

# THE RECONCILER

DECEMBER 2017

## **MAKE LOVE YOUR AIM & THE REFORMATION**

***"Faith Hope & Love abide these three but the greatest of these is love."***

The work of Jesus is all about connecting people with the love and provision of God our Loving Heavenly Father. The coming and death of Jesus opened up a superhighway of love between God and all men. It simply remains for all to jump aboard this highway by returning to Him and receiving His goodness, forgiveness and New Life. The act of returning is called 'REPENTANCE'. The act of receiving is called 'FAITH'.

To receive and transmit God's love is the goal of all spiritual living. *"Make love your aim,"* writes Paul. We were made to be loved and to love. The purpose of the work of Jesus is to connect us with that Living Vibrant Source of all love. Once connected we begin to experience the Love of God Our Heavenly Father for ourselves - His reconciling love, healing love, forgiving love, affirming love. It is literally poured into our hearts like spiritual liquid by the Holy Spirit once we approach God on the basis of sins paid for and guilt removed, because of the Blood of The Lamb. (Rom. 5.5)

### **The Reformation & The Distortion OF Christianity**

Last month Christians throughout the world celebrated and commemorated the 500th anniversary of The Reformation, which began with Luther's protest against some clearly unchristian practices in the Catholic Church. He thus opened the way to examine and challenge all Christian doctrines and standards against the plumb line of the scriptures. The Reformation was an inevitable consequence of the development of the printing press and the availability of the Bible to the masses. The technology of printing produced a revolution in Christianity that still resonates today. But the Reformation was not only a revival - it was also a debacle, a fiasco and a tragedy.

It swept through Europe like a hurricane leaving the continent deeply divided, deeply intolerant, and deeply anti-Semitic. The forms of

Christianity that emerged from The Reformation were compromised by reliance on state patronage, intolerant of other forms of Christianity and repressive of minorities.

Most of the reformers were poor examples of Christian living and no role models for their followers. Nearly all who attained to any degree of power were murderously vicious against their opponents. They were coarse, rude, fanatical, intolerant of dissenters, unloving, unforgiving and persecutors of those who opposed them.

Having discovered forgiveness through faith in the fact of Jesus' atoning work, they were like the man in Jesus' parable who was forgiven much and refused to pass that forgiveness on to others and thereby brought back on himself all his former miseries. They saw themselves more often as agents of the wrath of God than of His love, and they passed this miserable heritage on to many of their followers.

### **Love Was Not The Aim**

Though they were courageous champions of their views, they made the imposition of these views a higher priority than the command to live in love. The leaders of the Reformation definitely did not "make love their aim". Their aim was power. The triumph of their orthodoxy and the repression of views that they deemed unacceptable were more important to them than faithfully representing the love and the way of Jesus. They pulled at the "baby" of Christianity until the "baby" was nearly dead.

The European believer had a choice between being a supporter of state sponsored, coercive Catholicism or state sponsored coercive Protestantism. Actually he had NO choice - he could only be what the state told him he could be - a Catholic or a Protestant. What if he did not want to check either box? In that case he could risk execution, forfeit his property, emigrate to America, or live as an outcast in his own country. Is it any

wonder that today Europe looks like the graveyard of Christianity

Catholics were brainwashed to believe that there was no salvation outside their church and Protestants were brainwashed to believe there was no salvation inside the Catholic Church! The reformers took over governments, duchies and principalities. To protect themselves from persecution they repressed other views and in the process they became persecutors. The freedom they sought for themselves they withheld from others and became bound by spirits of repression, intolerance and bigotry that are the opposite of the freedom that Christ brings.

### **Beyond Ecumenism**

Of course those were different times and most have moved on. In light of the sad legacy of this history the Ecumenical Movement deserves to be acknowledged for its work in restoring respect between churches - a value that was lost in the hot arguments and divisions that came from the reformation days. This respect on the basis of love, acceptance and forgiveness is now a bedrock value in Christianity.

However, because we owe each other respect should not mean that we give up our responsibility to examine views, and challenge doctrines and practices in the light of the scriptures. While all churches deserve our respect we should not use ecumenical politeness as a cover to suppress the prophetic voice or to ignore the call to repent because the kingdom of God is at hand. Because the ecumenical movement has gone a long way to heal the hatred between denominations it should not be abused to become a reactionary movement that permits only dialog and represses honest examination of our positions and practices. Ecumenism should not be taken to mean that we must stay bound to the old unscriptural, denominational expressions that emerged from the Reformation.

Today no one is a Christian because it is forced on him by government coercion or tradition. A true Christian is a Christian by choice. The recovery of this basic reality is reshaping the fabric of Christianity. As Christians by choice we don't define ourselves by the obsolete labels of the post Reformation era as "Catholic" or "Protestant" but as "followers of

Jesus." We are not simply members of a particular religious tradition - we are Christians because we have deliberately received and accepted His forgiveness and love, accepted His care, chosen to live by His ways and to "make love our aim". We do not expect, or look for state support or sanction and are learning to operate without it.

As the spirit filled disciples of the last day our values don't come from the prevailing religion of our society but from heaven and the Heavenly man Jesus who revealed them to us.

### **Unnecessary Burdens**

It is unfair to burden the believers of this generation with the weight of tradition or bind them to the arguments of a bygone era. *"For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders."* (Mt. 23.4) *"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things."* (Acts 15.28)

Older Christian movements and older Christians should encourage the believers of this generation to build a Christianity unshackled from the traditions of rivalry that emerged after the Reformation but based on the standards of Jesus and the scriptures.

The Christianity of the last days will be without bigotry and the commandment that Jesus gave us to love one another will no longer be pushed to the side but will be front and center. We will be devoted to make love our aim. Our aim will not be the triumph of our denomination or church but to walk in the light of love and mercy which Jesus opened for us by His life, His atonement His example and the gift of His Spirit.

We are called to be focused on sharing the **apostolic message** rather than the confessions of faith of the Reformation. We will thus be devoted to humble service rather than a seeking to dominate one another. One day the believers will rule over the nations, but now is not the time for dominion over each other but in love to become servants of one another.

The future expressions of Christianity will be focused on the three great virtues mentioned by Paul: FAITH, HOPE and LOVE and especially on receiving and transmitting the LOVE He so generously supplies

## Israel On The Rise"

The city, from which the Torah of God and the Gospel Of Messiah went forth to the ends of the earth, has returned to the center of world attention. It has stirred the voices of merciless hatred coming out of mosques from Gaza to Paris. Ironically, we see a special nation developing and prospering as well as slowly turning toward God, while the world is trying to destroy what is happening and the 'clash of kingdoms' continues.

The paradox is, that the more Israel's enemies try to destroy her God-given destiny the more she continues to rise. The pale and bent feeble and frightened Jew of the Diaspora has now become a brave warrior. The fallow and barren fields that lay in the dust of generations are now well-watered crops and lush gardens. malarial swamps are now fertile fish farms. The once withered vines now bear luscious cluster of fruit. The fig tree blossom and the desert blooms with joy and praise of God's blessing. ...

...When we arrived in Israel in 1985 no one wanted to speak of Jesus because He represented persecution. Not long ago the Israel Museum hosted an art exhibition "Behold The Man" (displays by Jewish artists who had painted Jesus.) The increasingly open attitude towards Yeshua is encouraging... Our task is not to convert the Jews to another religion but to provoke to a jealousy that reflects Christ.. We, non-Jews, have been grafted into Israel, not Israel into us. We have become a part of the Commonwealth of Israel through Jesus Christ. (Ephesian 2.12) We are never to separate from Israel but to cling to her (Isa. 56.3)..

Be encouraged things are not falling apart -they are falling into place. Just remember what God has promised He will deliver.

- Excerpts Sharon Sanders "For Zion's Sake"  
3rd Quarter 2017, Christian Friends Of Israel

## We Cannot Earn God's Blessings

We have to realize that we cannot earn or win anything from God through our own efforts. We must either receive it as a gift or do without

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

it. The greatest spiritual blessing we receive is when we come to the knowledge that we are destitute. Until we get there, our Lord is powerless. He can do nothing for us as long as we think we are sufficient in and of ourselves. We must enter into His kingdom through the door of destitution. As long as we are 'rich', particularly in the area of pride and independence, God can do nothing for us. - Oswald Chambers

## Do Not Establish Your Own Designs.

"Do not set out to establish your own designs. I have already set in motion my divine will and purpose, and I would not have you interfere.. Yes you may do many things, but only that which I direct you to do can have my blessing." - Frances Roberts "Come Away MY Beloved

## Christ The Life Of Our Bodies

He (Christ) becomes the life of our bodies as He delivers us from the law of sin which is in our members .."*If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through the Spirit that dwells in you*" It does not say He shall resurrect us after we die: it says instead the He will give life to this body of death today. We need to know how Christ is made our redemption in relation to our mortal body. Formerly we relied on our natural life as the source of our body's strength but now we depend on the life of Christ for its supply. We obtain the resurrection life of Christ to maintain our body, thus strengthened to do God's will." Watchman Nee The Glory Of His Life p. 72

## The Womb Of Mary & The Heart Of The Believer

"The womb of Mary where, in a physical form, Jesus had His abode for a few months was not so blessed a place as the heart of the believer in which He has a home and makes it a heaven."

- Sadhu Sundar Singh

Dear Friends,

It is good once again to have the opportunity to wish you the highest blessings of **Christmas** and **Chanukah**. We pray for a wonderful year ahead filled with Lord's blessings and moments of love and opportunities to bless others. The greatest blessing of all is to know the true meaning of Jesus' coming to earth and the consequence of this for those who believe. Chanukah (the Festival that Jesus celebrated at this time of the year) is the Festival of Lights (John 10). The Light to enlighten this generation does not come from our universities or media but from the *person* JESUS, The Light Of The World, and this light also shining through His followers.

### Ministry In Europe

As we write this newsletter we have just returned home to Florida and are catching up with friends and reconnecting with the ministries we work with in the area.

We spent August, September, October and the beginning of November in **Ireland**, **U.K.** **Germany** and **Israel**. We had the privilege of ministering at over 50 meetings.

Thanks to the help of your prayers the Lord blessed them with His presence.

In Germany our time was hosted by **Ebenezer Ministries** whose German and Middle East offices are headed up by our friend of many years Johannes Barthels. Ebenezer was founded by our friend Gustav Scheller. Since Gustav went home to the Lord his work has continued to flourish and resulted in many thousands of Jewish immigrants continuing to make Aliya and return to their homeland. This year Ebenezer ministry is also in process of translating our book *The Four Great Covenants* into German and French.

# NEWS

When in Ireland we taught at two conferences on Israel and the Church (at **Loughbrickland Mission** and

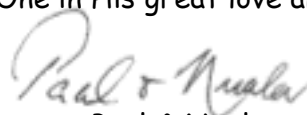
**Celbridge Christian Church**) and taught a three-day seminar on the end times at **Carryduff Elim Church**. Another event we were happy to be a part of was the **National Day Of Prayer and Repentance For Ireland**. We believe that this day will bear great fruit for the gospel in Ireland. The event was hosted by Lydia in conjunction with other ministries.

We especially thank the pastors of the churches and fellowships throughout Ireland who allowed us to minister. Being involved in Christian ministry in Europe today is a challenge. The nations of Europe need the apostolic gospel as never before, due to extreme secularism, political correctness, and the rise of anti-Semitism once again. These laborers for the gospel need our special prayers, support and encouragement.

Our **Tour to Israel** once again blessed those who joined us. In Nov. we traveled to the U.K. to participate in the 100th anniversary of the **Balfour Declaration** that opened the door for the re-establishment of Israel as a nation. While in London we had the opportunity to teach on the *The Four Great Covenants* on Revelation TV.

Our deepest thanks to all who help us with your encouragement, prayers and financial support. Without you this ministry could not function. Let us know if we can serve you in any way in 2018.

One in His great love and service,

  
Paul & Nuala

