

Focus on the Kingdom

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How Jesus Did Evangelism

America is flooded with instructions on “how to make churches grow,” “how to evangelize,” “how to disciple,” “how to win men and women for Jesus with ‘four simple steps to becoming a Christian.’” The common objective of these “programs” is to lead a person to “accept Jesus,” to “get saved.”

It appears to us that the phrase “accepting Jesus” can be deceptive *unless it is defined* as “hearing, understanding, accepting and obeying the commands and *words* of Jesus.”

No one hearing the statement “obey your mother” would understand anything other than “obey *the words* of your mother,” but in religion, a startling misdefinition abounds. Jesus can apparently be accepted but not obeyed! One might be asked to “receive Jesus” without knowing what it is Jesus asks us to accept, receive or obey. “Accepting” him, “asking him into your heart” may sound both admirable and comforting, but what if the commands of Jesus are not conveyed to the convert? What if becoming a Christian is based on our *own* idea of what this means, rather than on the Gospel teaching of Jesus himself?

The point of raising these questions is to invite an examination of the Gospel as Jesus preached it, Christianity as he conceived it, conversion on *his* terms and not ours. After all, Jesus’ central thesis, repeated constantly, was that only those who hear and obey his words will achieve salvation. Did he not, in his most powerful warning, state that many in that day (the day of judgment) will claim to have preached *as Christians*, exorcised demons as Christians and done many marvelous miracles as Christians? But they will be tragically disappointed to find out that their efforts had been in vain. They had not been recognized as his disciples. They had not heeded his instructions (Matt. 7:21-27).

It would not hurt for us all to conduct a self-inventory. If salvation is for “those who obey him” (Heb. 5:9), would it not be natural to consider his orders to us?

His first and primary command was given in Mark 1:14, 15. Repent (a command) and believe my **Gospel of the Kingdom** (another command). The ringing cry of Jesus throughout the land was that the

Kingdom of God was approaching. This was the Gospel from God Himself — God’s Gospel (Mark 1:14; Rom. 1:1). Jesus was the organ of that call to repentance in view of the Kingdom. People were to respond with all urgency to the command to “repent and believe God’s Gospel” about the Kingdom of God. Mark 1:14, 15 provides a summary of the Christian faith as Jesus taught it. “After John was thrown in jail, Jesus came into Galilee preaching God’s Gospel: The Kingdom of God is approaching. **Repent and believe the Gospel.**” The rest of the New Testament is an expansion of this opening salvo launched on the public by Jesus and valid until the future end of the age when he returns.

“Repent and believe.” The original Greek term “repent” has to do with *rethinking*, changing the mind, a complete reorientation in a new direction, with a new-found belief in the Kingdom of God and in Jesus the bearer of that Gospel or Good News about the Kingdom.

Repent does not just mean, “Be a better person. Give up whatever *you* define as sin. Be good and believe in God.” Repentance, Jesus-style, means *firstly* grasping the concept of the Kingdom of God, believing in that Kingdom and beginning to live in the light of that coming Kingdom. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and God’s righteousness [right way of thinking and doing] and all these other things [the necessities of life] will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

Jesus unpacked his command to repent and believe in the Kingdom Gospel in the famous Sermon on the Mount, and later in the parable of the sower he detailed the mechanics of the salvation process and program. He started as always with the Kingdom of God Gospel. Here is how the salvation program works. Here indeed is how immortality in the Kingdom is to be gained. The process begins when a person is confronted with the Gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus preached it.

“Whenever someone hears the Message about the Kingdom and does not understand it, the Devil comes and snatches away what is sown [**seed**] in his heart” (Matt. 13:19). Luke reported these words from his source with the same dramatic clarity: “Whenever someone hears the Message [of the Kingdom, Matt.

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13:19] the Devil comes and snatches away the Message *so that he cannot believe it and be saved*" (Luke 8:12). Mark begins by reminding us that Jesus makes this parable of the sower the key to all the parables: "If you do not understand this parable, how will you understand any of the parables?" (Mark 4:13). What a brilliant key to the mind of Christ, that is, the holy spirit of Christ and of God his Father.

Mark details the sequence of events leading to conversion to Christianity. Jesus is recorded as having warned about the danger of our blindness and stubbornness, our failure in fact to believe the word and words of Jesus:

"To you [disciples] has been given the secret of the **Kingdom of God**, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that seeing they see but do not perceive and hearing they hear but do not understand. *If they did, they would repent and be forgiven*" (Mark 4:11, 12).

We propose that Jesus here makes *an intelligent grasp of and response to the Gospel of the Kingdom, the condition for repentance and forgiveness*.

Those words in Mark 4:11, 12 (and parallels in Matt. 13 and Luke 8) warrant close study and meditation. They open up the mind of Christ to us. There is a clear sequence. Seeing, hearing, understanding, repentance and forgiveness (we offer the acronym SHURF!).

Seeing, hearing and understanding relate *expressly and specifically* to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. We note too that when Jesus preached these words of invitation to salvation, he had not yet mentioned a word about his sacrificial death, nor a word about his resurrection. Belief in the atoning death and resurrection of course are now (since they happened) *also* central in the Gospel, *but never to the exclusion of belief in the Kingdom of God as the basis of the Gospel message*.

Further examination of Jesus' method and message in evangelism reveals that he thought of the word/Gospel of the Kingdom as the essential saving **seed** which must be planted in our minds. The Gospel of the Kingdom is the germ of immortality, the energizing principle of life. The Gospel message is the vehicle by which the spirit of God is transmitted to us, and that holy spirit is a down payment for the immortality which we gain fully at his future return (not at the moment of death, but at the resurrection when he comes back).

Without a seed there is no new life. Nature is the parable of the salvation process. God puts us in His laboratory surrounded by evidence of seeds as the

initiating spark of creatures of all sorts, as well as of plants, flowers and trees. God's immortality program is initiated by a **seed**, the **seed** sown in the mind, the **seed** defined as the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11; Matt. 13:19).

Think of how the Devil would oppose God's immortality program based on the vital seed of new life. Would he not try to suppress that saving seed Message of the Kingdom? Would he not obscure it by every possible means? Is that not exactly what Jesus warned in a startlingly brilliant intelligence report — a glimpse into the world of reality as it truly is? Christians need to know what the Devil is doing:

"When someone hears the Message/Gospel of the Kingdom [Matt. 13:19], the Devil takes away the Message from their hearts [i.e. as seed], so that he may not believe it *and be saved*" (Luke 8:12).

Salvation then hinges not only on believing that Jesus died for our sins and rose, but *firstly* on believing in the Gospel of God concerning the Kingdom of God, that is, the New World Order to be established in a renewed earth when Jesus returns, and how to prepare now for that great coming event.

The preaching of "salvation" today appears to lack that essential, fundamental "Kingdom" factor. While Jesus and Paul announced the Kingdom of God Gospel everywhere (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; cp. 24:14; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:24, 25; 28:23, 31), is the phrase Gospel of the Kingdom the central focus of sermons in church or on radio or television? We invite our readers to listen carefully for the label which Jesus gave to the Gospel. Is it clear that the *Kingdom of God* is being preached as the saving Gospel?

Not according to many keen observers of our religious scene. Experts in the Bible and in the science of evangelism have expressed their deep concern that the modern popular Gospel does not sound like the Gospel preaching of Jesus. Has Jesus been excluded from churches?

"There seems to have been an eclipse of the Gospel of the **Kingdom of God** lasting from the apostolic age down to the present...When I left the seminary I had no clear idea of the Kingdom of God and I had no place in my theology for the second coming, the Parousia...I had no concerns about the future. Thousands of books are printed and circulated every year on evangelization; most of these fall into the category of 'how to' manuals for churches (devising plans, strategies, methodologies and goals)...Our traditional mini-theologies (the 'plan of salvation' or 'four spiritual laws') *do not do justice to the whole Gospel*.

“Not all this activity or activism is a sign of health or creativity...The Good News of the **Kingdom of God** is not the usual way we describe the gospel and evangelization...**The Kingdom of God** has practically disappeared from evangelistic preaching and has been ignored by traditional ‘evangelism.’ The evangelistic message has been centered in personal salvation, individual conversion, and incorporation into the church. The **Kingdom of God** as a parameter or perspective or as content of the proclamation has been *virtually absent*...Those interested in evangelization have not yet been interested in the **Kingdom** theme...Why not try Jesus’ own definition of his Mission — and ours? For Jesus evangelization was no more and no less than announcing the Kingdom of God” (Dr. Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God*, 1984).

“We’ve become so used to *separating evangelism from the Kingdom* and to interpreting evangelism in privatized, ‘spiritual’ terms that we don’t usually connect it with the Kingdom. We forget that the object of the verb *evangelizomai* (to announce ‘good news’) is, in the synoptic Gospels, **the Kingdom**. We forget that the content of the noun *evangelion* (the good news) is the **Kingdom**” (Alfred C. Krass, *Evangelizing Neopagan North America*, Herald Press, 1982).

What did Jesus and Paul have in mind when they preached repentance and belief *based on the Kingdom of God*? Certainly the message contained the vital information about the atoning death and the resurrection of Jesus, but that is not the whole of the Gospel. The Gospels contain some 30 chapters of Jesus’ Kingdom evangelism without at first any reference to his death and resurrection. Jesus’ command was that we believe in God’s Gospel of the coming Kingdom and prepare to enter it when it comes at his second coming. The meaning of the word Kingdom in the Gospel is noted by leading expositors: “The preaching of the Kingdom of God obviously refers to the Kingdom of God *which will begin with the Parousia*” (E. Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1971, p. 141, fn. 2).

“Nothing obviously distinguishes the term Kingdom of God in Acts from such *apocalyptic use as it has in the gospels*” (H.J. Cadbury, *Acts and Eschatology*).

“Luke’s understanding of the Kingdom of God is that *it is still in the future and it will mean the restoration of Israel*” (Kevin Giles, *Reformed Theological Review*, Sept. 1981). He goes on to quote J. Jervell, who refers to the Apostles’ question about

the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel and says: “Luke’s theology anticipated a restored Israel” (*Luke and the People of God*, 1972, pp. 41ff., 72).

Cadbury: “Acts includes many familiar elements in NT preaching. The preachers preach the Kingdom of God or the things about it (Acts 1:3; 8:12; 20:25; 28:23, 31). The term Kingdom of God appears from almost the first verse to the last verse in the book. **Kingdom of God** constitutes *a formula* apparently parallel to the writer’s more characterize single verb ‘*evangelize*.’ Nothing obviously distinguishes the term Kingdom of God in Acts from such apocalyptic use as it has in the synoptic gospels. For example one enters it through much tribulation (Acts 14:22).”

Haenchen on Acts 28:23: “The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ properly stand side by side. The second expression refers to the death and resurrection attested in the holy Scriptures and therefore the Messiahship of Jesus. *Kingdom of God itself describes the entire Christian proclamation*: so in 19:8, 20:25 and 1:3 it also has this meaning. If, on the other hand, as here and in 8:12 and 28:31 it is mentioned along with the events of Jesus, then it has *the futuristic meaning* of which 14:22 speaks. *At the Parousia the future Kingdom will come with the returning Jesus* (Luke 21:31). Paul’s efforts to win the Jews lasted throughout the day. This shows how keen he was to win them” (p. 773).

“In Acts *the term Kingdom of God is used only of a future event*. The Kingdom will have a glorious and public manifestation *in the future*...Like the creative word in Genesis (1:3) *the word of the Kingdom* contains within it the reality of the new creation itself. Nevertheless the Kingdom also *remains in the future and its coming is associated with the Parousia*, the glorious appearance of Jesus at the close of the age (Luke 19:11; 22:29; 11:2; Acts 1:7, 11). Eternal Life awaits the age to come (Lk 18:30). By their response to the Kingdom Message men reveal whether they are destined for the ‘life of the age to come’ (Lk 8:1-18; Acts 13:46, 48)” (Earle Ellis, *Luke, New Century Bible*, p. 13).

The Apostles Were Masters of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

The parable of the seed and the sower defines the Gospel as the Gospel or word about **the Kingdom of God** and invites us to repent and be forgiven by believing God’s Gospel of the Kingdom preached by Jesus (Matt. 13:19; Mark 4:11, 12; Luke 8:11, 12).

When the Apostles preached the Gospel they followed the example of Jesus precisely. In 1 Peter 1:22-25, Peter, who had heard Jesus preach the

Kingdom Gospel everywhere, repeats the “mechanics” of the saving process. “Having purified yourselves by your obedience to the **Truth** for a sincere love of the brothers and sisters, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been **born again** not from perishable seed, but from imperishable **seed**, through the living and abiding **word of God**...That word is **the Gospel** which was preached to you.” Every one of Jesus’ key Gospel words is repeated here: “born again” (John 3:3), “seed” (Luke 8:11), “word” (Matt. 13:19), “Gospel” (Mark 1:14, 15).

Paul speaks likewise in Galatians 4:29 of those who have been “**born of the spirit**” (cp. John 3:5). In the same passage he refers to the rebirth as caused by “**the promise**” (vv. 23, 28). Jesus in John refers the rebirth to the **spirit** (John 3:5) and describes the same salvation in John 5:24: “He who hears **my word** [Gospel] and believes Him who sent me has the life of the age to come.” Paul echoes the same scheme for gaining immortality: “He saved us...by His own mercy by the washing of **rebirth** and renewal by the **holy spirit**” (Titus 3:5). James expresses the same salvation in terms of God “**giving us birth by the word of Truth** so that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creation” (James 1:18). He speaks of the word being **implanted** in us (v. 21, cp. seed).

Paul rehearses the process by which we become Christians by tracing it to our reception of the **word** of the Gospel and equating this with the reception of spirit: “Did you receive the **spirit** by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?” (Gal. 3:2). And again in Ephesians 1:13: “You have heard the **word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation**, and have believed in him, and were sealed with the **holy spirit** of the **promise**.”

We can sum up this unanimous view of Christian salvation expressed by Jesus and the Apostles by pointing to the vital necessity of receiving in our minds the **seed** (Luke 8:11) of immortality transferred to us via Jesus’ Gospel of the **Kingdom**. John reflects exactly the same point of view: “No one **born of God** continues in sin, for God’s **seed** abides in him and he cannot sin because he is **born of God**” (I John 3:9). And the whole process goes back to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God: “Whoever does not receive the **Kingdom of God** like a child will not enter it” (Luke 18:17). The astonishing goal of this process is that Christians are to be given the Kingdom: “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

It is hardly surprising that the Apostles would strain every nerve to warn us never to depart from the Gospel as Jesus preached it. “How shall we [Christians] escape if we neglect so great a **salvation** which was first declared by the Lord?” (Heb. 2:3). “Anyone who ‘progresses’ and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree with the health-giving words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness...he knows nothing” (I Tim. 6:3, 4).

Gospel of the Kingdom, seed, word, truth, seeing, hearing, understanding, repentance and forgiveness: these words form the fundamental vocabulary of the salvation program given us by God through Jesus. When these defining terms are absent from sermons and tracts, there is cause for concern that vital elements of Jesus’ saving Gospel are being suppressed. Take a simple example: Jesus spoke always of the **Kingdom** as the Christian objective and promised his followers that they will inherit the land or the earth (Matt. 5:5; cp. Rev. 5:10).

Jesus promised no one “heaven,” but rather entrance in the future into the Kingdom of God *on earth*. The process of salvation was according to Jesus conditioned on the reception of his own Kingdom of God Gospel. “If they do not receive that Gospel of the Kingdom they cannot return [repent] and be forgiven” (see Mark 4:11, 12).

Defining the Gospel as Jesus defined it remains the one crucial and urgent issue facing churchgoers today, when the threat of “entertainment” in the name of Jesus or inadequate exposure to the biblical text threatens us on all sides. Luke 8:12 is a fair warning!

The public should be aware also of the extraordinary mistake of the celebrated C.S. Lewis who wrote: “The Gospels are not ‘the Gospel,’ the statement of the Christian belief” (Introduction to J.B. Phillips’ *Letters to Young Churches*, p. 10). This systematic misunderstanding goes back to Martin Luther who wrote: “Therefore St. Paul’s epistles are more a Gospel than Matthew, Mark and Luke. For these do not set down much more than the works and miracles of Christ; but the grace which we receive through Christ no one so boldly extols as St. Paul, especially in his letter to the Romans” (Moore, *History of Religions*, Scribners, 1920, p. 320).

If that is really so then Jesus was not a preacher of the Gospel and Christianity is undermined at its foundation. ✧

Jesus' "I am He" Does Not Mean "I am God"

Cambridge New Testament scholar J.A.T. Robinson states: "The identification of Jesus' 'I am' statements with the 'I am' of Exodus I believe to be a misreading of the text. To take the 'I am' as the '*ani hu*' [I am He] of the divine name is a misreading which can be shown to be such by careful attention to the text [of John]. The 'I am the bread, shepherd' certainly do not imply that the subject is God. The 'I am' statements do not carry with them the implication that he is Yahweh — indeed in the latter two [John 8:28; 13:19] there is a contrast with the Father who sent him — but in contrast 'the Christ, the Son of God.'

"That Jesus is arrogating to himself the divine name is nowhere stated or implied in this Gospel. Even the Jews do not accuse him of this — only of calling God his Father, and thereby implying equality with God or as H. Oldberg interprets this from rabbinic parallels, rebellious independence being 'as good as God' (5:18). What they take to be the blasphemy of making himself 'a god' in 10:33 is again made clear to be a misunderstanding of Jesus calling himself 'God's son'...**The worst that can be said of him at the trial is that he claimed to be 'God's Son'**" (J.A.T. Robinson, *Priority of John*, pp. 385-387). "Jesus steps into the space reserved in the mind of his contemporaries for God" (p. 389).

Barrett (one of the most celebrated commentators on John): "*Ego eimi* ('I am he') does not identify Jesus with God, but it does draw attention to him in the strongest possible terms. I am the one, the one you must look at and listen to if you would know God" (*Commentary on John*, p. 342, cf. p. 98). "It is simply intolerable that Jesus should be made to say, 'I am God, the supreme God of the OT, and being God I do as I am told,' and in 13:19, 'I am God, and I am here because someone sent me'...Jesus' *ego eimi* is not a claim to divinity."

Robert Young, LLD, of *Young's Concordance*, on John 8:58: "'I am he' means a claim to be the Messiah and implies neither divinity nor preexistence... 'Before Abraham's coming, **I am he**,' that is, the promised Messiah. The simple phrase 'I am he' is used by Jesus 15 times, but in every case but the present it is rendered in the Common Version, 'I am he' or 'It is I.' See Matt. 14:27, Mk 6:50, 14:62, Luke 21:8, 22:70, 24:39, John 4:26, 6:20, 8:24, 28, 13:19, 18:5, 6, 8."

H.H. Rowdon: "That the absolute use of '**I am**' need not have connotations of divinity is clear from its usage by the man born blind at John 9:9. Jesus' words, then, were not an unambiguous asseveration of divinity" (*Christ the Lord*, p. 172).

E.D. Freed: "The phrase is specifically Messianic. In John 8:24 *ego eimi* is to be understood as a reference to Jesus' Messiahship... 'If you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins'" ("*Ego eimi* in John 8:24 in the Light of its Context and Jewish Messianic Belief," *JTS* 33, 1982, p. 163).

Bultmann: "We should reject the idea that *ego eimi* means 'I (Jesus) am God.'"

Robinson: "Of the 'I am' sayings in this Gospel [John] those with the predicate 'I am the bread of life,' 'the door,' 'the way,' 'the good shepherd,' etc. certainly do not imply that the subject is God. Of the 'absolute' uses of *ego eimi*, the majority are simply establishing identification: '**I am he**.' This is so of 4:26 (the Messiah you speak of); 6:20 (confirming Jesus' identity on the lake at night, exactly as in Mark 6:50, Matt. 14:27); 9:9 (on the lips not of Jesus but of the blind man) and 18:5-8, the 'I am your man' at the arrest (cp. Acts 10:21), even though it evokes awe (though not the reaction to blasphemy) in the arresting party. There is the same usage in the resurrection scene of Luke 24:39, 'it is I myself'... Three other occurrences, 8:24, 28, 13:19 are I believe correctly rendered by the NEB 'I am what I am,' namely the truth of what really I am. *They do not carry with them the implication that he is Yahweh* (indeed in the latter two especially there is a contrast with the Father who sent him), but in contrast 'the Christ, the Son of God'" (pp. 385-387).

"There can be no residue or trace of a Christology that says that Jesus said or did some things as God and some things as man. That is wholly alien to the interpretation of John" (p. 388). Jesus is uniquely human. ✧

Singular Personal Pronouns Tell Us That God Is One Person, Not Three

"The unity of God, as **one individual person**, is denoted throughout the Bible by the almost constant use of **singular pronouns**, whenever any thought, action, attribute, or condition is ascribed to the Supreme Being. In all languages the personal pronouns of the singular number are understood to apply only to **one person**.

"Thus, if I were writing a letter, by employing the pronouns of the *first* person and singular number, *I, me, my*, I should confine my assertions to myself as one individual person. By using the pronouns of the second person and singular number, *thou, thee, thy*, I should

indicate that my assertions were addressed to my correspondent as **one individual person**. By introducing the pronouns of the third person and singular number, *he, him, his*, I should denote that it was **one person** only I was speaking of. If on the contrary I were writing a letter in conjunction with any other intelligent being, we should use the pronouns *we, us, our*; and if I were writing anything of more than one person, I should say *they, them, their*. Such being *the universal application of pronouns*, it is evident, not only to those who have studied Greek and Hebrew, but to all who know the use and meaning of human speech, that *throughout the whole Bible God is almost uniformly mentioned as one person, this being implied in the almost constant use of singular pronouns*.

“The doctrine of the Unity of God is implied in every passage in which the personal pronouns of the singular number are used to denote the Supreme Deity...Thousands and tens of thousands of passages imply, by the use of *the singular pronouns, that God is one person*” (Yates, *Vindication of Unitarianism*, Boston, 1816, pp. 66, 153).

Examples: God appears to Abraham: “*I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect, and I will make My Covenant between Me and thee*” (Gen. 17:1-2). (Not, “We are Almighty God; walk before Us and be thou perfect...”)

Levites address God: “**Thou**, even Thou, art **Lord alone**; *Thou* hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, and *Thou* preservest them all; and the host of heaven worship *Thee*” (Neh. 9:6).

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament: “But without faith it is impossible to please *Him*; for he that comes to **God** must believe that *He* is and that *He* is a rewarder of those who diligently seek *Him*” (Heb. 11:6).

In addition there are thousands and thousands of similar passages throughout the Bible. Singular pronouns prove that God is a single Person, the Father of Jesus, described by Jesus as “the only one who is truly God” (John 17:3). In three passages, God says, “Let us...” These passages tell us that He was speaking to someone other than Himself, just as when we say “let us...” we are referring to someone other than ourselves.

The biblical creed is that “there is One God, the Father” (I Cor. 8:4-6). There is no biblical verse in which “God” means “God in three Persons.” Jesus is the one Lord Messiah, the adoni of Psalm 110:1,

and not the Lord God. The Father alone is the Lord God. ✧

Comments

“I have read many of your published articles over the years and found that they are very incisive with a large measure of impeccable logic attached to them. I am no scholar by any appraisal. I am an engineer by trade and have a natural appreciation for sensible analysis.” — *Canada*

“I was very blessed reading your book on the doctrine of the Trinity. So much truth about the real Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 11:1-4) has been withheld for many years.” — *Netherlands*

“I read all of Anthony Buzzard's book this afternoon/evening...I have visited the website...I must say it is well argued and has challenged a lot of my beliefs — I have the humility to admit it ‘destroyed’ most of the arguments I would have used in support of the Trinity. I still have questions about the ‘preexistence’ of Jesus in John's Gospel. I need to read more on this aspect of the argument.” — *New Zealand*

“We thank you for your ministry and appreciate the care and concern you demonstrate for us. It's been a long journey for us and often lonely, even sometimes discouraging, but we walk on thanks to the Lord and His leading us into all truth as we search. *Focus on the Kingdom* has been a great help and we continue to be surprised at the many rejections we encounter when we express truth about the Trinity, that Jesus is not God, the Father.” — *Oregon*

“I commend you and the others among you for the extraordinary teaching you provide. I pray to God that your ministry be blessed and be given a greater voice to reach the hearts and minds of more and more people. Your doctrine is sound and you are real about the truth. I encourage you to do whatever possible to expand your teachings and plant more churches around the country and the world.” — *Pennsylvania*

“After reading and rereading and studying, now there is a new energy in what you are saying in regard to Matthew 1:1, 18 — the genesis, the origin of the Messiah, the virgin birth; plus Gabriel's message to Mary concerning the Son of God, Luke 1:30ff. Along with this a real glimpse of, a brilliant light on, the second Adam, the new creation, ‘you must be born again,’ along with related verses. It really took me many, many months of going over it again and again because of the unconscious reading into it of Greek church philosophical ideas and the creeds and the doctrines of the churches that have dusted over the real

meaning of the above Scriptures. Thank you!" —
Finland

Dear friends of the Theological Conference,

With this letter we want to extend an invitation to our thirteenth annual Theological Conference to be held at Cornerstone Bible Church, close to Atlanta Bible College. We plan to meet from Friday, April 23, 2004, starting at 9:00 am, until Sunday, April 25th, ending with lunch together.

Accommodation is at the Hampton Inn, McDonough, and we plan to provide transportation there from Hartsfield Airport on Thursday, April 22nd, and also back to the airport on Sunday. We sincerely hope you can be with us for these special days. The conference has been a success in years past because of the fascinating mix of truth-seeking persons from many parts of the world.

Thanks to the Internet, local advertising and the massive interest in the Bible around the world, Atlanta Bible College and the *Journal from the Radical Reformation's* circle of friends of the Truth of the Abrahamic faith has been extended. A large amount of literature promoting the Messianic faith of Jesus and first-century understanding of God and the Gospel is circulating. Advertising locally has brought many new students to the college. Our Trinity book — *Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* — is about to be in its seventh language.

We will be blessed by having as guest lecturer Dr. Colin Brown of Fuller Seminary. He is a distinguished specialist in the field of Christology and has expressed a great sympathy for our "unusual" views of Jesus as the human Messiah. We know you will be enriched by his penetrating remarks on John's prologue and Philippians 2. Dr. Brown is of English descent but has been professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller since 1978. He is the general editor of the prestigious *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, the "state of the art" authority on biblical words.

The tragic state of the world compels us all to tighten our grip on faith and above all to become better informed about what we believe. This will lead to a greater confidence and influence for good in the world in which we are all responsible to be lights.

We plan to devote two sessions to issues of Christology and will have presentations from Alex Hall, pastor of the Abrahamic group in London. An exciting new speaker from Australia, formerly a Church of Christ pastor, will tell of his journey into our biblical unitarian faith and offer his thoughts on Babylon in prophecy. David Maas will address concerns relating to the Christian and the state.

There will be an ample opportunity for many of you to present your "faith story" from any angle you choose. These mini-presentations (10 minutes at the most, if possible!) provide some of the most delightful parts of our conference. Please do plan to give us a report on your journey of faith so far. A half-hour question and answer session follows each of the formal presentations. As usual the proceedings will be filmed and we have noticed that much of the conference's value lies in its extended influence by way of video. If you have any questions at all, please phone Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or email me at anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com

Below are the details of accommodation and costs. Please note that transportation from Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport is included in the registration fee. *Please book your flight according to the shuttle schedule below.* We plan to cater three of the meals at the conference site and suggest that you go out for the other two meals.

Accommodation is available at the Hampton Inn, McDonough. The block rate of \$69 per night may be reserved by calling 770-914-0077 **by April 7** and mentioning Atlanta Bible College and confirmation number **86416808**. The rate includes continental breakfast. A free shuttle will run from the airport to the Hampton Inn on Thursday, April 22nd at **2, 4, 6, and 8 pm**. Please go to the ground transportation area and look for the Atlanta Bible College van. Shuttle between Hampton Inn and Cornerstone will be provided. Registration is \$69 **before April 7**, \$79 after. This includes three meals. **Register online** or by mail. Questions, please call 800-347-4261.

Theological Conference 2004 Online Registration (add \$5 processing fee)

- 1.) Go to <http://www.abc-coggc.org/ABC/TC04Registration.htm>
- 2.) Choose an airport shuttle option
- 3.) Click "Register" to enter payment information (you will be directed to PayPal, a third-party secure website)
- 4.) Follow the instructions to complete your registration

Theological Conference 2004 Mail-In Registration

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____

**Return with check made out to: Atlanta Bible College,
PO Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260**

\$69 before April 7 \$79 after