

KOINONIA KONNECTION

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THE TWO FACES OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Imagine, if you will, a disagreement within the Session of a local church. The issue: so-called "special music." The problem: the members of the Session simply cannot agree on the propriety of including "special music" in Sunday worship. The majority of the Session feels that the inclusion of special music (in the form of solos, instrumental performances, etc.) is not appropriate for a congregation, biblically speaking. A minority voice believes that the addition of such an element would be just fine. In fact, according to this latter group, special music is not only biblically acceptable, but it's the direction the congregation wants to go. "Who are we," say these, "to dictate to the congregation what their worship should look like? Isn't that a matter for all God's people to decide? Doesn't the Apostle Peter tell us not to be 'lords' over God's heritage?" (see I Peter 5:3)

And so a heated discussion ensues. Some, particularly the younger members of the Session, find the minority argument persuasive. After all, being an Elder doesn't mean being a tyrant. While personally one may not agree with the presence of special music in worship, who has the right to force his views on someone else? In the end, when the vote is cast, special music is voted in. Not because most of the men believe it to be a legitimate part of worship, but because most of them have a very weak and faulty view of leadership.

OUR CULTURE AND "AUTHORITY"

By our nature we are haters of authority, and so the tendency to cast aside the "shackles" of rule has always been a temptation for fallen man.

But rarely in history has there been such an open demonstration of that hatred as there is in our own terrible times. The only legitimate authority is the all-mighty, all-knowing Individual, the self-serving, pleasure-pursuing individual. Any force or body which would infringe upon our "right" to do whatsoever we please is anathematized on a societal level. All the guns of media power, cultural pressure, and individual ferocity are turned against any who dare to utter the word "don't" or "can't." Let's face it, even concerning governmental power the same malaise exists. After all, it's not like we obey the government due to any loyalty or admiration on our part. We obey because we fear. We fear fines, jail time, and the gun. If governmental power were to collapse, the only thing most of us would miss would be the services they provide: our health care, our snow-plowed roads, our police security, our mail... Aside from what we would lose out on as far as benefits are concerned, I doubt many would shed a tear if everything fell apart. Why? Because we don't like government. We don't like rules. We don't want somebody else's standards pressed upon us under threat of punishment.

Alas, things aren't much better in the Church. How poignant the Apostle's words for our times when he says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." (II Tim. 4:3) In other words, the only kind of authority we're willing to put up with is the kind of authority who will do what we want him to do.

Oh certainly, we talk a big talk when it comes

to Church authority. We sadly shake our heads at the disrespect young people have for their elders these days. We "amen" louder than anyone when the Pastor preaches on biblical submission, the nature of the Eldership, or the role of the Ministry. But so often, what happens when the rubber meets the road in this very issue for our own lives? What happens when we find ourselves on the negative side of that authority toward which we were once so supportive? What happens when the Elders come to visit us because of some spiritual weakness on our part, or when as an Elder we're outvoted in a Session meeting, or when the Consistory makes a decision for the Church that we don't like? We generally do what anyone out in the world would do. We whine. We complain. We accuse. We leave. We depart to find someone who will "tickle our ears," and upon whom we can shower all manner of praise and respect...that is, until he does something we don't like. Then, we start the charade all over again.

Sadly, very often all our pious, Reformed talk about authority and submission comes to nothing in the hour of trial (the only hour, by the way, which really counts in the measure of our character...or our orthodoxy). And this accusation could be launched not only against the membership of Christ's church, but against the very leadership, as our opening paragraph sought to illustrate.

OUR NATURE AND "AUTHORITY"

Why would the Holy Spirit have uttered the words he did in I Peter 5:3, when he told Elders and Pastors that they are not to be "lords over God's heritage?" Perhaps the first step is to understand what, precisely, the text means. We cannot assert that the Spirit forbids men from making authoritative decisions or proclamations in his Church. Such an interpretation would fly in the face of passages such as Acts 15, which records the Jerusalem Council, together with the ordinances which that body set down for the churches concerning the

inclusion of the Gentiles. Or consider, likewise, Paul's words to Titus when he commanded that young man to "rebuke with all authority." Just as a quick note, the Apostle continues in his words to Titus with the words, "Let no man despise thee." The term "despise" doesn't refer to dislike, as though Paul were telling Titus to be sure nobody disliked him. The word refers to "taking someone lightly." This is important for our subject at hand, because it forbids Ministers and Elders from allowing the people of God to disregard or make a joke of the authority of their offices.

Our beloved Matthew Henry grants us an explanation as precise as it is clear when he says that "lording it over" involves "tyrannizing over them by compulsion and coercive force, or imposing unscriptural and human inventions upon them instead of necessary duty." Tyrannizing may involve harsh threats, a stern and unloving countenance, an improper use of Church discipline, or other such means. The latter application is more obvious, and involves any attempt on the part of Ministers or Elders to implement in their congregations that which is opposed to or outside the commandments of the written Word.

There are just as many who would unduly inflate Church authority as would deflate it. These, for whatever reason, be it lust for power, ignorance, or personal vendetta, take upon themselves a lordly manner, believing the congregations of Christ to be a commodity for their own use. Such have forgotten the words of our Lord, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." (Luke 22:26) But such words are entirely against our nature. Without the grace of the Holy Spirit, power unfailingly corrupts. We become folk who must always have control, who constantly have to be in the driver's seat. We've all known people like that. We've all been people

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FAMILIES IN FOCUS

THE EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN - PART 3



The main theme of our previous article could be stated like this: the goal of our children's education is that they would fear the Lord. I also attempted to show that God places the responsibility of this endeavor squarely on the shoulders of the fathers. Lastly I sought to show that every academic discipline is married to the goal of teaching our children the fear of the Lord.

In this article I would like to discuss 'the mechanics' of teaching. What I am referring to is the method taken to educate our children. To put it in yet another way: does this mean that every Christian family ought to homeschool, or are Christian schools permissible and/or preferable, or even the public system?

Let me restate the biblical and foundational premise of the education of our children. The responsibility for the education of our children lies firmly in the hands of fathers. Fathers will give an account to God for how they have educated their children. This does not mean that every father must stay at home and administer the writing exercises, math drills, science experiments and history lessons. But this responsibility does mean that the father is involved in educating his children. His involvement includes curriculum choices, teaching and administration methods, and deciding who will directly teach his children. The most important element of the father's involvement, however, lies in monitoring the results or the application process of the education. It is he who will seek fruit on the labors of education for he will answer to God who gave him those children. This means that there will be a continuous interaction with the children and their education, not just some final analysis at the end.

My purpose in discussing these three methods of schooling is not to come down decidedly on

one side or another. Certainly, amongst Christians, there are those who would strongly advocate a particular method and even bind the consciences of others. Let me say up front that the scriptures give foundational principles and wise counsel concerning the upbringing of our children, to which we must avail ourselves. However, this does not mean that education must be done by either home schooling or by a Christian educational institution.

Let us first examine the use of the public school system for those who call themselves Christians desiring to honor Christ.

At the outset I need to make clear that I will be speaking largely in generalizations. In our North American culture today, the philosophy of education that shapes the public school system's education program and curriculum, is shaped by post modern thinking, or non-thinking as the case may be. In a culture that has jettisoned the God of all truth, North Americans have lost their anchor and are hopelessly adrift in relativism and find themselves unable to affirm anything as truth. That which is affirmed as truth at one time is subsequently denied and replaced by some other contradictory position. This is the thinking that lies behind the state sanctioned schooling system. The thought and claims of God have been removed from the schools. No true Christian desires this thinking and its implications for their children.

Perhaps you think that I am being extreme and harsh, but remember that I am speaking of generalizations. Every parent will need to assess their own situation and that the schools they could avail themselves of. You can hear in the news, or by talking to the people involved, the public opposition to Christianity's claim of exclusivity, the existence of God, the

reality of the Genesis account of creation and the invocation of 'the Lord's Prayer'. Both the curriculum taught and the practice of the teaching staff and the student body, demonstrate the rejection of biblical ethics. It is possible that there are schools that have a godly principal or have godly teachers. There is, through the grace of God, still salt and light, in the world but the world is at enmity with God.

Obviously it would be great sin for us to abandon our children to this system of education. God is greatly angered when we sacrifice our children to the gods of this world (see Ezekiel 16:20-23). But this still begs the question of whether it is ever possible to make use of the public school system to educate our children. I think that there is a limited use of the public system for the Christian, provided that certain parameters are adhered to.

During the early years of the child's life, when they are most impressionable, and when they are learning foundational truths, this is the time when it is most important that they are not influenced by an agnostic educational system. This is the time when they need to have their minds and hearts filled with God-glorifying truth. This is the time when the parent needs to guard the child from negative influences of both the educational system and of the child's peer group. The godly parent wants to see their child established in God's truth in knowledge, affection and commitment. It is of paramount importance that the parent be very involved in the young child's education. This means time and interaction as well as direction.

When the child becomes more mature, demonstrating a good grasp of the difference between the commitments of the world and the call of the Christian life, together with a credible commitment to Jesus Christ, together with obedience to and love for the word of God, then it is possible that there would be some benefits of making use of the public system.

In the kindness and grace of God, there is much of the light of general revelation, still known in our culture. There are many academic disciplines that are saturated with demonstrable truths. Mathematics, biology, chemistry, history, and even the arts and languages all have truths that the Christian embraces just as well as the non-Christian. This is where the Christian student can learn academic truths in a secular setting. The great danger lies in the agnostic educational system using these academic truths to promote an ungodly worldview. Here is where the grace of God is essential for the Christian to maintain a faithful Christian worldview. Here is where maturity and understanding together with a godly focus is necessary to withstand the pressures to conform to the world's way of thinking. The study of rock formations is science, but the theorization that suggests that the world is billions of years old, based on present observations, is a faith commitment to an ungodly world-view.

When the public school system is being used to educate our children, it is essential that the parents, and particularly the fathers, be intimately involved in the life and faith of the child. They need to monitor the child's thinking concerning what he or she is learning at school; they need to know what their children believe in their hearts. There is a need to discuss how that which is learned at school is or is not consistent with the teachings of scripture. Parents need to discern what effects the teachings of the public system are having on their child's life and thought patterns. And parents need to demonstrate faithfulness to God and love for the child, using, if necessary, drastic measures such as pulling them out of that system, should it turn them away from God. May God give us as parents, great wisdom when we have to send our children into environments that are antagonistic to Jesus Christ and His Lordship. May we love our children accordingly.

To be continued

-by Bill Kroesbergen

YOUTH'S CORNER

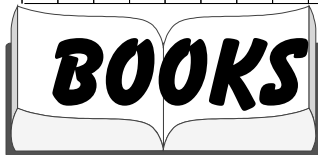
1 PETER 1:21,22

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Christophobia
by Tristan Emmanuel

*This book was written in regards to the recent hate crime legis-
lation (Bill 250-C) which the Canadian government recently tried to pass. The author shows the real
reason behind this legislation, namely, that it was the continuation of the attempt to silence
Christians from speaking out against sins that are becoming more and more norm in our society.
The reader is reminded that "tolerance" in regards to evil is not Scriptural while "discrimination" is
not anti-Scriptural and immoral. The religious liberty of Christians is being threatened. The author
first points out the reason why Christian activism is an act of love and calls them to action. Secondly,
he teaches Christians that they need to stop being defensive in debates over these issues and that
there is no need to begin discussion with disclaimers stating that Christians do not hate the gay
community. This goes without saying-we are not reacting against persons, but sins. He then reveals
the real reason behind hate crime legislation by showing that there was no need for special
legislation to protect so-called "gay rights". Present legislation already does that, and that the
percentage of crimes that involve hate against specific groups is very minimal (not as extensive as
it is made out to be). The real reason is to quieten the Christian community from pointing out and
confronting sin. The author then shows how this law (Bill 250-C) is a bad law and that the only
people it does not protect are Christians. Lastly, he shows that there is no quick fix for the problem
being discussed. The solution does not lie in Ottawa or Washington, but only by way of the Gospel
of Jesus Christ changing hearts and lives. Ultimately, the author calls all Christians to action, in
speaking out against the sins of our day, but to do so in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel
and evangelism.*

*This book is very well written, easy to read, and will certainly inform and encourage the reader. It can
be purchased from the author. The price is approximately \$20.00. -Cope Jonkman*



MISSION SPOTLIGHT

THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL IN ISRAEL

If their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the gentiles, how much more their fullness!... For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Romans 11:12,15

THE PAST

The State of Israel's 50th anniversary is a testimony to God's faithfulness, who has kept his covenant not to "cast away the descendants of Jacob and David" (Jeremiah 33:25-26). Since the rebirth of the nation in 1948, thousands of Jews in Israel and around the world have come into the New Covenant established by their Messiah, the Lord Jesus (Isaiah 29:22-24).

A vibrant, thriving Israeli church is now in its second generation. However, the growth of the church in Israel has not been without problems. Congregations in the land are often isolated, lacking in mature spiritual leadership. Numerical advances have not always been matched by spiritual growth; a strategy is needed to help nurture the growing Jewish Christian community in Israel beyond the year 2000. Christian Witness to Israel (CWI) has such a strategy and, God permitting, is determined to work for its implementation.

At the heart of God's covenants with Israel is his self-giving commitment to them in grace apart from any merit of their own (Ezekiel 26:32). As his people, the church must reflect something of this covenant faithfulness (Matthew 5:48). CWI has pledged itself to the long-term welfare of the Body of Messiah in Israel. CWI intends to labor so that the next generation will be able to witness with a confidence and an authority born out of a deep acquaintance with the Scriptures (Colossians 2:2). Their greatest need is, indeed, to understand the Bible better and to be able to

apply its message to every area of life (Psalm 1). However, there is a great dearth of solid Christian literature, no commentary on the whole Bible, few books on essential doctrines and literally nothing in terms of historic Christian biography.

CWI's work in Israel over the last 25 years hardly scratched the surface of opportunities available. There is a need to ensure that the new generation of believers in Israel is strong, vigorously biblical and evangelistically vibrant, as was the early church in Jerusalem whose wisdom and spirit could not be resisted. To those ends, CWI remains committed to a sensitive, bold, grass roots evangelism conducted by local believers in the country. The Mission praises God for the growing number of Israelis who have put their trust in Messiah Jesus and who now serve him and their people in the fellowship of local congregations. But CWI is greatly concerned over the growth of the Messianic Movement and its divisive influence in the church.

CWI has been working in Israel since 1925. From its very inception the Society was committed to a well-rounded and biblically orientated outreach to the Jewish people that includes evangelism, the encouragement of local congregations, biblical and theological education, and an active practical concern for people. CWI's work is doctrinally based, biblically informed and soundly committed to the historic Reformed confessions of the church.

CWI was active in the physical salvation of many Jewish children during the Nazi occupation of Europe. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, the Mission undertook to provide medical services to a fledgling State in which there was great need. All along, staff

spoke up for the gospel and worked in closely with the local congregation in Haifa, where the work was originally based. Dr. James Churcher, long time leader of the work in Israel, was so highly valued by the city in which he lived that he was granted the keys of the city.

In the past, CWI managed a Christian bookshop in Haifa, which has now been handed over to a local congregation. The Mission also spearheads the support of a number of schools for retarded children. This is done through the co-ordination of work groups that come from various parts of the world to help these needy children and by the purchase of selected equipment for the schools. That important task has also been handed over to a local congregation. CWI believes that it should support the growth of churches, not supplant them. That assumption lies at the heart of the organization's theology of mission.

THE PRESENT

The CWI offices are in Rishon LeTzion, close to the center of the country. Its work is conducted and led by a wholly indigenous body of believers who are active in their local churches. One of these churches works in close association with the Mission in a partnership role. Its staff shares the CWI office and some of its equipment, and the Mission shares the church's.

The backbone of CWI's work in Israel, executed under HaGefen Publishing, is the production of solid spiritual literature geared to help equip the Israeli church for its important task of glorifying God by the lives of the believers and by their active evangelization of their own people. Due to high production costs and the impossibility of importing books in Hebrew, all productions are heavily subsidized. Among these are: *The Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges, *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer, *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis, *Discovering God's Will* by Sinclair Ferguson and various evangelistic books, tracts

and booklets. Other publications include a modern Hebrew hymnbook, the only full Sabbath School curriculum in Hebrew, an illustrated Children's Story Bible and two quarterly magazines. An important project now under way is a limited vocabulary, modern Hebrew version of the complete Bible for children with contemporary Israeli illustrations. The writing of a Bible commentary in Hebrew is also envisaged.

CWI is also engaged in evangelism, in promoting unity among local Jewish believers and in providing the churches with opportunities for co-operation in evangelism. The Mission's staff initiated the founding of Mishkan, the quarterly International Forum on Jewish Evangelism; Keren Tkuma, the national social aid fund; the National Intercongregational Fellowship, and the National Evangelistic Committee. We also played an active part in the founding of the Theological Education by Extension program in Israel and are active in various aspects of the local and national life of the congregations in the country. Its offices and some of its staff initiated the founding of and then, for an extended time, served the Messianic Action Committee which led the struggle against proposed legislation to restrict freedom of religion in Israel.

THE FUTURE

The work in Israel is now faced with new and exciting opportunities. The children's Bible should be completed within the next few years and many other valuable books await publication. CWI would also like to take a more active role in evangelism, accelerate the production of its magazines, produce a magazine for the younger age group and respond to repeated requests for help in various areas of need and opportunity around the country.

To find out more about Baruch Moaz, the author of this article, see http://www.graceandtruthbulletin.org/english/baruch_maoz.htm. To read the complete article from which this discussion was excerpted please visit <http://wwwFOUNDERS.org/FJ38/article4.html>.

**THE TWO FACES OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP
(CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER)**

like that. It's our nature. Thus, to occupy the position of Elder or Minister is dangerous. Offices such as these provide ample opportunity and means for our enemy to create a tyrant rather than a servant.

THE SAVIOR AND "AUTHORITY"

The Christian leader is a man with two faces. On the one hand, he wields incredible spiritual authority in the Name of his Divine Savior (Matthew 16:19). Ministers and Elders of God have full mandate and right to confront Kings, to humble Emperors, and shame Presidents. When they speak the Word of God, the people of God are bound to submit themselves to their words with utmost willingness and respect. Yet, these same men have been commissioned with a kind of leadership different from anything this power-hungry world is familiar with. It is a servant leadership, a leadership which is summoned to altogether discount self in favor of the good and blessedness of the flock. It is a leadership which has as its pattern the Selfless Christ, who was not ashamed as Lord of

Heaven and Earth to wash the filthy feet of His disciples.

It is not without import that in presenting the proper model of leadership to Church authority, Peter should command Elders and Ministers to be "examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). The term which our English version translates as "examples" may also be translated "type" or "impression." A type is a kind of copy, or replica. The rulers of the Church are to be replicas, reflections of the Person and character of their Master Jesus Christ. Thus, their leadership is a selfless leadership. It's a compassionate leadership. It's a servant leadership. Yet, it's an authoritative leadership, a binding leadership. It's a leadership that must needs be followed.

In the Person of Jesus Christ, slavery and authority go hand in hand. Such is likewise the case with those Christ has put in authority over His people. They are slaves for the peoples' eternal good and spiritual comfort...but slaves with an authority which is to be respected.

-by Pastor Ludt

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For Christ's Crown and Covenant

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