

KOINONIA KONNECTION

A Publication of Sheffield Reformed Church

Spring 2001

Volume 2, Issue II

COME LET US WORSHIP

PART ONE

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. (Psa. 95:6)

INTRODUCTION

With incense rising in the dim lighted auditorium, a procession of purple robed men and women march down the aisles. Their movements are synchronized with soft instrumental music by Chopin. Those along the outer aisles stop at various stained glass windows. They kiss the panes that depict episodes from the ministry of Jesus. A representative lights three candles at the front. Each candle represents one of the persons of the Christians' God. Then a vial of incense is unsealed and offered to the three candles. Just as the puff of incense flares into the air, trumpets, trombones, and timbres make a pronounce blast. A beautiful young lady in ballet attire enters the sanctuary. She twirls down the center aisle. Her movements have been choreographed, hoping to give interpretative meaning to a vocal rendition of the hymn, Silent Night.

Could this be Christian worship? If so, how? If not, why not? If your corporate worship does not include any of these aspects, can you sight more than just, "It's not part of our tradition"?

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IS WORTH IT

The seriousness of Christian worship is unquestionable. We were created to worship and obey the only true God, and for this purpose He saves us. The importance of God having true worshipers is stated by Christ in John 4:23, Yet a time is coming and has now come when the

true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

Because of the importance of worship, various mistakes must be avoided. First, views on worship should receive much thought and study. However, this is one of the most neglected areas of cogent biblical thinking in the church. Unfortunately, too few have thought through to develop a biblical theology of worship. Many can provide a theology of end time expectations; a theology on the nature, work, and purpose of the Son of God; a theology of the Holy Spirit; a theology of worldviews; etc. But virtually nothing except traditional "heartless" models and contemporary "mindless" experimentations are presented for worship in the church today.

The scriptures speak clearly, warning against trivializing or tinkering with God's worship.

Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. (Deut. 4:2)

See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it. (Deut. 12:32)

Second, because of the importance of true worship, principles and teaching relative to the application of those principles should not be formulated by just anyone. Those equipped and gifted by God within the church should be responsible for worship's trust. Of course, these persons are accountable to God and to the people. Those who have been called and

affirmed should be entrusted and yet examined from the word and by the word; their teaching and practice of worship must not implement anthropocentric (man centered) imaginations or suggestions of evil forces (cf. WCF 21.1).

Next, discussions, as with any other biblical topic, should not tolerate wrong theology, especially as that usually found in traditional and contemporary approaches to worship. Proper worship is not man-centered but God-centered.

Then, because of the importance of biblical worship it should not be improperly planned, promoted, or led. The most problematic feature of this appears to be that we do not know why we do what we do.

Finally, humility, patience, and love should always be shown when sharing and discussing the great privilege and responsibility of corporate worship. There are areas where sincere people, committed to the same principle on corporate worship, will have disagreements.

Views on the Christian faith and practice should be unwaveringly structured by God's word. No less should be required concerning the subject of corporate Christian worship.

*Wonder Don't Wander With Worship
Every one has a mindset on worship. What you think about it and speak about it is your philosophy of worship, for better or worse.*

Here's a statement that I think serves well as a comprehensive description for Christian worship: Biblical worship is the corporate adoration and service offered to God as Father through the Savior, Christ Jesus the Lord by the Holy Spirit according to God's word.

In order for the statement above to have any significance there should be a theology of worship. In order for a theology of worship to exist, it must be systematized. In order for a

systemization to be developed, the statements of Scripture have to be put together as with the Trinity, the person of Christ, etc.

For the sake of time and space only the last part of the statement "according to God's word" will be developed.

Essentials, inadmissibles, and preferences for corporate worship should be derived by principles of scriptural teaching, from precept, good and necessary inference, or approved biblical example. Determining how the New Testament incorporated Old Testament worship as it viewed the two places for corporate worship in the Old Testament: Tabernacle/temple and meeting house/synagogue will be extremely helpful. The New Testament itself had to determine what was fulfilled and what was carried over, that is, what was continuous and what was discontinuous.

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. (Isaiah 29:1)

They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. (Mark 7:7,8)

Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:21-24)

-continued inside back cover

FAMILIES IN FOCUS

MARRIAGE – PURITY FOR ANOTHER



The Christian has as his goal, to be holy, for God is holy. God has given marriage to man as a means by which he might be kept pure, and so reflecting truly his Creator and Redeemer. God is faithful and pure; He is holy.

We have seen that God has instituted marriage in order that man might have a helper comparable, and complementary to him. God had said that it was not good for man to be alone, and God provided him with a wife.

God also has given marriage to man that he might raise a godly seed. Eve, in looking to God's promise of a seed to bring deliverance from sin, named her firstborn son Cain. She said, "I have acquired a man of the Lord." God's promise was sure but it wouldn't be this son who was its fulfillment as later she painfully realised.

The third reason that God instituted marriage is that man, a sexual creature, might be kept morally pure. To say it in the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "Marriage was ordained à for preventing of uncleanness." Paul says of the unmarried, "if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion." 1Corinthians 7:9.

Before we look at the safe guards that the marriage covenant provides, we need to deal with an objection that is often raised against this third reason for the institution of marriage. The objection goes like this: marriage cannot have been instituted to prevent sin in marriage because sin had not yet come into the world when God gave the marriage institution. This sounds quite plausible. However, though Adam and Eve were without sin when they were

wedded, we must not forget that in marriage God communicates something of Himself to man. Therefore the marriage covenant receives its definition from God. Without this defining of marriage, supposing that the human race was populated without sin, men could enter into a relationship, which would misrepresent God and so be sinful (miss the mark). If God had not defined marriage, he could conceivably enter into polygamous or even worse, homosexual relationships or bestiality. God would then be grossly misrepresented and that would be sin. By defining the marriage boundaries, God prevented man from falling into sin by ignorance. By giving Eve to Adam God was giving as a pattern, a specific woman to a specific man. This is still true of marriage today.

For Adam there was no temptation to look for sexual satisfaction in a woman that was not his wife before the fall for the simple fact that the only woman who existed was his wife. But ever since Adam began to populate the earth, there has been a flood of temptation to sexual impurity. Since the husband-wife relationship is the most basic of human relations, it is just here that we see the devastation that sin and alienation from God has brought. Unfaithfulness here is a prime expression of the sinner's rebellion against his faithful Creator. Sadly today, it has become the 'norm' in our culture, defended as necessary for finding ones personal satisfaction.

The first principle that we need to realise is that to come short of God's standard is sin. That standard is high, holy and perfect. "Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the

Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and His bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." Ephesians 5:22-33

By giving Eve to Adam, God was giving as a pattern, a specific woman to a specific man.

God has set the marriage institution within the protection of the covenant community constitution. The specific precept states, "You shall not commit adultery." It stands to reason then, that anything that would take away from this standard or would bring man short of it, needs to be resisted with the whole of our being. First there is the assault of the principalities and powers in high places which would deny God as the standard bearer. Then as the Heidelberg Catechism says, there are things that would entice men to this sin. (Lord's Day 41) These enticements come from the devil, the world and the flesh and they most often come through the 'windows of the mind', our eyes.

Since in previous articles we looked from a positive perspective at what marriage is, here we will use the question and answer of the Westminster Larger Catechism. "What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment? The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancing, stage plays; and all other provocation to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others. Though the mediums change over time, the enlightened mind recognises the moral application of these principles.

It is a glorious tribute to God's goodness that He gave man this defined institution of marriage that our relationships might be kept pure. Some receive grace to live a life of singleness to be wholly devoted to God. Those who have the privilege of marriage only have the grace they need in Christ. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Matthew 5:8

-Bill Kroesbergen



MISSION SPOTLIGHT

CORNERSTONE BIBLE INSTITUTE - PRISONERS SET FREE!

How important is it to reach out to prisoners? Are there Biblical reasons why the church should shun them? Should the government lock them up and throw away the key? Should not Canadian criminals have an opportunity to hear the great news that by grace they too can be saved?

What did the thief on the cross say to Jesus? More importantly, what did Jesus say to the thief? "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise". Yes, it is possible for criminals to repent and to be forgiven. Today there are thousands of incarcerated men and women who must be offered salvation in Christ alone through faith alone. However, the words of Romans 10 ring loud and clear, "how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ".

In 1996 the Lord laid it upon the hearts of a number of Reformed people in Canada to begin a formal Reformed gospel outreach to prisoners. Through much prayer and many small steps the Lord has provided CornerStone Bible Institute as a means to that end. We are grateful for men from various Reformed Churches who serve on the board of directors.

"See I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" Without the cornerstone, it was impossible to erect a building. Without Jesus Christ no one can be saved; no one can become a living stone.

CBI's stated purpose is "To facilitate the Church in the evangelization, teaching and discipling of prisoners". Our desire at CBI is to involve the church in calling prisoners to believe

on the Lord Jesus Christ the chief Cornerstone, and as living stones to be built up as a part of a spiritual house, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

Since 1996 CornerStone has been enrolling Canadian inmates in Bible correspondence courses and assisting churches with involvement in their local prisons.

Many inmates are enrolled in our multi-level Bible correspondence curriculum. This type of discipleship ministry is vitally important. Jesus gave the commission to "make disciples of all nations". But Jesus goes on to further explain what disciple-making is; "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". The desire of CBI is to see imprisoned men and women turn to God in repentance and faith, and to be educated regarding all that Jesus commanded us His Word.

Canadian inmates are referred to study with CBI by their chaplains, by current CBI students and by promotional material and books which CBI places in prisons. Prison Fellowship volunteers across Canada are also involved in enrolling inmates with CBI since PF does not offer their own Bible correspondence courses.

Due to the many prisoners who are enrolling for CBI studies, CBI depends heavily on Reformed Churches to assist with this evangelistic and teaching ministry. Since it is our desire to be church-based, local churches establish their own prison ministry via CBI. Church members sign up to be Volunteer Instructors, are approved by their elders and are trained by CBI to grade course material for our students. Already CBI has students from coast to coast and has trained Instructors in several Canadian provinces.

Over and over CBI Instructors are finding this ministry to be a great blessing to them as they evangelize and pray for lost souls. At times they also find it to be a challenge as they are forced to dig into the Word of God because of questionable views and interpretations given by their student. Mrs. Monica Pot is a Volunteer Instructor with CBI. She writes:

I first considered becoming a CBI instructor after a presentation by the Director of CBI at our local church. In the short time that I have been an instructor, I have found it to be a very encouraging experience. It is exciting to be involved in sharing the good news of salvation with those who have not heard it before, or who want to learn more. It is amazing how God can work in the lives of desperate people and change their hearts.

At the same time it is an upbuilding experience that involves personal study of the Scriptures, and reaffirms the Reformed faith. One inmate I correspond with believes that man is not totally depraved, and it has been enriching for myself to delve into Scripture and explain to him what the Bible teaches about this.

One of CBI's goals for 2001 and beyond is to begin a reintegration program for inmates who have been studying with CBI. The goal is, that upon their release from prison, this church-based program would enable them, by God's grace, to integrate well into society and church. Another goal for this year is to see a greater portion of the Reformed community involved in this vital ministry to Canada's prisoners.

Please remember this work in your prayers. Consider how through your church you might play a role in God's gracious work of setting prisoners free. Pray that, by God's grace they would grow in knowledge and wisdom regarding our all glorious God; that this knowledge will move them to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

Join us in proclaiming to the inmate population of Canada, "Come and see what God has done; how awesome his works in man's behalf!" (Psalm 66:5). -Mr. Rudy de Vries

Rudy deVries is the National Director of the Canadian Bible Institute. To contact CBI phone (519)448-1180, fax (519)448-1872 or Email cbirdv@iname.com.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The message of the cross is the heart of the Christian gospel and the Bible constantly underlines its centrality, especially in the New Testament. However, "the cross" is not only spoken of as the symbol of God's love, but also as a principle of Christian experience. To belong to Jesus Christ means to take up the cross personally to live for him rather than for ourselves.

*The Shadow of the Cross
(Studies in Self-Denial)
Walter J. Chantry
The Banner of Truth Trust*

In this book, Chantry seeks to restore this often neglected teaching to its central place by expounding the practical necessity of bearing the cross and living under the joy of its shadow. He then applies this teaching to such areas as marriage, Christian liberty and work of ministry. This short book is delightful reading and is full of instruction regarding the relationship between the cross of Christ and that which his follower is to bear.

-Cope Jonkman

COME LET US WORSHIP

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.
(John 4:21-24)

WHY SCRIPTURE IS SUFFICIENT

You and I may struggle with scripture's teaching on any subject, but we shouldn't doubt that scripture is to be our guide instead of tradition, experimentation, or culture. Just how sufficient is scripture? In 2 Timothy 3:16,17 the Apostle Paul answers this question concisely and clearly. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Jesus, himself, upbraided the Pharisees for following the traditions of men rather than trusting in the sufficiency of God's Word.

You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother, and anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that. (Mark 7:8-13)

PREDATORS LIE AT THE DOOR

Our thinking about worship must be formulated "according to God's word" because of the depravity of man (Acts 20:29,30; 1 Tim. 4:16; Tit. 2; Heb. 13:9) and the doctrines and schemes of demons (1 Tim. 4:1).

There's in each one of us because of indwelling sin the resistance to worship God in the way He delights. A constant reminder should be written in stone and hung around our necks saying, "I have no authority to maintain any view or practice toward corporate worship which is not shaped thoroughly by the word of God."

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Corporate worship would be an outcome of the statements of Scripture having been put together - from a theology of worship. It is not my desire to prescribe a "fixed" order of worship, when I am not certain that the Bible gives us an exact order of worship. I think, however, a theology of worship that adheres to a covenantal and corporate principle (what in my opinion could be called a "Corporate Worship View") provides a prudent structure for ordering corporate worship.

Corporate worship is the primary expression of true biblical worship. God commanded it from the beginning for his people whom he called unto himself.

On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat - that is all you may do. (Exodus 12:16)

Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. (Leviticus 23:2; see 23:3-27,35ff; also see Numbers 28:18, 25f.; 29:1,7,12)

STICKING WITH IT

The Church today will be troubled and confused over worship until she returns and remains steadfast with the principles that God laid down in His Word. Because those principles are laid down in the Old Testament only

heightens not diminishes our accountability before the Lord. If we pled, "We're New Testament Christians and those principles don't apply" we'll only continue in the muddle of our making and forever be held by the imaginations of men or the suggestions of Satan.

You must not worship the LORD your God in their way. But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you. You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you. But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an in-

heritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name - there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD. And there rejoice before the LORD your God, you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns, who have no allotment or inheritance of their own. Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. Offer them only at the place the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you. (Deuteronomy 12:4-14)... See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32; see also Psalm 22:22ff; 40:9; 116:13f; 122:1ff)

-Pastor Perry G. Brackin

Elders:	Pastor Perry Brackin RR#2 Branchton, ON N0B 1L0 (519) 624-4423 pbrackin@execulink.com	Mr Cope Jonkman RR#1 Paris, ON N3L 3E1 (519) 448-1068 cjonkman@bestnet.org	Mr Bill Kroesbergen RR#1 Lynden, ON L0R 1T0 (519) 647-2659 bkkroes@execulink.com
Deacons:	Mr Gary Everts RR#2 Branchton, ON N0B 1L0 (519) 623-9674 gete9@aol.com	Mr Evert Winkels 52 Selkirk Street Cambridge, ON N1S 1Z3 (519) 622-5745 ewinkels@sgci.com	

SHEFFIELD REFORMED CHURCH

For Christ's Crown and Covenant

*Services: Sundays at 11:15 am and 6:00 pm
(meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Sheffield)*

*P.O. Box 12-4
Sheffield, ON
L0R 1Z0*

(519) 624-5920

web site - <http://www.bestnet.org/~cjonkman/index.htm>