated his penitent listeners to be baptized, inasmuch as the promise came to them and to their children – whereupon about three thousand souls received that sacrament of initiation and were thereby formally engrafted into the visible Church (Acts 2:4,17,38,41). Again, when the household

## 8 – THE APOSTLE PETER

of Cornelius as the first Gentile converts received the Holy Ghost, Peter commanded that they all be baptized in the Name of the Lord (Acts 10:47.). And later still, in his First Epistle, he reminded his addressees that they had received the sprinkling with the blood of Jesus and, like Noah and his whole house, been baptized and saved by the good answer of their conscience toward God (I Pet. 1:2 & 3:20f). May we too in our evangelization campaigns never regard baptism as merely peripheral, but as the important matter which it was both to Peter and to Peter's Lord (I Pet. 5:13 cf. Mark 16:15).

Fourteenth, Peter realized that he **preached a very precious gospel**. Christ, he believed, is Himself precious (I Pet. 2:4). As such, His Church too is precious, of which He is Himself the precious Cornerstone (I Pet. 2:6). He paid the price for that Church when He saved His children by the shedding of His precious blood (I Pet. 1:19). Moreover, He has also given us exceedingly great and precious promises (II Pet. 1:4). Furthermore, even the very trial of our faith is much more precious than gold (I Pet. 1:7). And if these things are also precious to us today, our desire to share them with others will promote effective evangelism.

Fifteenth, **Peter's gospel is one of cosmos-embracing scope**, and in that respect it is particularly precious! Peter understood this when on the day of Pentecost he described the all-encompassing effect of the good news in terms of a universal outpouring on all categories of people accompanied by the cosmic signs of fire and smoke (Acts

2:17f). Later too, the apostle's message was not confined to the salvation of souls but was also applied to the glorification of the body (Acts chs. 3 & 9). It would promote better international and even interracial relations (Acts chs. 10 & 11), and it was and is also of profound socio-politico-economic significance (I Pet. 2-4). Particularly does it seek to re-establish the sin-lost dominion of man as the image of God (I Pet. 4:11 & 5:10-11) and the likeness of the Lord Who, as Peter faithfully confessed, had made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them (Acts 4:24). Oh, that we too may not truncate the Gospel – but present it without compromise in its all-encompassing thrust!

Lastly, **Peter's Gospel was eschatological in its tendency**. Jesus Himself had told the apostle that he would sit with Him and rule the covenant people in "the regeneration" or the renewed order here on earth (Matt. 19:28) – which, of course, already commenced in principle when, as Peter recognized, the Holy Spirit renewed His Church on the day of Pentecost "before that great and notable Day of the Lord" fully arrives (Acts 2:20). Accordingly, Peter could also later warn the crowds in the gate of the temple that the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord and that Jesus would come from heaven at "the time of restitution of all things," or the time of the reconstitution of the entire universe (Acts 4:19-21). So too in his Epistles, Peter convincingly preached that our inheritance is reserved in heaven ready to be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:4f). For the end of all things is at hand (I Pet.

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

4:7) and the glory of Christ is about to be revealed (I Pet. 4:13 & 5:1-4), especially when the entire heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the very elements shall melt with fiery heat and the works of the earth shall be renewed by fire at the advent of the new heavens and the new earth (II Pet. 3:10-13). Shall we too not preach the gospel today with all its Petrine emphasis? Then indeed would God grant us true revival, even as Peter himself experienced!

\* \* \* \* \*



## THE APOSTLE PAUL

There is little doubt that the apostle Paul is the greatest (purely) human evangelist ever mentioned in Scripture. Even though, unlike the other apostles, he was converted after the ascension and heavenly session of Christ (Acts 9), it is indisputable that by God's grace he labored more abundantly than all (I Cor. 15:10). He established scores of churches during his various missionary journeys (Acts 13-28). He also wrote no less than thirteen missionary epistles – all of them crammed with material of the greatest significance for evangelism.

First, **Paul was a covenantal evangelist**. Although he was converted to Christ as an adult (Acts 9:5f), Paul insisted that he and Timothy had both been sanctified – in the wider sense of that word – from birth (Gal. 1:15 and II Tim. 1:3-5 & 3:15). Similarly, he also insisted that children born of mixed marriages in which one parent was a believer and the other not – children such as Timothy (Acts 16:1 & II Tim. 1:5) – were sanctified on account of the God-given faith of the believing parent (I Cor. 7:14). Incidentally, if Timothy was less than twenty years old when Paul met him in about A.D. 50-53, Timothy may have been baptized in infancy, at the time of his faithful mother's confrontation with the baptism of John or by one of Christ's apostles shortly after Pentecost (Acts 1:5-8 & 8:1-4 & 9:1-2 & 14:1-21 & 16:1-2 & 18:24-25 & 19:1). At any rate, there is no Scriptural account of Timothy's own

"conversion" from rank unbelief to Christ. Nor is there any account of a similar "conversion" of any other child of the covenant born after Calvary and baptized in infancy – for all these were born in the Covenant of Grace and grew up in it from their very birth (I Cor. 7:14; Eph. 1:1; 4:4-6; 6:1-4; II Tim. 1:3-5; 3:15; I Pet. 1:1-5,20-25; 2:1-5; I John 2:12-14 cf. Matt. 11:25; Luke 1:15,41,44,76,80). Even the covenant children during Old Testament times were only required to live according to their infant circumcision as they grew up (Gen. 21:1-4; 26:22-29; 27:27-29; 28:13-22; Ex. 6:12, 30; Deut. 6:4-10; 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:24-26; Ezek. 44:7). All such covenant children, according to Paul – far from being regarded as aliens who needed to be brought into (*eis*) the covenant when they had grown up – were rather to be regarded as being citizens of God's Kingdom even from birth, and were therefore to be raised in (*en*) rather than to be brought into (*eis*) the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4 cf. 1:1 & 4:4-6 and Col. 1:2 & 2:9-13 cf. 3:20f). Let us then too take the same view today, particularly in formulating the evangelistic methods we are to use. This covenantal emphasis is important also in reaching backslidden children of the covenant!

Second, and flowing from the first point, **Paul correctly understood the relationship between baptism and evangelization**. Not only did he clearly see that baptism had replaced

## EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

circumcision (Col. 2:9-13 and Gal. 3:6-29 cf. Gen. 17), so that he baptized whole households (Acts 16:15 & 16:31 & 18:8 and I Cor. 1:16 & 10:2), but he also insisted that baptized people should live as they ought to. He further hastened to evangelize all backsliders on the basis of their having received holy baptism and thus being called to live holy lives (Rom. 6:1-14 and Eph. 4:5f cf. Acts 19:1-6 & 22:16 and I Cor. 12:13 and Gal. 3:27). If we today would similarly evangelize baptized backsliders, our successes in provenly proclaiming the Gospel would be much greater than they often are.

Third, **Paul firmly preached the Law of God.** He knew that this was the divinely appointed way to awaken a conviction of sin (Rom. 2:12-16 & 3:31). Hence, the Law is holy and just and good and spiritual, he insisted, and we are to fulfil it by loving one another (Rom. 7:12-14; 13:8-9). All ten of the commandments were explicitly or implicitly stressed by him (Eph. 6:2 & 4:28 to 5:5 and I Tim. 1:8-11). Paul declared that precisely by the preaching of the Law, the knowledge of sin is established (Rom. 3:20). Oh, that our present antinomian and lawless age and its evangelists would heed this doctrine of Paul!

Fourth, **Paul's gospel was thoroughly Biblical.** "What saith the Scripture?" was his only concern (Rom. 4:3). He insisted that Timothy preach only the Word of God, remembering that he who knew the God-breathed Holy Scriptures from childhood must ceaselessly continue to labor in word and in doctrine – for such is the work of an evangelist! (II Tim. 3:15f

& 4:2-5 and I Tim. 4:12-16f & 5:17) Time and again, Paul quoted from the Scriptures in his sermons – and with remarkably successful results (*e.g.* Acts 13-26 and Rom. 10:5-21 & 15:9-12 *etc.*). If we would be effective in our evangelism today, we should abandon the modern pathological attempt at being "relevant" –and instead reaffirm our determination to be "scriptural." Only when we are "scriptural" – is our evangelism really "relevant!"

Fifth, **Paul unqualifiedly submitted to the sovereignty of God in his evangelism.** Not only did he recognize God's sovereignty wherever and whenever and to whomsoever he was or was not permitted to preach (cf. Acts 13:45-49 & 16:6-10). But he also delighted in preaching the deep riches and unsearchable judgments of his Sovereign God from whom and through whom and unto whom are all things (Rom. 11:33-36). This God was for Paul the eternal, immortal, invisible, and only wise God, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who dwells in the light which no man can approach, to whom be honor and power everlasting (I Tim. 1:17 & 6:15-16). The very proclamation of the nature of this awesome Being subdued the rebellious minds of the apostle's listeners. This gave an irrefutable authority to his God-centered message. Just how authoritative is our message today?

Sixth, **Paul especially concentrated his evangelism on key persons.** God had told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear His Name before Gentiles

## 9 – THE APOSTLE PAUL

and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). Thus he testified to Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cyprus; to chief Pharisees and Sadducees; and to Felix the governor in Caesarea. He preached to Porcius Festus; to King Agrippa in Palestine; and even to Caesar himself in Rome (Acts chs. 13 & 23 to 26). Moreover, he enjoined Christians to pray particularly "for kings and for all that are in authority" (I Tim. 2:2). And today, without in any way neglecting the multitudes, we in our evangelism would be much more effective if we would really concentrate on winning influential political and religious leaders for Christ. They in turn could then be used to win great numbers of their subordinates – with the result that as Christians we "may lead a quiet and peaceable life" and so "the Word of the Lord may have free course" as it is "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (I Tim. 2:2; II Thess. 3:1; Matt. 24:14).

**Seventh, Paul preached justification and forgiveness through faith in Christ.** "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren," he told the Jews in Pisidia, "that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts 13:38) This message was the burden of the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians (cf. Rom. 3:25 & Gal. 3:13f). Likewise Paul insisted to Timothy that he himself, as the chief of all sinners, had been saved only through faith in Jesus (I Tim. 1:12-16). Only as we today preach this greatest of all the doctrines of the Reformation, will our witness similarly be blessed!

**Eighth, Paul preached the judgment of God on unrepentant sinners.** The

wrath of God, he boldly declared, is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). Transgressions of the Moral Law are worthy of death (Rom. 1:29-32). All who know not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power when Jesus shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them (I Thess. 1:8-9). It is high time that modern evangelists again preach the full counsel of God – which includes fire and brimstone as the certain reward of all the unregenerate.

**Ninth, Paul preached to the whole man.** He besought the Romans to present also their bodies as a living sacrifice unto the Lord (Rom. 12:1). He enjoined the Corinthians to eat and to drink and to do all things to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31), even as he himself contentedly made his tents to earn his daily bread (Acts 18:1-3 cf. I Thess. 3:7f). He commanded the Philippians to think on whatsoever things are honest or true, pure or moral, and lovely or artistic (Phil. 4:8). He told the Colossians to glorify God in their cultural, familial, and socio-economic affairs, just as much as in their church life (Col. Ch. 3) – inasmuch as all things in the universe hold together in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed to reconcile all things in earth and in heaven (Col. 1:17-20). Oh, that we today may preach an equally comprehensive gospel! Then indeed would our message strike a responsive chord in the hearts of modern men!

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

Tenth, **Paul loved to tell others how Christ had saved him.** Not only did he privately write about his life both before and after his conversion – and send such accounts to the Philippians, the Galatians, and to Timothy (Phil. Ch. 3 cf. Gal. ch. 1 and I Tim. Ch. 1). He also related in great detail how God had saved him – to the crowd in Jerusalem and to king Agrippa in Caesarea (Acts 22 & 26). Similarly, without ever becoming subjectivistic, it is good for an evangelist today to let his audience realize that he not only knows about God, but actually knows God Himself (cf. Ps. 66:16). Is this evidenced also in our witnessing?

Eleventh, **Paul was an intellectual evangelist.** Raised at the feet of the learned Gamaliel (Acts 5:34f & 22:3), Paul was learned both in the Israelitic laws (Phil. 3:5) and in the philosophy of the Greeks (Acts 17:18f; I Cor. 15:33; Tit. 1:12). Hence, after his conversion, he confounded the Jews with his Christian testimony (Acts 9:22 & 23:6), reasoned with Governor Felix about righteousness and temperance and judgment to come (Acts 24:25), and argued so cogently before King Agrippa that the latter was not only overawed by the apostle's great erudition but was almost persuaded to become a Christian (Acts 26:24-28). And all the other apostles – whose great fruitfulness Paul far surpassed (I Cor. 15:10) – were not "just" simple fishermen. They had in fact sat for three years at the feet of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. Also today, even though it pleases God to save men and women through the "foolishness of preaching," our preaching should not be as foolish as

it sometimes is – inasmuch as the Christ whom we preach is the Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:21-30). For in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 1:27 to 2:3).

Twelfth, **Paul was a man of great prayer.** Right after his conversion, he started praying to Jesus (Acts 9:11). He continued to pray without ceasing for the rest of his life (I Thess. 5:17). He prayed in jail and during storms (Acts 16:25 & 28:34f). He prayed for others and requested prayer for himself (Eph. 3:14f & 6:18f). He wrote his many addressees that they should in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let their requests be made known unto God (Phil. 4:6). How frequently we today have not – because we ask not! (Jas. 2:2 cf. 5:14-18) Oh, that God's Spirit would cause us to pray – so that our evangelism may increasingly be effective!

Thirteenth, **Paul loved God, and man as the image of God** (Eph. 4:24 & Col. 3:10). He loved his neighbor as himself (Rom. 13:8f & Eph. 5:25-28). Therefore he heeded the love of Christ which constrained him to beseech all men everywhere to be reconciled to God! (II Cor. 5:14-20) Accordingly, to the Jew he became a Jew so that he might gain the Jews; and to those without law he became as without law (yet himself being not without Law to God), so that he might gain the lawless for Christ. Thus he became all things to all men, so that by all means he might save some (I Cor. 9:20-22). Do we, too, have this kind of love?

Fourteenth, **Paul was prepared to live and to die for the sake of the Gospel.**

## 9 – THE APOSTLE PAUL

Having been very seriously injured by viciously antichristian persons at Lystra and at Philippi (Acts 14:19 & 16:22), and knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Palestine (Acts 20:23), Paul was ready to die for Christ's message (Acts 20:24 & 21:13). Much of the remainder of his life was spent in suffering afflictions, beatings, imprisonments, insurrections, shipwrecks and sleeplessness (II Cor. 6:4-5 & 10:23-27). Are modern evangelists made of the same metal? If not, small wonder that their results are less impressive!

Fifteenth, **Paul was a Spirit-filled evangelist.** After his conversion and at his baptism, he was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17). In his spiritual wrestling with the sorceror Elymas, he was again filled with the Holy Ghost. Thus he succeeded in powerfully witnessing to Sergius Paulus and winning him for the Lord (Acts 13:9f). In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul enjoined his readers not to be drunk with wine, but rather to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Oh, that we in our day may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19) and mightily evangelize the world in all its need!

Lastly, **Paul's gospel was eschatological in its orientation.** Like

Peter, he longed for the coming of the regeneration of the entire cosmos and the completion of the bride of Christ. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity; not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope – because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope!" (Rom. 8:18-24) God grant, then, that this "theology, of hope" in our present day may not be confined to the errors of the so-called "Christian Marxists" (like Bloch and Moltmann) but, freed from all perversions, be fixed on the God and Savior of the apostle Paul – and on our "Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our Hope!" (I Tim. 1:2)

\* \* \* \* \*



## THE APOSTLE JOHN

In this last article, we shall deal with the Gospel preaching of the Apostle John, the fourth evangelist – one of the first disciples to be called by Jesus (Luke 5:8-11) and certainly the last to join Him in glory after completing our Bible when he finished writing the book of Revelation (John 21:23d.; Rev. 22:8-20).

First, the apostle John **loved Jesus, and therefore loved all the Savior's children whom Jesus loved**. He insisted that God so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for whomsoever believeth in Him (John 3:16). He was amazed at the love of God that assures believers that they can be called sons of God (I John 3:1). He entreated Christians to love one another even unto death (I John 3:11f). "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone that loveth, is born of God... He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love... Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us... Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (I John 4:7-11) John in his own Gospel recorded the words of our Savior: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another!" (John 13:35) Do we have such love?

Second, however, John the apostle of love also **paints the doom of the impenitent in dire terms**. He who does not believe on the Son of God, John insisted, is condemned already – and the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:18

& 3:36). He that commits sin is of the devil, and shall not see eternal life (I John 3:8 & 3:15). He that hath not the Son, hath neither the Father nor life (I John 2:23 & 5:12). There is indeed a sin unto death, and it is useless to pray that such a sin should ever be forgiven (I John 5:16). Moreover, it is John who records the awful judgments of God which are poured out upon the unbelieving world (Rev. chs. 6 to 13 *etc.*). Indeed, ultimately even the devil and all who follow him will be tormented with fire and brimstone forever and ever (Rev. 14:10 & 19:20 & 20:15 & 21:8). John even closed off the last book of the Bible by pronouncing a solemn curse on anyone who adds to or subtracts from the entire content of that blessed book (Rev. 22:18). What a solemn warning to us today not to proclaim anything other than the undiluted Word of God!

Third, John's messages are **thoroughly steeped in the teaching of the Bible itself**. Explicitly or implicitly, he constantly refers to Cain and Abel (I John ch. 3), Sodom and Egypt (Rev. 11:8), Moses and Elijah (Rev. 11:3-6 & 15:3), Balaam and Jezebel (Rev. ch. 2), the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles of the Savior (Rev. chs. 7 & 21). In fact, the whole of John's great message in the book of Revelation presupposes his vital contact with and intimate knowledge of especially the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah in which it so clearly roots. Oh,

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

that all our messages today would be equally conspicuous as regards their Biblical foundations!

Fourth, John's messages constantly present **the centrality of Jesus**. Nearly half of his Gospel gives us the details just of the dramatic end of Jesus' earthly life (John chs. 10 to 19). His First Epistle gives us a most beautiful portrait of his own close impressions of the earthly Savior (I John ch. 1) – and his Revelation gives us a glorious description of his heavenly exalted Master centrally dominating all the lives of His earthly churches (Rev. chs. 1 to 3). Does He so dominate our own churches today – or are we only chosen frozen pseudo-Calvinists with no real **Christ-ian** warmth?

Fifth, **John stressed the importance of the ten commandments**. In his Gospel, he recorded Jesus' important words: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" and "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love" (John 14:15 & 15:10). It is useless for antinomians to maintain that these commandments of which he speaks are not the ten commandments but the new commandment of "love." This cannot be, for we are here told to keep the "commandments" (plural) and not a new commandment" (singular). Again, even this "new" commandment of love is not really new, but it is in fact "the old commandment" to love our neighbor as ourself and therefore not to kill one another as did Cain who broke the sixth commandment (I John 2:7f. & 3:11-15 & 3:24). As John's Second Epistle tells us, it is "love that we walk after His commandments" (II John 6). And John's

Revelation insists that those who have the testimony of Jesus also keep the commandments of God; that such keeping of the then commandments is the very essence of the everlasting gospel, and that it is they who do His commandments that have the right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates of the city of God – while the commandment-breaking idolators, sorcerers, murderers, whoremongers and liars shall be excluded therefrom forever (Rev. 12:17 & 14:6,12 & 21:8 & 22:14-15). Only when we present the Law of God as the permanent rule of gratitude to be kept by the saved sinner, will our evangelism today be truly effective.

Sixth, John was a **covenantal evangelist**. He realized that care must be given not only to the sheep but also to the lambs of Christ's Church (John 21:15f). Within each congregation, he emphasized the special interests of various groups of "fathers" and "young men" and "little children" in covenantal fellowship with one another (I John 2:12-14). Each congregation in its turn was to be linked together in fellowship with other local congregations into a presbytery (cf. I Tim. 4:14 and Acts 9:31 & 13:1-3 and I Cor. 16:1) even as the seven churches of Ephesus and Smyrna and Pergamos and Thyatira and Sardis and Philadelphia and Laodicea were all linked together in the Presbytery of Asia (Minor) like seven arms of one candlestick (Rev. 1:11-20). And the various local presbyteries in their turn were to be linked together into a synod or general assembly (cf. Acts 15:6f and Gal. 2:1,9 and Heb. 12:21-23). Hence, it seems that John regarded each Christian



## 10 – THE APOSTLE JOHN

presbytery as an "elect lady" enjoying fraternal synodical fellowship with her other presbyterial "elect sisters" and also enjoying motherly fellowship with her congregational elect "children" (II John 1:13). Indeed, when the whole Church militant and latent is "fulfilled" on the new earth to come as the Church triumphant – the baptismal covenant will then have been fully consummated, "and His Name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 6:11 & 7:2-4 & 14:1 & 22:4 cf. Eph. 4:4-6). May the Triune God give modern evangelists similar covenantal insights into the remarkable structure of the nature and manner of expansion of the Christian Church!

Seventh, John, the apostle of love, was **utterly antagonistic to doctrinal inclusivism**. He was never prepared to compromise fundamental doctrines just to gain the involvement in evangelism campaigns of a greater number of sub-Christian people than might otherwise seem to have been the case. The many antichrists which departed even from the bosom of the orthodox churches were identified and warned against – not collaborated with, as in modern inclusivistic evangelicalism (I John 2:18f). Rather than stress the lowest common religious denominator in order to gain a much broader basis for evangelistic co-operation, John stressed the necessity of testing or trying the spirits or claims of other would-be "Christians" (I John 4:1f). Rather than enter into a "constructive dialogue" with anti-Christian sects as "separated brethren" – John, the apostle of love, enjoined Christians not even to receive them into their houses or to bless

them (II John 7-11). For John hated the antinomian deeds of the Law-hating Nicolaitans, the blasphemies of the synagogues of Satan, and the activities of the pseudo-prophetess Jezebel (Rev. 2). In the light of all this, can we really expect God's blessing to rest on our modern "city-wide" evangelistic campaigns in which Christian ministers share the platform with every variety of heretical leader who regards himself as a Christian – just in an attempt to present a "united front" over against the "world?"

Eighth, **John addressed his Gospel to the entire man**. Jesus, he insisted, has appointed His children as prophets and priests and kings to exercise co-dominion with Him forever (Rev. 1:5-7). So their preaching of the everlasting gospel involves obedience to both the great commission and the dominion charter. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth – and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters!'" (Rev. 14:6-7) That must continue, until "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). Oh, that today's evangelists too would present the gospel with all its cosmos-embracing implications! Then indeed would Christianity be conceded to be relevant, and its outreach seen to be effective,

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

Ninth, John the evangelist **preached the blood of Jesus Christ**. He never forgot that Jesus had laid down His life for His sheep; for he himself had seen the water and the blood gush out of the side of the dying Savior (John 10:11f & 19:34). Hence, knowing that Jesus had come by the water and the blood, John loved to testify that "the blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 5:6-8 & 1:7). And it was on the basis of this shed blood of the Lamb of God that John enjoined Christians to overcome the devil (Rev. 12:11). May our enthusiasm to speak out on the "social issues," then, never eclipse our mention of the blood of Jesus – for it is only on the basis of that shed blood, that all things in heaven and on earth are reconciled! (Col. 1:20)

Tenth, John's evangelization was **characterized by great patience!** Suffering tribulation while in exile on the island of Patmos for the sake of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, he encouraged his persecuted addressees by reminding them that he too was their companion in tribulation in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9). Again, he praised the churches of Ephesus and Thyatira and Philadelphia for their great patience in faithfully laboring and in bearing reproach for the sake of the Savior (Rev. 2:2-3 & 2:19 & 3:10). Furthermore, he enjoined the saints to be patient even under the direct persecution of the Roman beast (Rev. 13:7-10), and patiently to keep the commandments of God and hold to the faith of Jesus notwithstanding all opposition (Rev. 14:12). Do we have this kind of patience today?

Eleventh, John **insisted on Christians bearing fruit**. He distinctly remembered the Savior's words: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples" – and "he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:8, 5). He knew that the Gospel reaper was to gather fruit unto life eternal (John 4:36). For Jesus had ordained His servants, so that they should go and bring forth permanent fruit (John 15:16). The modern concept of professing to be saved while not actively being spiritually fruitful by witnessing and keeping the commandments of God, was totally unknown to John (cf. Rev. 12:11,17 & 14:12-13,18f).

Twelfth, John **encouraged Christians to achieve certainty regarding their salvation**. For not only should the believer trust Christ for ultimate salvation, but he should also strive to experience the absolute conviction and joy that he is already saved for time and eternity (cf. *Heid. Cat. QQ.* 1,21,60). Hence John assured his listeners: "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life" (John 3:36); and "he that...believeth on Him...shall not come into condemnation; but has passed from death unto life" (John 5:24); and that "these things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God so that ye may know that ye have eternal life and so that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us" (I John 5:13-14). Oh, that all our modern evangelists would preach both the necessity of fruit-bearing and the duty of each believer to strive to achieve the

## 10 – THE APOSTLE JOHN

certainty of the knowledge of his unloseable sonship of God!

Thirteenth, John's Gospel was **eschatologically oriented**. He encouraged the early Christians to live holy lives because of Jesus' holiness which they would perceive at the time of His final coming (I John 3:1-3). He warned them of Jesus' coming with the clouds when every eye would see Him, when He would come to reap His Gospel Harvest (Rev. 1:7 cf. 14:14-19). He dramatically described Jesus' coming with the armies of heaven to make war against and to destroy the unrepentant kings of the earth and to cast them into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:11-20). He finished off the Bible with a glorious eschatological description of the descent of the heavenly city onto the renewed earth and then the consummation of cosmic peace throughout God's universe (Rev. chs. 21 to 22). Surely the apostle's description of so glorious a vista had a great effect on his listeners! Will it not also move our own listeners today, if we too evangelize in this manner?

Lastly, **John's Gospel preaching was confident of victory in this world here and now**. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," he insisted (quoting the words of Jesus), "but be of good cheer; I

have overcome the world!" (John 16:33) "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4) For the Gospel of Jesus goes forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:2) – with the result that the Christians overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony (Rev. 12:11). For notwithstanding all opposition, the everlasting Gospel keeps being preached to every nation and kindred and tongue and people that dwells on the earth (Rev. 14:6), until "all nations shall come and worship before Thee" (Rev. 15:4). In God's good time, the pagan beast goes into perdition, for the Lamb and they that are with Him destroy all their enemies (Rev. 17:14). And finally, after the triumphant reign of the martyr church while Satan is bound more and more through the mighty preaching of the Gospel to all the nations, he and his followers are led to the final holocaust when God again triumphs gloriously and casts them all into the lake of fire forever (ch. Rev. 20). If John, while persecuted on the isle of Patmos for the sake of his faith in Jesus, could be so confident about the certainty of the ultimate victory of Christianity in our present world – dare we who live in so much greater liberty today be less confident?

\* \* \* \* \*



## CONCLUSION

Let us then, like the great evangelists of Scripture (God Himself in Eden, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptizer, Jesus, Peter, Paul and the apostle John), evangelize all we can, by: condemning sin and upholding God's commandments; preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit and relating our messages to baptism and the covenant of grace; appealing to the sovereignty of God, the centrality of Christ, and the infallibility of the Bible; preaching indiscriminately to friends and foes and foreigners, commoners and kings; offering mercy to the penitent and judgment to the obdurate; boldly preaching to the entire man in terms of the dominion charter and man's daily work; always testifying uncompromisingly in public and in private about the great power of the saving blood of Jesus; both patiently and enthusiastically enjoining all-out dedication to the total Kingship of Christ; evangelizing through the officers of the Lord's true visible Church and rejecting all co-operative endeavors with sub-Christian sects and apostate religious organizations; and confidently laboring in the knowledge that the power of the risen Savior, flowing from His heavenly throne into His Spirit-filled Church here on Earth, shall overcome all opposition and by her powerful Gospel preaching yet reduce His enemies to a footstool under His feet! I Cor. 15:22-25; Heb. 1:13 and 10:13.

---

**So on then, Christian soldiers!  
Onward, to victory!**



## SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- My Conversion: Jesus Grabbed Me!*, IDRS, Kortenhoeft, Netherlands., 1960, 8pp.  
*The Conversion of an Atheist*, DRC Pubs., Cape Town, RSA, 1961, 5pp.  
*The Sabbath in the Bible*, L.D.O.S., London, 1966, 20pp.  
*Culture: Its Origen, Development, and Goal*, SCP, Cape May, N.J., 27pp.  
*Nationality and the Bible*, SCP, Cape May, N.J., 21pp.  
*Communism Versus Christianity*, LCICCC, Philadelphia, 1969, 20pp.  
*The Biblical Theory of Christian Education*, SCP, Cape May, N.J., 20pp.  
*Communism Versus Creation*, Craig Press, Nutley, N.J., 1969, 260pp.  
*Calvin on the Sciences*, Sovereign Grace Union, England, 1969, 50pp  
*Race and Nation*, Wever, Stellenbosch, RSA, 1969, 35pp.  
*Materialism, Idealism, and Calvinism*, SAVBCW, Potchefstroom, RSA, 1970, 8pp.  
*Philosophy in 20th Century America*, SAVBCW, Potchefstroom, RSA, 1970, 27pp.  
*The Lord's Day*, DRC Commission on Public Morals, Pretoria, RSA, 1970. 20pp.  
*Christian Introduction: History of Philosophy*, P&R, Philadelphia, 1970, 261pp.  
*The Basic Ideas of Communism*, Anticom, Pretoria, RSA, 1971, 26pp.  
*The Salvation of Early-Dying Infants*, DRCTJ, Stellenbosch, RSA, 1971, 15pp.  
*Missions the Heart of Church's Calling*, DRCTJ, Stellenbosch, RSA, 1971, 15pp.  
*The Covenantal Sabbath*, Lord's Day Observance Society, London, 1971, 343pp.  
*You Baptize Incorrectly!*, DRC Pubs., Pretoria, RSA, 1971, 15pp.  
*How to Confess Christ*, ICC, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1971, 16pp.  
*The Westminster Confession and Modern Society*, SRF, Edinburgh, 1972, 20pp.  
*Communist Eschatology*, Craig Press, Nutley, N.J., 1973, 1201pp.  
*The Origin and Destiny of Man*, Craig Press, Nutley, N.J., 1973, 125pp.  
*Sunday the Sabbath*, DRC Pubs., Pretoria, RSA, 1975, 53pp.  
*Ten Commandments Today!*, Lord's Day Observance Society, London, 1976, 15pp.  
*The Central Significance of Culture*, P&R, Philadelphia, 1976, 164pp.  
*The Christian Manifesto 1984*, Christian Liberty Press, Chicago, 1976, 18pp.  
*What About Baptism?*, SRF, Edinburgh, 1976, 17pp.  
*About Sunday*, Lord's Day Observance Society, London, 1978, 78pp.  
*The Office of Deacon*, PCA Commissioners' Handbook, 1978, 27pp.  
*The Ministry of the Word*, PCA Commissioners' Handbook, 1978, 55pp.  
*Christocracy: Divine Savior's Law*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1979, 25pp.  
*Toward a Biblical Theology*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1979, 12pp.  
*Effective Evangelism*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1979, 12pp.  
*Are the Mosaic Laws for Today?*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1979, 52pp.  
*Creation and Commission*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1979, 40pp.  
*Mt. Sinai and the Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1979, 23pp.  
*Communism*, Korean Journal of Reformed Theology, Seoul, 1980, 25pp.  
*Abraham Kuyper: Rebirth of Knowledge*, Jesus Lives, Bristol, Tn., 1980, 12pp.  
*John Calvin: True Presbyterian*, Jesus Lives, Brisbane, Australia, 1981, 22pp.  
*Communism: Christian Evaluation*, Jesus Lives, Brisbane Australia, 1981, 74pp.  
*Have You Neglected Your Baby?*, Jesus Lives, Brisbane, Australia, 1981, 13pp.  
*Will Christ or Satan Win World?*, Jesus Lives, Brisbane Australia, 1981, 32pp.  
*Pentecostalism: Outpouring or Heresy?*, Commonwealth Pub., Dallas, 1986, 79pp.  
*Calvin on Creation*, P.U.C.H.E., Potchefstroom, RSA, 1986, 53pp.  
*Revealed to Babies!*, Commonwealth Publishers, Dallas, 1986, 20pp..

## *EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM*

- Biblical Private Property vs. Socialism*, Ex Nihilo T.J., Brisbane, 1988, 7pp.  
*Sprinkling Is Scriptural!*, The Presbyterian, England, 1990, 44pp.  
*Biblical Principles for Church Architecture*, The Presbyterian, 1991, 44pp.  
*The Christian Afrikaners, 1652-1980.*, G.D.L., Cape Town, 1991, 215pp.  
*Revive Your Work!* (ed.), Presbyterian Church of Qld., Australia 1991, 104pp.  
*Neglecting Your Baby?* The Presbyterian, Bristol, England, 1991 rep., 16pp.  
*Culture*, Korean Society for Reformed Faith and Action, Seoul, 1992, 208pp.  
*Antichrist in Scripture*, Focus Christian Ministries, Sussex, 1992, 58pp.  
*Calvin on the Weekly Sabbath*, British Reformed Journal, England 1993, 17pp.  
*Toward a Biblical Philosophy*, Persuasive Press, Cambridge, Ma., 1993, 60pp.  
*The Fascinating History of Early Britain*. BRJ, England, July 1994, 11pp.  
*The Anabaptists and Their Stepchildren*, Blue Banner, Dallas, 1994, 62pp.  
*My Father's Slayer Saved!* Wilston Presbyterian Church, Australia, 1994, 10pp.  
*Patrick and His Writings*, Counsel of Chalcedon, Atlanta, July-Aug. 1996, 12pp.  
*Brothers Because of Bloodshed*, Counsel of Chalcedon, Atlanta, July 1997, 20pp.  
*John's Revelation Unveiled*, Ligstryders, RSA, Dec. 1999, 313pp.  
*Daily Family Worship*, Signpost, RSA, Dec. 2000, 444pp.



## **ABOUT REV. PROF. DR. FRANCIS NIGEL LEE**

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son in that faith. At the onset of the Second World War, Dr. Lee's father was appointed by the Royal Navy as Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There Dr. Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., he attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his previous ministerial credentials to that denomination, and pastored congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Research Scholar in Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol Tennessee. He was then the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Alliance (headquartered in London) and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (headquartered in Atlanta).

Preacher, theologian, lawyer, educationist, historian, philosopher and author, Lee has produced more than 300 publications (including many books) and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. In addition to an honorary LL.D., he has twenty earned degrees including some ten earned doctorates awarded for dissertations in law, literature, philosophy and theology. His latest major work is a dissertation of more than 800 pages on *Tiny Human Life*: against abortion, AID, AIH, SHW, IVF and human cloning.

Dr. Lee rises early; reads God's Word in eight languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World some six or seven times; has visited eighty eight countries (several repeatedly); and has visited every Continent. He continues to be in demand as a promoter of doctoral students in Australia, Britain, South Africa & the United States.

A diehard predestinarian and unreconstructed Southerner, Dr. Lee is affectionately nicknamed "General Lee" by his closest friends. Now in Australia, he is the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological Hall. His wife Nellie is in Fulltime Christian Service as a godly Homemaker.



## **BOOK REVIEW**

**(Resensie in Die Kerkbode, 9 Julie 1980, deur C.J.L.)**

Dr. Lee was Professor van die Departement van Filosofie en Godsdiens aan die Shelton Kollege in New Jersey, vanaf 1969-1973 predikant van die N.G. Kerk te Winterton in Natal, en tans „First Scholar-in Residence" by die Christian Studies Center in Memphis Tennessee.

In sy voorwoord sê hy dat hy in hierdie boekie wou vra wat die Skrif sê i.v.m. evangelisasie, deur te let op die tien grootste evangeliste in die Bybel.

Dr. Lee begin deur die vraag te stel: „When is evangelism really effective? When dramatic altar calls are made for conspicuous public decisions? When the masses are exhorted to come forward and 'confess Christ' in city-wide 'revivals' lasting for several weeks? Or when the good news of the whole counsel of God is faithfully proclaimed – *irrespective* of the outward and alleged verifiability or visibility of the response?"

Dr. Lee begin by die Paradysbelofte en behandel nege ander Bybelse figure om aan te toon dat dit in die Bybel gaan om die verkondiging van die volle Raad van God.

Baie mooi toon hy die belangrikheid van die verbond aan, and dat ons nie moet skroom om die volle Wet van God aan mense voor te hou en die oordeel van God aan te kondig nie.

Baie sterk wys dr. Lee die gevoelsopsweping, die opsteek van hande, af. Hy toon duidelik aan dat die mens hom nie sal wil bekeer, as God nie sy hart verander nie. Met sy standpunt stem ek heelharting saam....