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Developing a Reformed Worldview in a Postmodern/Modern World

A Prospectus for Central Carolina Presbytery

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A worldview is simply the philosophical perspective by which one views all of life. It is determined by what one considers as reality. Francis Schaeffer coined the double word for Truth as "True truth." It is true if it corresponds to reality. It is not the truth if it does not.

It may come down to one thing--TRUTH. A worldview will stand or fall in its relation to God, the universe, society, and the self. The truest Truth is that which manifests the *Excellencies* of Beauty and Goodness. It is practical for life in a fallen world. *The Sovereignty of God* may be the watershed of Calvin's worldview, while *the righteousness of Christ* is the centerpoint for Luther. Wesley would look from the heights of *sanctification*, and Jack Miller through *sonship in the Gospel*. I find that Providence and the covenant are twin pillars in my worldview.

The Hebrew word for Truth is used to describe the character of God--*faithfulness* is another translation to show that God is true to His character, His Word, His promise. The Greek *aleitheia* is from the negative *a* privative and the verb *lethein*, lit. "to forget." Actually, truth is that which cannot be forgotten. Truth is *there because God is there*. Thus in Romans 1:18 man under the wrath of God must violently wrestle it down, but the very nature of the truth, even on the "scaffold" as in Lowell's metaphor, makes all such efforts vain. There is no "*Escape from Reason*."

R.C. Sproul, Jr. presents this dream-like reverie where he finds himself in an endless labyrinth, and at the point of despair, he comes to two gates. One is shining and large and upon it is the one word, *CHRIST*. The other door, rather lowly, has *truth* written on the lintel. Which would you chose? R. C. says he chose the lowly looking gate of truth, for as one goes through he or she discovers the whole universe of **TRUTH**. But to chose "Christ" might bring one to his death, for there are many Christ's and only the TRUTH tells us who He really is--fully God and fully Man, our only Lord and Redeemer. Christ has a thousand and one connotations because of the perverse nature of man the idolater. Most sects use that word, as do liberals, modernists, and all Catholics, mainline denominations

and the cults that are multiplying daily. Embrace TRUTH and you will embrace the true Christ, and have it all, for "in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Embrace a false Christ, and one loses his way forever in an eternal labyrinth of darkness.

I was there. The opening salvos of the L'Abri bombardment on modern culture were at Covenant College in 1971. With great curiosity I brought my sociology students from King College. He had already penned the first words in his first book, *The God Who Is There*. It was incontrovertible, and yet so simple. Francis Schaeffer, who perhaps first used the word "postmodern" in 1969, was ahead of his time:

The present chasm between the generations has been brought about entirely by a change in the concept of truth . . . The tragedy of our situation is that men and women are being affected by a new way of looking at truth, and yet they have never even analyzed the drift which has taken place. Young people from Christian homes are brought up in the old framework of truth. Then they are subjected to the modern framework. The God Who Is There, p. 13

I like what Montaigne says about it. "When I see Truth coming, I run to her and surrender my sword on bended knee." Modern man engages the truth in deadly combat, and he is lost before he begins. The failure of faulty worldviews not founded on "true truth" is inexorable.

So what do we mean by "Modern?" Modern man seeks to confine reality to "the uniformity of natural causes in a closed system" as Schaeffer put it. All *isms* except theism are closed systems. Rational is good--John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards present to us a rational theology. But add the *ism* to rational and you have a world shut up to the limited mind of man, further limited by the physical reality of the "given" of his brain. Obviously, Albert Einstein arrived on planet earth with more to work with than Shirley McClain--but we look for both to be rational and consistent with their worldview.

Empiricism, rationalism, pragmatism, and scientism are all the words of this technological age. All Postmoderns would cease to exist without the contributions of these as fields of true endeavor and accomplishment. Harry Blamires in one of John Stott's "top five" books, *The Christian Mind*, says that it is a disgrace indeed that we blindly embrace this modern mind by saying, "But science says this or science says that." We Christians have forsaken the field and retreated. It should be that one says, "But the *Christian Mind* says this."

I was a fool about Post Modernism as perhaps some of you were. So impressed by these mindless Sophists and their writings, I felt intimidated. I finally opened the door and looked in. I found there was no one there. Is it really odd that Ronald Nash came to the conclusion that Post Modernism does not exist. How can we be intimidated by this tempest in the teapot, a fad that soon will disappear because we have, unfortunately for these bookwriters who are fattening their pocketbooks with modern spoof writing, an objective universe.

The cycle is like this. In three generations of mentors and mentees, Socrates asked the questions, Plato answered them, and formed an academy, and Aristotle gave us all the definitions--he perfected the knowledge. Then Philip of Macedonia asked Aristotle to be the tutor for his son, Alexander. He conquered the world and put a library in every city named for himself, and that was from Egypt to India. But this knowledge was insufficient for a world of Gnostics and the mystery religions--the outcome of the Aristotelian technocrats and other such factors. It would take the objective Truth of the Hebrews and Christians to conquer the Greeks and the Romans.

A peculiar little man who was a seed picker in the opinion of the Greek philosophers was dragged up to the *Areopagitica* to give his philosophy. At least they asked, which hardly happens in our modern universities. After a very sage presentation with allusions and quotes from the poets and astute observations, he said something that would seem to be off the wall--perhaps even *presuppositional*.

He said the Athenians were going to be judged by a Man that came out of a grave in a far off country, which they knew little or nothing about. There would be a judgment and the Resurrection Man would preside as Judge. He also blatantly challenged them to repent in the here and now because of this reality. He did not beg. It was God speaking in the imperative.

My question is, "How could a learned man like Paul tell the sophisticated Stoics, Cynics, and Epicureans on Mars Hill that a man was resurrected in Jerusalem, and expect one shred of respect?" It is a very simple answer. **Because was true!** It was "True Truth." It was verifiable in an objective universe, although these particular persons were not in the position to do so. But Truth has its own inherent persuasiveness, and can be told to anyone, anywhere, and at any time--and hopefully with the wise rhetoric of a Paul. But still, better said than not. Actually, it was quite successful if one would consider that it was something like the Cambridge City Council being also tenured Harvard faculty. Dionysius and others did believe and become disciples.

I was discussing this paper with my colleague and Executive Director of the

Jonathan Edwards Institute and asked him his definition of Post Modernism. He thought it to be "thought collapsing into itself"--like a building being demolished. It looks perfectly fine until the dynamite plunger is pushed, and the walls collapse inward in one vast demolition. For postmoderns, there is no more history, no more language, no more literature, no more philosophy and "truth is lying in the streets." With antithesis destroyed, there is no more thought. It is leaning on a moving wall that is not there. Taking a step in the dark when there is no step. It is nothingness. Why then would we fight that which is not? We have the Truth, we should use it.

In short, metaphysically, the postmodern phenomenon is nothing new--it is old world Gnosticism dressed up in Twenty-First Century clothes. Theologically it is pantheism, philosophically it is monism, existentially it is despair, and intellectually it is irrationalism. The rationalism of Voltaire is followed by the mindless romanticism of Rousseau. Marcuse in his *One Dimension Man* (1954) saw clearly that technological man would be dispirited. It is this vast void that welcomes the New Age with an open and empty heart. Man with his *imago dei* has a God-shaped vacuum (Pascal). Only God can satisfy the heart of man. We are made for Him, and Augustine speaks for the race of men when he says "our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." (*Confessions*, p.1)

If the Church is not there with the Gospel, others will fill their hearts and minds with a hundred damning untruths. The scorpions, like little dragons, are out of the Pit. When I attended Columbia Theological Seminary (1951), we studied the cults--five or six of them. Now the computers cannot track them as they multiply daily.

And how is a worldview tested, is it corresponding to reality? Lifestyle is living out one's philosophy--it is worldview with skin on. It usually is not too long that the objective universe demands that life and reality correspond, and a tragic toll is ultimately extracted. It is a moral universe, and there are consequences. Say the Lord's Prayer and jump off the Empire State Building. God will look with apparent indifference on such stupidity. Although one thinks he is doing quite well for 110 stories, that last one is quite a jolt! The realm of the mind and spirit in a moral universe is more profoundly serious.

Paul and Paracelsus agree. The greatest reality is love, and where there are hope and faith (truth) love lives there. Paracelsus says that *he who knows nothing loves nothing . . . He who understands nothing is worthless. ergo*. If postmodernism, monism and Eastern Mysticism are the *nirvana of nothingness*, then the indispensable necessity of love for a sane society (Erich Fromm) is impossible. Nothing cannot produce something--especially *love*. If love does not exist, neither does God.

Steve Clinton of the International School of Theology spoke of the framework necessary developing a Biblical worldview. Of his various citations, he prefers the definition of James Sire, editor of many Schaeffer books, in his own worldview offering, *The Universe Next Door*:

A worldview is a set of presuppositions or assumptions which we hold consciously or subconsciously about the basic make-up of our world (Sire, 1976; p. 17).

"Developing a biblical world view is a risky business! If you understand a biblical perspective on issues in life, are committed to God and to His service, and are equipped to serve, He may chose to use you to reach the world. You could become a revolutionary! Let it be, that you may boldly take your stand and do exploits.

"Many of us are committed to God and to His service and are equipped to serve, but must incorporate another element in becoming a revolutionary for God, and that is having a biblical worldview, *i.e.*, a biblical perspective on issues in life."

We will italicize a recasting of point 2 with the Reformed distinctive rather than a general statement which references *evangelical* theology. These are the essential elements for a biblical worldview:

1. Knowledge of Bible content;
2. Knowledge of historical theology and Reformed doctrine;
3. Biblical practices integrated into one's life;
4. Knowledge of contemporary cultural issues;
5. The proper biblical response to these issues.

Knowledge of Bible Content

Calvin E. Stowe (husband of Harriet Beecher) introduced John Gillies' biography of George Whitefield to America in 1853 with a stunning essay on the character and lifestyle of the men God wonderfully used in that era of powerful spiritual impulse. Feel the irony as you read that "although God can do without our intelligence, we can do less with our ignorance."

Schaeffer speaks of the Reformation disappearing in the Twentieth Century. Many, many seminary graduates, as you discover in Presbytery examinations, have an abysmal knowledge of the English Bible. If is so, what of the people in the pew? In a genial dinnertime with the President and faculty of a seminary, it fell upon me as Dean to lead a Bible game. It did not turn out so well.

I asked, "Let us start with Ten Commandments and recite them around the circle."

We could not get a full quote on the second and fourth commandments, nor could they get them in order, and one or two were omitted. I understand that many theological professors, like their secular peers, teach within their narrow spheres, and forget many, many essentials. One of the "Big Twenty" churches of the Presbyterian Church in America sent some elders with me to the Cayman Islands to teach Evangelism Explosion and Lifestyle Evangelism. In a casual time before going snorkeling, I thought I would do the pernicious and impertinent "Ten Commandments Game." They were about a 5 on a 1-10 scale. I would let them neither snorkel nor evangelize until they had memorized the Ten Commandments. **They did, and to this day they thank me for it.**

Let us look at Hosea 4:6-9 for a moment.

The prophet says that ignorance destroys God's people and it corresponds with Psalm 11:3 which says that "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" This ignorance is a choice, and therefore God not only takes away the covenant headship of the priest, but God will forget the children of those who forget the knowledge of God. "Like people, like priest" is the result.

I grew up in the best educated church of the old Southern Presbyterian Communion--a Sunday School of 1200 where quarterly exams were given and report cards sent home--thus 150 theologic evangelists went into the ministry in a mere 24 years. And knowledge in obedient hearts does not blunt evangelism, for in twenty-four years there were 4000 persons who joined Shenandoah Presbyterian Church by profession of faith--just 1000 less than joined the 1200 or more churches of the Presbyterian Church in America last year.

God's people need to know the truth about themselves, sin, God and Redemption, the Christian life and practical religion. The Bible tells about that and more--and with it comes the life-giving Spirit.

Knowledge of Historical Theology and Reformed Doctrine

Calvin informs us of his reason for writing the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in his Dedication to the Inquisitor King, Francis I. It was so that young students of the Bible would not get lost in scripture. We might say also that to find "true truth" in the Word one must follow this rule like the Reformer: "To divest myself of all ground of glorying, that He might be eminently glorious." And it was in the historical context of battling for the truth that he and Luther, like Augustine and Athanasius before them, hammered out doctrines to live by through the antithesis of Arians, Pelagians, Arminians, and Libertines.

All truth is something to live by, and if theology is not practical, if it cannot be existentially incarnate and walk out into the marketplace in the practice of the truth, it is unworthy of God and untrustworthy for God's people.

My question to my brothers this fine day would be the same as yesterday or tomorrow. What does Providence have to do with your approach to evangelism or pastoral care? How does the Fall help you understand the tragedy of the world, and face reality, especially when implacable evil is found in the church? How does the Sovereignty of God and Evil conspire to spiritually inform the scene of a teen tragedy in an accident or the funeral of a three-week-old baby? How would you handle the thousand and one inequities in the world, and those against you if you did not believe in the Judgment of God, imminent and transcendent, timely and for eternity? If we truly embraced biblical eschatology, would we not live in the light of heaven and hell and the judgment? Perhaps we are passionless Gospel do-gooders because we do not believe in these eternal verities.

In other words, how does the Reformed faith shape your worldview and effect "How shall we then live?"

And what of the doctrine of Creation? Do you take the cultural mandate seriously exulting in the magnificent universe created *ex nihilo* for us to explore, and marvelous world of men and cultures to know and books to read? The Psalms give us a world and life view of worship in beholding Creation as well as Redemption.

Give yourself this exercise after you read this essay. List the central Reformation doctrines quickly, and then pick the two or three that govern your world and life view. What is missing in your truth framework? Do you have a lifestyle that matches what you profess? What are you going to do about NOW by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the necessary shared life a spouse and colleagues who love you enough to hold you to account.

Tom Skinner used to say that the reason the "brothers" on the streets of Harlem greet you with "What's happening?" is that they do not know what's happening. But Tom found out that they had real questions and there always some who would begin to search theologically for the answers.

What are the big questions facing Postmodern/Modern Man? What are the worldviews that are out there confronting us? Do we know and understand those people who embrace these worldviews? Are we listening to them empathetically and honestly where they are.

There are some biblical models of men who shaped destiny and what they

embraced as the Truth shaped their world and life view, and often cost them their lives.

Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Barnabas, Luke and Paul.

And what does church history teach us of Athanasius, Augustine, Patrick, Alcuin (with Charlemagne), Luther, Calvin, John Milton, Whitefield and Wesley;

What more may we say of William Tennent and sons, August Francke, William Wilberforce-Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, William Carey, Robert Murray McCheyne, Abraham Kuyper, and Francis Schaeffer.

Joseph, without the knowledge of the Holy Spirit knew the Presence of God, and therefore could not betray his purity in keeping the unwritten Seventh Commandment. He knew the Providence of God, and it gave him a pardoning, trusting heart as well as a pure and tried one. Moses was possessed by the calling of the "God who is there--the I AM." Psalm 90 shows how the eternal taught him about time. And Daniel. Such clarity and wisdom was given him because of his one focus, the worship of God and God alone (the first commandment embraced all holiness). He was the Prime Minister of two world empires, and the prophet for the coming Kingdom and the reign of Messiah.

John Piper would suggest to find a biblical and historical model for your life and learn and practice all you can within the limits of God's economy. Should not someone want to follow you as you so follow Christ? Who of us would want to be emulated and say with Paul, "Whatever you received and learned and seen and heard, do it, and you God will really bless you?" Many of us dare not disciple, because it will demand a realignment of the great tectonic plates of our inner lives would impact one another and create an earthquake. Our doctrine will have to conform to reality.

In our masculine setting, we do too easily forget about Deborah, Ruth, Hannah, Esther, Mary, and that remarkable tri-cultural Priscilla. We are Calvinists and some translate it chauvinists. How may one forget Sussanah Wesley and Sarah Pierpoint Edwards, and your mother and that remarkable woman who shares your pillow?

History turns on the character of a Nero or Paul, Churchill or Hitler. Indeed, it was the character of Jesus that qualified Him to redeem us: "*He lived the life that He lived, perfect, that He might die the death He died, to redeem; he died the death he died to redeem, that we might live the life that he lived by the grace of His indwelling life.*" (Ian Thomas, *The Saving Life of Christ*)

Aristotle gave us a model for true communication, and if we are to speak to the Twenty First

Century, we must meet the criteria, and all of these men met those three attributes which correspond to Steve Clinton's points 3-5 having a biblical worldview.

Ethos -the character we bring to our communication--this is the Christian life lived;

Pathos -the passion of heart, even to the death! This constrains living it out in the world of men and ideas;

Logos -knowledge upon knowledge, available for application in the real world--we take the biblical and Reformed Truth into a world we are learning to know and love with compassion. Then we skillfully confront and pull down the strongholds and build something better--the Church of the Living God.

The Lord said through Ezekiel that the prophets, priests, princes and people were all corrupted and under judgment. He "looked for a man among them to make up the hedge, to stand in the gap . . . and (He) found none." God is looking for men and women with these three qualifying attributes to speak to this generation. Like Elisha never taking no for an answer with Elijah, we must go for it totally with all we've got.

D.L. Moody overheard some old gentleman speak as he was shrouded by a hedge in a garden, and one of them said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a fully consecrated man,"

Young Moody thought, "I want to be that man!" The rest is history as millions heard the Gospel and multitudes entered into the Kingdom. His life has touched my life indirectly, one hundred fifty years later.

In 1895 Dwight L. Moody came to Savannah, Georgia and with his 300 pound frame of boundless energy he preached everywhere, sacred and profane, including my grandfather's Seamen's Bethel. Then at the great Independent Presbyterian Church he stepped into the John Knox pulpit, 16 feet above all contradiction, to preach. With his massive head and beard he perhaps looked like a mighty bear to the son of Halvor Iverson:

"Tonight I am speaking about a man in the Bible named Daniel. There is a little boy here with that name," and looking fully in the face of seven year old Daniel Iverson he exhorted, "And young man, I want

you to be a Daniel just like the one in the Bible." (Ref. To W.T. Iverson, Jr., on the *Memoirs of Daniel Iverson*, and the Georgia Historical Society, circa 1895.)

My father says that it was then that he was called into the Gospel ministry, as best he can recollect.

My call to the ministry simply came as I observed the man in his ministry. He never sought to influence me by word. It was by demonstration did I receive the clear call. We tend to reflect the lifestyle and passions of those with whom we are converted, and thus explains evangelistic passion in my father, Billy Graham, and I sense in my own life.

In closing, let me share with you my critique, simply observed, of those qualities that must be found in the church in the leadership in this new millennium. Not all will be resident in any one of us, but together in the body of Christ, we can present what we are and have, letting the Spirit of the Living God break and melt, mould and fill as he wills. Aristotle gave us but three headings for the effective communicator to any generation, and with a Christian worldview framework, we must undertake the requisite qualities and qualifications

Ethos-the Character We Bring to Our Communication

Being is before doing. God who created the universe was simply the Essence, the being, Jehovah He had to exist before he did it. Jesus spent thirty years simply being before He began His brief three-year ministry. But if the axe is blunt, it takes more strength. The holy man pierces the darkness and is a dividing sword-- each word and deed has eternity in it, even washing feet.

It was said of Lyman Beecher's congregation that they "preached" the sermon all week in their lives. Of Robert Murray McCheyne it was that his "weekdays were the sequel to his Sabbaths" and that "his life was the best exposition of the text." The character of Jonathan Edwards was the foundation for the mighty intellect and the Spirit-given preaching and writing. McCheyne often quoted Chalmers' classic statement that **"a holy man is an awful instrument in the Hand of God."**

Luke makes an astute observation when he writes that Barnabas was "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith; and many people were added to the Lord." Acts 11:24.

I have shared with many, many people the way of the Gospel, and have even told by D. James Kennedy I was "the grandfather" of his Evangelism Explosion. Lately,

before beginning principles or methods in an evangelism conference or seminar, I deal with character (including my own, again and again)). I go to the Sermon on the Mount and we study the "Be-Attitudes" and the twelve signs of a true Christian as found in Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections*. Judgment must begin at the house of God.

The Holy Spirit was sent to convict of sin, righteousness and judgment. Without the broken heart over sin, there is no conversion. He convicts of righteousness because Christ has gone to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit (and He is just that!) It is a holy church practicing the truth and living sacrificially in a broken world. It is now that the church can reveal righteousness to men through both life and the Gospel message. And yet we live as if there is no judgment. Paul said we must all appear to give account before he spoke of the constraining love of Jesus. His argument from the lesser to the greater was that "Therefore, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men!" (II Cor. 5:10-21)

What is the character you bring to your wife and children, your church, your community--and into the marketplace?

We must begin by preaching the Gospel of Law and Grace to ourselves, by repenting, by heart cleansing, and embracing a perfect alien righteousness *i.e.*, that of Christ alone, before the Father for us, and then by the Holy Spirit in us as adopted sons. Hallelujah!

REMEMBER! BEING BEFORE DOING!

Pathos-The Passion of Heart, Even to the Death!

Oswald Chambers speaks of how Paul was held as in a vice by love of the Lord Jesus. It was inescapable to be gripped like that. To live in the light of the Cross of "Him who loved me and gave Himself for me." He had one holy passion? That the Cross is the center of Time and Eternity, the answer to the enigmas of both (Chambers). It is there that a holy God and sinful man meet with a crash, and the way to life is opened--but the crash is on the heart of God. If the greatest commandment is broken, yea, even profaned by our narrow doctrinal fetishes and cultural Christianity--like binding a risen Lazarus with more grave clothes--we have sinned the greatest of sins. Before you leave your house, kiss your wife goodbye or you will kiss your ministry goodbye--it all begins there.

We are to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength is to diligently teach that loving law and Gospel, setting life and death before our children in the context of grace. Sadly, when I preach on the covenant and ask for those who

have regular family worship to rise--it is a pitiful handful, including elders and pastors who have double vows. If we love not our families enough to lovingly seek their spiritual good, we will not seek that of our neighbor, except in a program perhaps well-executed but devoid of the love of God, the passion for Christ and His glory in the lives of men and women and children.

If a liar comes into this room and cries, "Fire, fire." You will not believe him because of his character, and you will continue on as is. Of if a man of excellent character strolls in and with a library voice says, "The building is on fire," neither will we believe him. But if we do not, we will surely perish in the fire.

In a world lost from love, alienated and hurting, modern and technological, postmodern and irrational, we will not speak a saving word without holy, bold, persevering character. It must be a costly servant love that is evident to all, winsomely calling God's own out of the world and into the strong, loving embrace of Jesus. It must start at home where it is tested with the reality of loving and honest relationships, undergirded by the covenant of grace.

Bettelheim was right in his book on the fragmented and wounded of the world--*love is not enough*.

It takes knowledge and skill. This is the very heart of Greek rhetoric, for "the greatest of these is love," and that is how truth is spoken.

Logos-Knowledge upon Knowledge, Available for Application in the Real World

We cannot look at the foolishness of man without agreeing with Calvin Stowe that "although God can do without our intelligence, he can do less with our ignorance." Recently I spoke with a church planter who knew nothing of philosophy and have had more than one theology student, college graduates, who never had read one book through. What ever became of *Logos*? Gillies said that the men God used, these Methodist Oxfordians such as Wesley Hall, the Wesleys, and Whitefield, were men who used their education in the service of the Gospel--not sophists, but holy and sharp instruments in the hand of God.

We need to know the "recondite arts" as Calvin said in his observations of creation in his Genesis commentary. Hodge was a modern man who matched the wits of the secular and scientific world of his day. The world has benefited because C.S. Lewis could think, and had a wealth of knowledge in literature, as did Schaeffer in the arts and philosophy, and R.C. Sproul in language, philosophy, theology and logic and rhetoric. No one ever put his mind at the service of God as Jonathan

Edwards did, but the labor of it all is beyond comprehension. Although few of us can match such men, we need to have a rational theology on fire. If these men with brains labored so diligently, so must we. Dr. William Childs Robinson used to say that Calvin did the work of twenty-one eminent professors with a headache for twenty years and disease from head to toe. He gave me a few headaches of my own, but I am eternally grateful that I outlined the *Institutes* twice. Once from compunction, and once for sheer joy--after seminary, of course.

Dr. Robbie used to say, "Young man, do not dare to go to a big church as an assistant pastor and certainly not as "the pastor." Take a little church in Mississippi and follow my **5-5-5 Plan**. Study five hours a day, five days a week, the first five years of the ministry, and you will never, never be an empty well for a thirsty people. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." It lies with the priests and prophets of the church, to give food and drink to the famished souls of Postmodern-Modern Man. I did Dr. Robbie's five-year plan, and never have regretted it. I regret that I did not read more history, science, and be more contemporary writings and purely enjoy worthwhile novels. But Newark brought other realities, and the Ph.D. in a great secular university such as New York University took that discipline and enlarged my borders, even without the help of Jabez.

I know as never before, thanks to study in a secular university, how very little I do know. Mercy is what I need, and hard work--"beaten oil for the sanctuary" as McCheyne would say--beaten oil burns the brightest and the longest

Enough of all of this. Let me summarize simply in John 1:14.

Our Lord Jesus was God incarnate, full of grace and truth, and so revealed the Father. We have the best plan--***incarnate!*** Be there! Show up on Monday. Enjoy living in God's world because He made it and put you there. Jesus did, and they thought he was having too much fun. But such joy was serious to the death, but until then, his life was all grace and all truth. No one will fail in their calling to this Postmodern/Modern world if mercy and truth meet together in his or her daily life. Surely then shall we see the Kingdom on earth with righteousness and peace kissing each other.

Remember the words of Brutus to Cassius at the plains of Philippi:

We are diminished, and the enemy increaseth every day . . .

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood,
Leads on to fortune;*

*Omitted, all the voyage of their journey is bounded
by shallows and miseries.*

*We are now on such a sea afloat, and we must take the current
while it serves, or **lose our fortunes**.*

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Let us pray!

Lord Jesus, let our satisfaction be in Thee, and Thy character and beauty as the infinite and holy God who stooped to behold the things of earth in Jesus Christ; Thou who redeemed us, and poured out His treasures into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We know Thou wilt be most glorified as we find our satisfaction in Thee alone. Let us daily delight in being available to Thee Lord Jesus, to be Who Thou art, Risen Lord, perfectly adequate in terms of who we are, twenty-four hours a day, one day at a time to the death or unto Thy glorious coming. We thank Thee ahead of time for the glorious day that we all stand together holy and hilarious because of Him who procured us that place in Thy Kingdom in His own blood. Amen.

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