

Events and Opportunities: 2017

The KMUSA Newsletter serves as a forum to inform, update and educate as best we can by providing information and articles on a quarterly basis.

- QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS** January | April | July | October
- KMUSA CONFERENCE CALLS** January 12th | May 11th
August 10th | November 9th
Call Number: (712) 770-4010
Access Code: 585656 - 10amPST
- NATIONAL CONFERENCE** April 26-28, Victorville, CA
- REGIONAL CONFERENCES** West Regional (October 19-20)
East Regional (October 26-27)
- KMUSA MEN'S ADVANCE** July 17-20, Northport, WA

It is our aim to motivate and mobilize the church through these and other events and opportunities. Make note, get involved and spread the word!



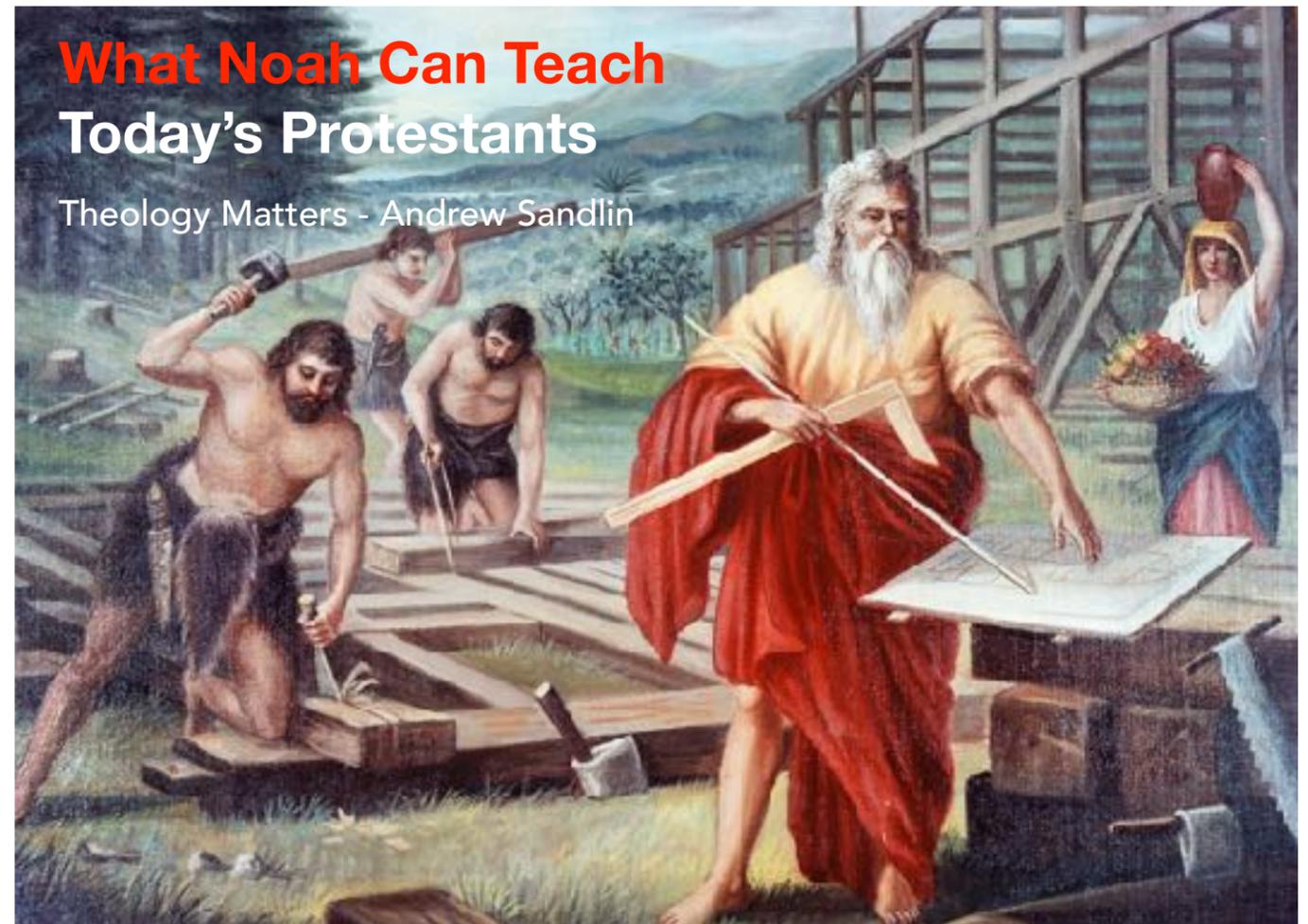
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What Noah Can Teach Today's Protestants

Theology Matters - Andrew Sandlin

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KMUSA DISTINCTIVE
The Kingdom of God

FAITH AND CULTURE
The Sovereignty of God, Disruption and Unintended Consequences

SPIRITUAL MATURITY
Transformation of the Mind

CHURCH MINISTRY
Secret Shopper Worshiper

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
The Power of Clear and Consistent Communication



**KMUSA
NEWSLETTER**





Health | Growth | Fruitfulness



The KMUSA National Conference will take place April 26-28 at the Gate Church of the High Desert in Victorville, California. We want to invite all leaders in the KMUSA family to attend! This year's theme is:

**“Reformation 2017:
Courageous Acts for Foundational Change”**

Based on the acts of the Reformers and the great courage it took for them to provoke foundational change, we believe a new reformation is needed in our time. It is our desire and hope that we can become the change agents in our culture. It begins with the people of God rising up to a new level of faith and building out God's Kingdom in tangible ways.

The 2017 KMUSA Conference intends to focus on ways for this change to occur. We will emphasize the following:

Healthy Fellowships | Growing Communities | Fruitful Ministry



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NEWS AND UPDATES

**Dwight Cunkle of New Covenant Church,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in the News**

Whiz Kids is Music to His Ears
by Carla Hinton, The Oklahoman News

The Rev. Dwight Cunkle gets a lot of mileage out of his guitar these days. Cunkle uses the instrument during his job as an elementary school music teacher and then, once a week, he can be found strumming a song during Whiz Kids sessions at a local church.

The Oklahoma City minister will be one of the longtime volunteers who will be honored at Whiz Kids' annual Seeds of Hope Volunteer Appreciation and Charity Event set for 6 p.m. Monday at the Cox Convention Center.

Whiz Kids, a ministry of the nonprofit City Care, connects inner-city churches and suburban churches to offer free tutoring and mentoring to children in first through sixth grades at Oklahoma City-area schools and in Tulsa. The inner-city church typically provides a location for the one-on-one tutoring, and volunteers from both churches provide the lessons.

Monday's event theme is "Honoring Our Special Heroes." More than 1,300 volunteers and many community, church and school partners will be honored for their efforts to make a difference in the lives of more than 850 elementary students.

Besides Cunkle and other volunteer tutors, Whiz Kids also will honor City Care founder Larry Bross, who retires June 1. Bross and his wife, Masie, started Whiz Kids in 1995.

Cunkle said 21 years ago, he started the Whiz Kids program at New Covenant Church, where he is senior pastor. The church moved to another location 18 month ago but the leaders of Church of the Pentecost, allow the Whiz Kids sessions to continue there.

Cunkle said Church of the Pentecost, 3106 N Utah, is directly behind Kaiser Elementary School so the location has worked well for the students who participate in Whiz Kids.

Jennie Penner and Evalyn Brawley, who serve as the site's co-coordinators, said the volunteers serving the 34 Kaiser students come from several metro-area churches including Covenant Life Church, Chapel Hill United Methodist, Crossings Community Church, Life Church Northwest Oklahoma City, Our Lord's Lutheran Church, United Methodist Church of the Servant, The Christ Experience and St. Mark's United Methodist Church.

Cunkle said he typically helps with the Bible Club portion of the Whiz Kids' sessions. On a recent afternoon, he played guitar as he and the students sang songs with biblical messages.

Once the singing was over, Cunkle joined his Whiz Kids student Joseph to work on a reading handout.

He said he has been committed to the Whiz Kids program for many years because education always has been important in his family. He is a music teacher at Horace Mann Elementary, his parents were teachers and his son is a teacher.

Cunkle said through Whiz Kids, students become more proficient readers, but they also learn more about God's Word and are connected to Christians who care about them and the community-at-large.

"If the kids can't read, not only are they probably not going to succeed in school but they won't be able to read God's Word. How will they learn about God's Word if they can't read and if there aren't examples of Christ's love for them?" he said.

"With Whiz Kids, they are reading the lives of the tutors at the same time the tutors are helping them learn to read. All of that works together to increase Bible literacy for them."



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Successful Leadership: The Power of Clear and Consistent Communication

by Randall Howard



Many times, the church is seen as such a relational entity that we forget it is an institution that requires systems and structures to guide and chart progress as well as it needs strong leadership to steer the organization to its desired destination.

If this is not recognized, it is possible that the mission of the church will fail and frustration sets in.

It is certainly clear in Scripture that the church is primarily a relational entity. There is no debate about that. But it is also clear that God designed specific ways for this relational priority to be directed and managed. From the Tabernacle to the Temple to the New Testament Church, God communicated through Moses, the priests and the Apostle Paul how He wanted to connect to His people and how He wanted His people to connect with Him and one another.

The pattern throughout the Bible was that God would start a movement by calling upon a *man* to which He gave a *message* that emerged into a *ministry*. The ministry would draw the *masses* and gain *momentum* thus becoming a *movement*. Every movement (such as the church movement) then requires *management* – the masterful maneuvering of manpower, money and materials to keep the movement on the mainstay of the God-given mandate. Good and godly management also provides the means, the methods and models for the implementation of strategies for the forward motion required to fulfill God's mandate. Proper management will keep the movement from becoming a memorial (a place of death with only memories), a monument (a place erected to honor something or someone in the past), or a museum (a place that holds the remains of the past with no relevance for the present).

With all of this in mind, let me say that there are six basic functions of management: envisioning, motivating, strategizing, organizing, staffing, facilitating and communicating. And while I will not be able to detail each of these in a short newsletter article, I would like to touch on the one things that ties all of these together and a key to great leadership: clear communication!

When it comes to communication in any organization and especially in the church, a leader needs to focus on three elements: purpose, people and teamwork.

What is the **purpose** of the church and what is the specific mission we are called to fulfill? That should be clear from Scripture, but often churches deviate from the purpose due to cultural pressures, internal circumstances and difficult situations. Deviation is also due to a leaders failure to communicate clearly or consistently. Throughout my time in ministry as well as in business many years ago, I have heard comments like, "I have no idea what we are doing" or "what are we trying to accomplish". A leader or leaders need to make clear the purpose and the mission so that there is no confusion. Never assume everyone is clear! Entertain feedback asking people to re-communicate back to you what they understand. This will help you to see how successful you are as a communicator. Make clear the vision, mission and objectives and stay consistent over time.

The second focal point is **people**. Basically we are in the people business. Our call is to disciple, develop and direct people toward their particular destiny. Good communication is essential for these things to happen. We need to always be preparing people for life and leadership. In the church, particularly, people need to know the value of the church as a vehicle to accomplish God's Kingdom mandate on earth. It is about conveying this value to the point that people are impassioned with the mandate and the mission.

A good leader has the responsibility to prepare people for what is ahead. Clear communication with people aims to give people tools to deal with uncertain situations. Even though the purpose and mandate doesn't change, a specific mission and/or methodologies may. In the church, we need to be discipling and developing people with the confidence they need to be proactive and progressive with expanding responsibilities and ever-increasing results. Clear and consistent communication will go far to achieve these things in the lives of the people.

Teamwork is crucial and the third focal point of this article. As an athlete playing team sports as well as a lifetime of service and leadership, I have come to understand the value in working together for a common cause. A team of committed members clearly on the same page and passionate about a cause can accomplish just about anything they set their minds to. Teamwork requires common cause relationships, interpersonal transparency, and mission specific synergy. It all begins, however, with a leaders clarion call to a cause that inspires and mobilizes. Then that leader needs to allow others the opportunity to add value to the mission feeling that they have a life investment to make. Communication on a personal level that leads to corporate unity is critical to the success of the mission. In other words, a leader needs to be able to relate outside of and inside the team dynamic with those on the team. This builds common cause relationship, interpersonal transparency and mission specific synergy. When there is ongoing communication of this nature, the morale and movement of the team is enhanced.

In conclusion, a failure to communicate clearly and consistently will certainly minimize the success of the church or any other organization for that matter. Communication is something that should never wane but always be increasing. No matter how well you think you are communicating the purpose with the people as well as your team, it is never enough!

The six basic functions of management all require clear and consistent communication. To cast vision, to motivate people, to strategize with leaders, to organize members and resources, to direct staff and enlist volunteers, to facilitate purpose and plans, the discipline of communication is highly required. Therefore, be disciplined to meet with people. Make appointments, have meetings. Use your calendar, text, call, or email. Of course, personal connection is the most effective way to communicate. But there is no excuse in the technology age not to communicate in order to successfully lead your church. Be responsible and responsive. Be diligent and disciplined. Be blessed and honor God in all you do!

The Kingdom of God

The Bible reveals God's intentions for the growth of His Kingdom in all nations of the earth during this present age through the proclamation and obedient application of His stated will in Scripture, and His intention includes the increasing manifestation of His rule over individuals, voluntary associations, families, the church, the state, and all spheres of human activity, some of which are law, government, economics, business, occupations, education, sports, medicine, science, technology, arts, and media.

God's ruler is not limited to transforming only the private lives of individuals to His will.

Christ alone, as representative man and last Adam, by His life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne at the right hand of the Father, accomplished redemption, the defeat of Satan, and the beginning of the restoration of man's godly dominion over the earth as God's vice-regent.

The restoration of man's God-ordained dominion does not lie outside the scope of Christ's redeeming work as mediator on the Cross, or awaits the physical presence of the returned Christ for its inauguration and expansion.

Jesus Christ rules sovereignly over the kings of the earth not only as eternal God but also as the sole mediator between God and men, and that He lawfully defeated Satan *de jure* by His victorious life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Satan is not the ruler of this world in any sense that undermines the recognition of the rightful rule of Christ over the earth during this present age.

Jesus, the Son of David and Son of God, was given all authority in heaven and on earth by God the Father; that after His ascension He sat down on the throne at the right hand of God; that from this position of absolute authority in the universe He is bringing all things into submission under His feet, exercising His authority ever more widely and fully on earth as the gospel spreads and people are converted to Him; and that His exercise of that authority will become more fully manifest after His second coming.

The Church, which is Christ's Body and Bride, consists of the redeemed and is manifested in the community of believers; that Christ's Kingdom authority is not limited to His Church but extends over all areas of life; and that the Church is the focal point of Christ's Kingdom work here on earth.

KMUSA
Distinctive



All increase in God begins with seeking and yielding to the rule and the realm of God's governmental way as expressed in the various jurisdictions of life.

The KMUSA National Conference

The conference will take place April 26-28 at the Gate Church of the High Desert in Victorville, California. We want to invite all leaders in the KMUSA family to attend! This year's theme is:

“Reformation 2017: Courageous Acts for Foundational Change”

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The 2017 KMUSA Conference intends to focus on ways for this change to occur. We will emphasize the following: *Healthy Fellowships* | *Growing Communities* | *Fruitful Ministries*

Hotel Information is listed below. Host homes may be available upon request. Please make plans NOW to join us for this amazing time together!

Hawthorne Suites by Wyndham, VV (\$86)

(760) 949-4700

Holiday Inn, Victorville (\$96)

(760) 245-6565

La Quinta Inn, Hesperia (\$84)

(760) 949-9900

Hilton Garden Inn, VV (\$112)

(760) 952-1200

REGISTER AT: www.kmusa.eventbrite.com

Conference Schedule and Topics

Wednesday, April 26

3:00pm – 5:00pm | Registration
5:00pm – 6:30pm | Dinner Together
7:00pm – 9:00pm | Evening Session

Thursday, April 27

9:00am – 9:30am | Prayer and Worship
9:30am – 10:30am | Session
10:45am – 11:45am | Session
11:45am – 12:00pm | Interaction
12:00pm – 1:00pm | Lunch

1:00pm – 2:00pm | Session
2:00pm – 5:30pm | Free Time
5:30pm – 6:45pm | Dinner
7:00pm – 9:00pm | Evening Session

Friday, April 28

9:00am – 9:30am | Prayer and Worship
9:30am – 10:30am | Session
10:45am – 11:45am | Session
11:45am – 12:00pm | Interaction
12:00pm – 1:00pm | Lunch

1:00pm – 2:00pm | Session
2:00pm – 5:30pm | Free Time
5:30pm – 6:45pm | Dinner
7:00pm – 9:00pm | Evening Session

Reformed Principles with Renewed Purpose

Strengthening the Church: Identifiable
Biblical Qualities of a Healthy Church

Strengthening the Church: Dealing
Scripturally with the Issues of Size, Sort,
Structure and Success

Effectiveness and Efficiency of the 21st
Century Small Church

Renewal of the Word and Spirit
in the Local Church

Advancing the Church: The Tension Between
Health and Growth

Advancing the Church: Mega Church or
Mega Influence

The Causes, Concerns and Challenges of the
Church Growth Movement

Summation: Courageous Acts for
Foundational Change

25 Years of Being a "Secret Shopper Worshiper" *10 easily corrected things I found. Is this your church?*

Who's checking your church for "chinks in the armor?" It's important to identify and do something about them. For 25 years I've enjoyed the occasional foray into sister churches to act as an objective "chink finder." My checklist for effectiveness has over 100 items on it, but I'm just going to share some impressions that have occurred way too often in my experience!

I didn't intend to be a "secret shopper," it just sort of happened. Twenty-five years ago my pastor called me into his office to talk about a newspaper article he had been reading about the retail industry and how cleverly they were sending paid stealth shoppers into the field to ferret out bad practices in their retail stores. The pastor thought maybe we should do the same sort of investigation at our church.

So, I found someone (non-Christian) to help with the task and, I must say, he was thrilled at the possibility that he might find out about some horrible secrets we were hiding or maybe even learn about our clandestine rituals and human sacrifices! He was very disappointed to find zero weird stuff, and about two weeks later started attending the church regularly. That was a good outcome, but the great lesson for us (and everyone in our congregation) was that we should all be "watching the store" a little more closely. I spoke of this experience at a church conference many years ago and over time I've been asked dozens of times to come to various churches and report on my objective observations. This is a list of some of concerns I reported to one church's staff and elders. Remember that by the time I gave them their debrief, we were speaking very candidly.

1. I believe you think that your church is very friendly, but not one person greeted me in the hour and a half I spent with you.

2. Your signage is similar to a country club's golf course—no information. At a CC the members all know everything there is to know about every hole on the course, so signage is usually not needed. At your church, I ended up feeling like I was in a club and didn't know the secret handshake. I couldn't find an adult class I wanted to attend and finally gave up. The truth is, I couldn't even find the men's room.

3. The folks at Willow Creek told us years ago that visitors don't like it when we talk about money during services. That's probably true, but, at least for me, I kept waiting for you to tell me about some of the things you were doing in the community and around the world so that I could help. I was looking for the "put your money where your mouth is" challenge that goes with your considerable vision.

4. There was a lot of talk about families and married folks. I wondered how I would have felt if I were a single in your community.

5. The sermon was exemplary from a homiletics point of view, but I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do with the information I received.

Not every sermon needs an application, but every sermon should have something resembling a behavioral objective. "So what?" is never a bad question to ask when you're assembling a sermon.

6. I must say that I couldn't figure out what your core beliefs are. You said a creed (rapidly) in unison, and I still didn't get it, and there was no written material that would have helped answer that question either.

7. The announcements were twice as long as the Prayers of the People. If I had not known better, I might have assumed you were more interested in potlucks than prayer. That may seem harsh, but I observe in many churches that they believe that their activities are a sign of their health. I'm not entirely sure that's true.

8. The guy operating the PowerPoint for hymns and songs on your screens consistently forwarded the slides late, so I was never prepared to move on. Come to think of it, I got very few cues from leadership about what was happening next in the service, so I spent the hour constantly playing catch up.

9. It felt like you believe that long delays between events in the service make it more reverent. Educators used to say that Sesame Street was too fast-paced for young minds, but they don't say that much any more. We've all become accustomed to fast edits and rapidly moving story lines. Long pauses are not necessarily more reverent. In fact, they might be the moments where people's attention slips between the cracks!

10. Small thing... Instead of just saying, "We're so glad you're here this morning," try adding, "God loves our coming together to give Him praise." Without meaning to, churches often end up being more about themselves and their culture than the Founder of their gathering.

Have you developed a plan for evaluating your worship experiences? As my uncle used to say, "It couldn't hurt!"



Doug Lawrence, internationally recognized speaker, author, and advisor, helps churches assess and improve their skillfulness in creating engaging worship experiences by utilizing his more than 35 years of "deep trench" worship leadership in prominent mainline churches.

(Article Used with Permission)



Transformation of the Mind

by Dallas Willard

The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow our minds to dwell upon. It is in our thoughts that the first movements toward the renovation of the heart occur. Thoughts are the place where we can and must begin to change. There the light of God first begins to move upon us through the word of Christ, and there the divine Spirit begins to direct our will to God and his way. We are not totally free in this respect, but we do have great freedom here. We still have the ability and responsibility to try to retain God in our knowledge. And those who do so will surely make progress toward Him; for if we truly do seek God as best we can, he, who always knows what is really in our hearts, will certainly make himself known to us.

Clearly our thoughts are one of the most basic sources of our life. By "thoughts" we mean all of the ways in which we are conscious of things — and it includes our memories, perceptions and beliefs. Thoughts determine the orientation of everything we do and evoke the feelings that frame our world and motivate our actions. Interestingly, you can't evoke thoughts by feeling a certain way. However, we can evoke — and to some degree — control our feelings by directing our thoughts.

Our essential nature as active and creative beings depends upon our ability to envision what is not the case, as well as what is. Our ability to plan for the future must constantly run ahead of reality. And this we do in thought. A will that runs ahead depends, of course, upon our ability to think; and what we think, imagine, believe, or guess sets boundaries to what we can will or choose, and therefore to what we can create.

As our senses present a landscape for our body and its actions, so our thoughts present the "lifescape" for our will and our life as a whole. Within that "thought lifescape," which includes our perceptions, we make the decisions that determine what we will do and who we will become.

The realm of thought involves four main factors: ideas, images, information and our ability to think. The two most powerful ones, of course, are ideas and images.

Transforming Ideas

Ideas are very general models of our assumptions about reality. They are ways of thinking about and interpreting things. They are so pervasive and essential to how we think about and how we approach life that we often do not even know they are there or understand when and how they are at work. Examples of ideas may include freedom, education, the American dream, church, democracy, justice, family, God and so on. And if you wish to see ideas in action, look closely at artistic endeavors in their various forms, such as movies and music — which encapsulate most of what is called pop culture — or efforts to persuade, such as in politics and commercials.

Christian spiritual formation is inescapably a matter of recognizing in ourselves the idea systems of evil that govern the present age and respective culture, as well as those that constitute life away from God. The needed transformation is largely a matter of replacing those idea systems of evil with the idea system that was embodied and taught by Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, who also understood and taught about these things, warned us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) These higher-level powers and forces are spiritual agencies that work with the idea systems of evil. These systems are their main tool for dominating humanity.

By contrast, those who have been rescued "from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13) are to "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5) This is what is meant when Spring Arbor University speaks about its unique commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for all learning. It is an essential way of describing the substance — the underlying reality — of Christian spiritual formation. We are, in Paul's familiar language, transformed precisely by the "renewing of our mind." (Rom. 12:2).

Thinking vs. Faith

Perhaps we are in a time when thinking rightly is more important than ever. The prospering of God's cause on earth depends upon his people thinking well.

Today we are apt to downplay or disregard the importance of good thinking as opposed to strong faith; and some, disastrously, regard good thinking as being opposed to faith. They do not realize that in so doing they are not honoring God. They do not realize that they are operating on the same satanic principle that produced the killing fields of Cambodia, where those with any sign of education — even the wearing of glasses — were killed on the spot or condemned to starvation and murderous labor.

Too easily we forget that it is great thinkers who have given direction to the people of Christ in their greatest moments: Paul, Augustine, Luther and Wesley to name a few. At the head of the list is Jesus Christ, who was and is the most powerful thinker the world has ever known.

Many Christians today will be surprised to learn that Isaac Watts — the composer of well-known hymns such as "Joy to the World," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," along with many others — also taught logic. He wrote a widely used textbook in his day titled, *Logic: The Right Use of Reason in the Inquiry After Truth*. Those hymns we enjoy so much owe their power to the depth of thought they contain. That is one reason we need to return to them constantly.

Of logic itself Watts said: *The great design of this noble science is to rescue our reasoning powers from their unhappy slavery and darkness; and thus, with all due submission and deference, it offers a humble assistance to divine revelation. Its chief business...is to diffuse a light over the understanding in our inquiries after truth.*

Bluntly stated, to serve God well, we must think straight, as crooked thinking — intentional or not — always favors evil. By contrast, to take the "information" of Scripture into a mind thinking straight, under the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, is to place our feet solidly on the high road of spiritual formation under God.



DALLAS WILLARD was a Professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles from 1965 to 2012. He was Director of the School of Philosophy from 1982-1985.

The Sovereignty of God, Disruption & Unintended Consequences

At its core, the Reformation was about how man sees God, the meaning of creation, and man's place in it. It was aimed at issues far, far beyond just the reforming of practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Its theological implications laid the groundwork for changes yet to be experienced even today. It proved its true historical breadth by the affects it had on society, economics, national political identity, and the future challenges of the uneasy relationship between political activity and the role of theology in the management of nations. It literally redirected history.

Is it possible that we are on the beginning edge of such an almost-cosmic event today? I believe that we are and I hope to make my case in upcoming releases of The Bottom Line Newsletter. In over 30 years of writing this social-spiritual commentary, I have never done anything like this—that is, staying at some length on one issue. My conviction is that this current hour in which we are living is a God-timing bridge of history worthy of exploring in its monumental possibility.

Reformation requires at least four connected things:

1. God's applied will.
2. Issues significant enough to create critical mass social reactions.
3. A person or identifiable movement to galvanize new members in large numbers.
4. And a common language that identifies the cause in a clear and compelling way.

I contend that we have all four of those components present today:

1. God's will to advance His Kingdom on earth is a standing order.
2. The political-economic war of world views between the progressives on the left and the marriage of populism/anti-globalism on the right.
3. Donald Trump and populist leaders emerging in multiple nations give us three of the four already.
4. All we are waiting for now is the language mantras that move the process beyond mere political contexts into the realm of articulated destiny for the majority of humans.

In no way can I hope to go into the depth this prophetic subject deserves in a series of commentaries like this. What I do hope is to stimulate a serious dialogue regarding the possibility of these next decades being historic in their advancement of God's Kingdom. I also hope to give a set of suggestions as to how we understand and work cooperatively with The Holy Spirit in our responses to what God is doing rather than what social forces are demanding us to think or do. In short, how can we midwife the Reformation and thus serve God and man with self-conscious joy in the process.

Biblical faith requires positioning ourselves before God in what I call "an openness to possibilities." This is what I am asking you as readers to consider. Are we in fact in a moment that is far larger than a political battle between the left-right forces of just another "pendulum adjustment" in the dialectical view of historic thesis-antithesis-synthesis? Is God about to push history in ways only truly understood by sets of His people so to help midwife His church? I trust I have raised the question enough to position you in your journey. There is a day Christ spoke of in Matthew 13:47-50: *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it upon the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of possibility the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

This Scripture speaks to the Kingdom going "viral" into all the nations and the unsaved cohabiting with the saved for the benefits of Kingdom living before Christ's return. Is the time in front of us and our grandchildren that He is speaking of? Remember, the effects of the Reformation of 1517 took decades to leaven the nations, but they had a clear beginning. Some understood the magnitude of what was happening in their day, just like some did in the first century church.

Our times will indeed be times of disruption and unintended consequences. I can assure you that no one was more surprised than Martin Luther at some of the consequences his actions produced (i.e., the peasant wars); so too will this time of historic conflict and major realignments produce surprises for us in our day. It is dangerous to disrupt, especially when those bent on revolution, not reformation, are in the mix and willing to push things just to see what will happen. Let's begin the journey with "openness to possibilities" and the conviction that analyzing what we can see may well allow us to see what we should see. And that is ...

THE BOTTOM LINE!

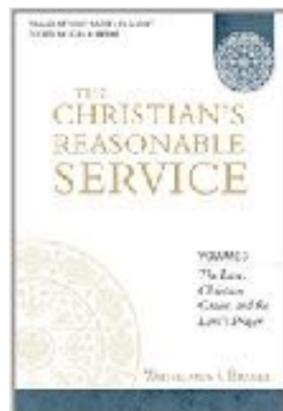


Dennis Peacocke is the founder of Kingdom Ministries International, an apostolic team that gives spiritual covering to KMUSA. He is a leader of leaders and a voice to the nations through Go Strategic, a prophetic ministry to every sphere of society.

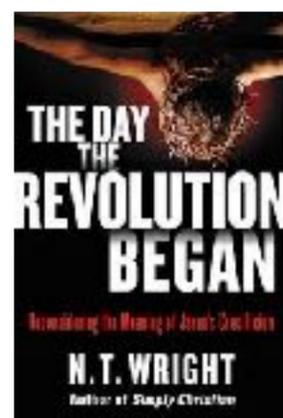


Recommended resources on this page may not always fully line up with everyone’s particular understanding of Scripture. However, we believe that being well read and informed of different points of view will open up good dialogue as we aim to explore the richness of God’s holy Word.

If a book or an author has been helpful to you and you would like to make a recommendation, please forward it us for future newsletters.



First published in 1700, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* expresses what God requires from man, and particularly from the Christian, that he serve Him in Spirit and in truth intelligently, rationally, and in harmony with and response to God's revelation of Himself, His Word. With a decidedly Puritan flavor and representing Reformed experiential religion at its best, Wilhelmus à Brakel systematically moves through the major doctrines of the Bible in hopes of seeing the minds of God's people renewed for the purpose of promoting godliness.



In *The Day the Revolution Began*, N. T. Wright once again challenges commonly held Christian beliefs as he did in his acclaimed *Surprised by Hope*. Demonstrating the rigorous intellect and breathtaking knowledge that have long defined his work, Wright argues that Jesus’ death on the cross was not only to absolve us of our sins; it was actually the beginning of a revolution commissioning the Christian faithful to a new vocation—a royal priesthood responsible for restoring and reconciling all of God’s creation.



What does it mean to say that we live in a secular age? Almost everyone would agree that we—in the West, at least—largely do. And clearly the place of religion in our societies has changed profoundly in the last few centuries. In what will be a defining book for our time, Charles Taylor takes up the question of what these changes mean—of what, precisely, happens when a society in which it is virtually impossible not to believe in God becomes one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is only one human possibility among others.

What Noah Can Teach Today’s Protestants

by Andrew Sandlin

The biblical narrative of Noah doesn’t fit neatly into the contemporary paradigm of the Protestant Reformation. But understanding Noah will assist us in returning to a truly biblical and balanced reformation in church and culture.

Noah obeyed God comprehensively

Noah obeyed God to the letter. That’s the meaning of “he did all that God commanded him” (Gen. 6:22). The emphasis is on the comprehensiveness of his obedience. Faith is obedience, and faith issues in obedience. If we believe God, if we take God at his word, we obey, and we obey comprehensively. We aren’t cafeteria Christians. We don’t choose what to obey and what not to obey. Noah didn’t say, “I believe God, and I’ll build and ark for me and my family, but this business of constructing a boat to haul hundreds of animals is excessive. God doesn’t expect me to go to such lengths.” Or, “Why does it have to be 300 by 50 by 30 cubits? God is so arbitrary. I’ll do my own engineering calculations and then decide.” No. Noah had faith that God knew better than he did, so Noah obeyed to the letter. Noah didn’t see himself as wiser or more advanced or more “progressive” than God. Noah believed God, and he acted on his belief — as all true faith results in godly action.

As a result, God favored Noah. We might say that, in an evil culture, Noah was God’s favorite (Gen. 6:8). God destroyed the entire world except for Noah and his family. That’s how much God favored Noah. Noah rubbed shoulders with God; that’s the literal meaning of “Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). Noah took God at his word. And Noah obeyed God to the letter. This is why God favored Noah.

What Roman Catholicism taught

Christians haven’t always been entirely comfortable with this truth, particularly those in the Protestant Reformation tradition. That tradition was launched as a result of the questions: Whom does God favor, and how, and why? In the medieval era, the Roman Catholic Church taught salvation is by both faith and works. God sent his Son to die on the Cross to save us. If we exercise faith in him and perform good works, he will justify us, or declare us righteous, on the final day. These good works were all wrapped up in the sacramental system of the church: baptismal regeneration, the mass, indulgences, and purgatory. The church itself, in effect, stands in for Jesus Christ. To get into Jesus Christ, you must first get into the church.

What the Protestant Reformation taught

The great rediscovery of Martin Luther is that salvation is not by what we can do, but by what Jesus Christ has done on the Cross. By simple faith we trust in him, and his righteousness becomes ours. The Reformation was a recovery of Pauline theology. We are saved by grace through faith and not of ourselves or our good works (Eph. 2:8–10). The Reformation re-situated the gospel at the center of the church. This means that it re-situated salvation by Christ alone at the heart of the church. You get into the church by first getting into Christ.

The Reformation (over)reaction

In practice, this meant that every recovery of the great cause of the Reformation also included a deep suspicion of good works and obedience. This is just what the early Roman Catholics had predicted would happen. It’s not what should

happen. Reformation teaching, properly understood, does not entail suspicion of good works and obedience. John Calvin made his point abundantly clear. For him, the central truth of soteriology is union with Jesus Christ. When we become one with Jesus Christ by faith, we do not get only justification; we get sanctification. In other words, God saves us apart from works, to good works. And if we do not perform good works, we only prove that we have not been justified.

Did God favor Noah because of his good works?

But this was a relatively technical point for many people, and for them the Reformation truth reduced largely to this: “I’m saved by grace apart from works, and I dare not stress good works. If I do, I’ll undermine the work of the Cross.”

So when they come to the Bible’s teachings like those about Noah (and there are many others in the Bible, and not just in the book of James), they get uncomfortable. They’re often at pains to make sure we don’t understand Moses to be teaching that Noah gained God’s favor by good works. But the fact is, this is precisely what Moses is teaching. He’s teaching that Noah was God’s favorite because he loved and obeyed God. The book of Hebrews teaches the same thing (11:7). His faith was an act of obedience, and his faith led to further obedience. The implication of the alternative is just as true: if Noah hadn’t believed God; if he hadn’t walked with God; if he hadn’t obeyed God, he would’ve perished with the rest of the world.

The teaching of Genesis 6 isn’t that Noah and his family were just as depraved as the rest of the world, but that God sovereignly selected Noah and protected him from the flood. There is nothing whatsoever in either Genesis or Hebrews to give us that idea. That Noah found favor with God does not mean that Noah was an abject sinner, but that in the abundance of God’s love, he saved him anyway by grace alone. If that’s what happened, Moses missed a golden opportunity to tell us.

What Moses is and isn’t teaching

Make no mistake: no one is sinless. Were it not for God’s grace (gift), Noah could not have walked with God, trusted God, obeyed God. Noah was saved the way everyone else in the history of the world has been saved: by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the pre-Christian saints looking forward in prospect, and the Christian saints looking back in retrospect. We’re saved by the blood and resurrection of Jesus. We gain Jesus’ righteousness by our faith and not by our works (Tit. 3:5).



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