

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Son of God Language in the New Testament

Leading scholars of our time who pay careful attention to the text of Scripture are currently supplying a refreshing confirmation of cardinal biblical doctrines espoused for centuries, against the mainstream, by a minority. Dr. Colin Brown is a distinguished professor of Systematic Theology at a leading theological seminary. In an article dedicated to the issue of who God is, he brings to light the biblical definition of "Son of God." The meaning of the title "Son of God" has long been buried by ecclesiastical tradition. It is widely assumed that as "Son of God" Jesus was claiming to be "God the Son," an eternal, uncreated member of the Godhead. It was Peter's *correct* identification of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God which won him unqualified praise from the Messiah himself (Matt. 16:15-19). Jesus' true identity as Son of God was made by the Savior to be the cornerstone of true belief. A return to that biblical Son of God is strongly encouraged by the words of Dr. Brown. We give below excerpts from his important journal article, "Trinity and Incarnation: In Search of Contemporary Orthodoxy" (*Ex Auditu*, 7, 1991, pp. 83-100).

"The crux of the matter lies in how we understand the term 'Son of God' and the questions that it poses about the relation of Jesus to the one whom he called Father and to the Spirit that came upon him after his baptism. The point is illustrated by the cheerful retort of Cornelius Plantinga to the charge that social Trinitarians are really tritheists: 'If it is tritheist to believe that *Father, Son* and *Spirit* designate distinct persons, then Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel must be regarded as tritheists. And they are good company to keep.' But to say this is to beg the question. For the claim simply asserts what has not been demonstrated. *Indeed, it seems to entail a systematic misunderstanding of Son-of-God language in Scripture.*

"Indeed, one may well ask whether the term 'Son of God' is in and of itself a divine title at all. Certainly there are many instances in biblical language where it is definitely not a designation of deity. Adam is called 'the son of God' in Luke's genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:38). Hosea 11:1 (which is cited in Matt. 2:15) alludes to the nation of Israel as God's son. In Wisdom 2:18 the righteous man is

called God's son. Nathan's prophecy to David contains God's promise to David's successor: 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son' (2 Sam. 7:14; cf. Ps. 89:26-27). This passage also occurs in a collection of testimonies at Qumran (4QFlor 10f.), indicating that the messianic significance of this prophecy was a matter of continuing speculation in first-century Judaism. In Psalm 2:7 the anointed king is addressed at his installation: 'You are my son: Today I have begotten you' (cited in Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; cf. 2 Pet. 1:17). This passage is the source of the identification of Jesus with God's Son by the *Bat Qol* (voice from heaven) after his baptism (Mark 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22; cf. John 1:34). The voice also identifies Jesus with the chosen servant in whom God delights (Isa. 42:1; cf. also Matt. 12:18-21).

"In the light of these passages in their context, **the title 'Son of God' is not in itself a designation of personal deity or an expression of metaphysical distinctions within the Godhead. Indeed, to be a 'Son of God' one has to be a being who is not God!** It is a designation for a **creature** indicating a special relationship with God. In particular, it denotes **God's representative**, God's vice-regent. It is a designation of kingship, identifying the king as God's son. Therefore, I take the application of the title 'Son of God' at his baptism to be an affirmation of Jesus as God's Son-king in virtue of his anointing by the Spirit. Likewise C.F.D. Moule comments on the trial scene: 'In Mark 14:61 the High Priest's words, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?" are presumably understood by the Evangelist as a question about a Messianic claim.' The title expresses the intimate relationship which Jesus had through the Spirit with the Father as the Father's anointed representative, which is depicted in the Gospel narratives culminating in his death and the cry of dereliction, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

"I believe that this is the meaning that we should attach to the term 'Son of God' at the beginning of Mark's Gospel (Mark 1:1) in view of the account of the baptism, anointing and voice from heaven which

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quickly follows. Nor can we read the theology of later centuries into the testimony of the centurion at the foot of the cross: 'Truly this man was a son of God' (Mark 15:39; Matt. 27:54; cf. Luke 23:47, 'Certainly this man was innocent!'). In my view the term 'Son of God' ultimately converges on the term 'image of God,' which is to be understood as God's representative, the one in whom God's Spirit dwells, and who is given stewardship and authority to act on God's behalf. The designation of Jesus as 'Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead' (Rom. 1:4) is a reaffirmation of that Son-kingship with divine authority, insofar as by the resurrection the Spirit has overturned the negative verdict of the Sanhedrin in condemning Jesus to death as a blasphemer who sought to lead Israel astray...

"It seems to me to be a fundamental mistake to treat statements in the Fourth Gospel about the Son and his relationship with the Father as expressions of inner-Trinitarian relationships. But this kind of systematic misreading of the Fourth Gospel seems to underlie much of social Trinitarian thinking. Thus statements like 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30) and those about the mutual indwelling of Jesus and the Father (John 10:38; 14:10-11, 20; 17:21, 23) are taken to be statements about inner relations of the 'persons' of the Trinity. However, the Fourth Gospel itself does not require such a reading. When read in context, the statements are evidently statements about *Jesus' relationship with the Father on earth*.

"It is a common but patent misreading of the opening of John's Gospel to read it as if it said: 'In the beginning was the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was God' (John 1:1). What has happened here is the substitution of *Son* for *Word* (Greek *logos*), and thereby the *Son* is made a member of the Godhead which existed from the beginning. But if we follow carefully the thought of John's prologue, it is the *Word* that preexisted eternally with God and is God. The same Word that made all things and is the light that enlightens humankind 'became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father' (John 1:14; cf. vv. 3, 8). In other words, Son-language in John denotes *the Word made flesh in Jesus* who as such speaks God's Word to human beings on earth...

"Whereas the Fourth Gospel simply says that the *Word* was with God and was God in the beginning, the fathers of the second and third centuries began to

talk about the *generation* of the Word [and then later about the premundane *generation* of the Son – *ed.*].

"Maurice Wiles has persuasively argued that the idea of 'eternal generation' was bound up with the way that the early fathers interpreted the begetting of wisdom in Proverbs 8:25 ('before the hills he begat me') and Ps. 110:3, LXX ('before the morning star I begat thee'). However, the impetus for applying the thought of *begetting* to the generation of the second 'person' of the Trinity would seem to be bound up with the designations 'Son,' 'Father,' and 'person.' If the first 'person' is thought of as 'Father' and the second as 'Son' the question of their relationship is inevitable. Thus we have, in fact, two acts of begetting: one in time when Jesus was (in the language of the creeds) 'conceived by the Holy Spirit,' and one in eternity when (in the language of Origen) the unbegotten Father begat the Son 'by an eternal act.'

"Inevitably this latter formulation raises the question of whether there was a time when the Son did not exist. Origen sought to answer it with an analogy drawn from nature [why not a biblical answer from Matt. 1:20 and Luke 1:35? – *ed.*]. The Son's generation is eternal and everlasting in a way comparable to the brilliancy of the sun and the sun itself. However, there was a price to be paid for such a maneuver, viz. that 'eternal generation' is no longer understood as the personal activity of an individual possessing self-consciousness bringing into being another similar individual. It is, rather, a way of thinking about different aspects of the sun in which the burning of sun is perceived as light. The point was not lost on the modalists who used the same example for their own ends.

"One is left wondering whether the thorny questions of later ages might have been avoided if the church fathers had not embarked on the language of the 'eternal generation' of the Son. How things might have been different, if the fathers had kept strictly to the language of John's prologue [i.e., if they had not abandoned the Bible or changed the meaning of the inspired words – *ed.*] as their paradigm for speaking of Trinity [they would not have needed the word at all! – *ed.*] and Incarnation. **What preexists is not the Son *per se*, but the Logos.** In John the Logos is not begotten or generated. The Logos was with God and was God, and in the course of time became flesh as the Son."✧

A One God Conference will be held in Washington, DC from May 14-16, 2004. See godward.org for details.

Measuring Modern Christianity Against the Words of the Bible

by Paul Fiorilla

In my 30-plus years as a Christian, I've heard the phrase "accept Jesus as your personal Savior" probably thousands of times. The phrase always rankled me, although it took me years to fully understand why.

There are abundant reasons to shiver at the idea of just a "personal salvation." For one thing, it goes hand in hand with the shallow, feel-good, "I found it" bumper-sticker version of Christianity, an appeal to accept Christ for reasons of personal fulfillment. Certainly, a life dedicated to Christ's will is the ultimate form of fulfillment, but "personal" fulfillment is more of a fringe benefit than a selling point of Christianity as announced in the Bible.

Another problem for me is that "personal salvation" ignores the corporate responsibility of Christians. Time and time again throughout the Bible, God's people are expected to work together for a larger cause. For example, the Old Testament prophets demanded justice for the poor, while early Christians created a refuge for orphans and widows.

One of my favorite Biblical passages is Paul's description of the church as a body. Individual body parts aren't much good without each other. God expects us to work together for the common good, not be solo practitioners. A Christianity that consists of individual Christians who are "saved" so they won't "go to hell" when they die misses a central point of Christianity. And where did Jesus ever offer "heaven" to anyone in the Bible?

Christ's main emphasis while he was on earth was to preach and teach about the coming Kingdom of God. While there is an individual element to that — each person on his or her own must come to a decision to follow Christ — it is by and large not just a personal triumph. The thrust of the Kingdom of God is that it will one day create a world filled with justice and righteousness — literally a better world.

God wants His people to help the less fortunate, to have a spirit of humility and love. It would be easy to think that this is God's way of directing people toward a higher personal piety. But it is much more than that. It is a foreshadowing of the goal God has set for this earth, a globe filled with justice, mercy and compassion under the Kingdom rule of His Son, Jesus. Christians will serve God as administrators in fulfilling this peaceful and non-discriminatory world.

How can we qualify for this job if we spend our lives spreading dissension and war?

Sadly, in America today the evangelical church makes little pretense of acting in accordance with Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God. Many evangelicals are fervently militaristic and political, despite Jesus' command to his followers to be peacemakers and to love their enemies. Many believe in a reward after death that amounts to a self-indulgent vision in which Christians wind up floating around the sky with harps.

This distorted vision of the Christian goal would not be possible if we had not lost sight of the corporate portion of the Christian message. The popular Christian author John Eldredge demonstrates this myopic vision in his best-seller *Waking the Dead*. He translates a seminal scene from Jesus' ministry, when he heralds his Messiahship in the temple by quoting Isaiah: "The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me because the Lord anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim the freedom of the captives and release from darkness the prisoner."

This is a vision fraught with social implications. Jesus is calling the oppressed majority beaten down by an unjust economic system, as well as those punished by unrighteous governments. He is speaking to the captives forced into slavery through the brutal and endless wars of his time, the Jews who were under the thumb of a long line of secular empires. He announced that all that was going to end, because the time was coming for God to make it right!

Yet here is Eldredge's translation: "God has sent me on a mission. I have some great news for you. God has sent me to release and restore something. And that something is you. I am here to give you back your heart and set you free." He takes God's spectacularly beautiful and uplifting vision of a future world and creates a pale (not to mention misleading) version. Who cares about the world; it's all about me, he says! Yet, judging by book sales, Christians lap up this gruel, ignoring the wholesome and tasty meal God has set for us.

I've always wrestled with what the Bible teaches. Every church has its own set of beliefs based on certain verses, but other denominations interpret the same text in wholly different ways. For years I concluded that our beliefs are not as important to God as our attitudes. I reasoned that maybe it was God's plan that truth be clouded somewhat. If God wanted us to know everything, He would have laid it out in

Scripture in simple terms. Since it remains so confused, maybe that was God's plan.

However, as I learned more about the development of Christian theology, I came to realize that the confusion is not caused by Godless intellectuals, but by the mental gymnastics needed to justify commonly held beliefs that are nowhere to be found in Scripture. There is a huge disconnect between the language of today's Christianity and that of the Apostles and biblical writers. They didn't need advanced doctoral courses, nor did their listeners. And it is not just that obsolete words or a different world view makes the disconnect a matter of semantics. Today's churches teach basic ideas — including the Trinity and the immortality of the soul — that would be viewed as foreign to members of the earliest church.

That fact becomes particularly clear when one reads the arguments of the Apostles. Take, for instance, the first recorded sermon after the death of Christ, as reported by Luke in the second chapter of the book of Acts. It makes sense that Luke, writing a historical record as a member of the faith, would have thought of this speech as a model for Christian teaching, given its prominent place in the story of the church's development. Let's look at a few excerpts.

After an explanation to the astonished onlookers who heard the Christians speaking foreign languages, Peter described who Jesus was: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, *a man* approved of God among you..."

Right off the bat, Jesus is described as *a man*, albeit one set apart by God. If Peter thought of Jesus as God Incarnate, it is inexplicable that he didn't just say it: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus Christ came down from heaven, where he was fully God, co-equal with God the Father, to become fully man without ceasing to be fully God..."

Peter continues by explaining how Jesus was foreseen by his ancestor David. God swore to David that "of the fruit of his loins" He would raise up a Messiah to "sit on the throne." This is another reference to the basic humanity of Jesus, as well as a reference to the fact that Peter believed that Jesus would ultimately rule on earth. If Jesus had been preexisting as God before being incarnated as "God-Man" — rather than begotten as a human being (as is taught by the Bible) — it would be incredible to think that Peter would speak of him as being a direct descendant of David.

Peter speaks of David as "dead and buried" and "not ascended into the heavens." Surely, if man has an

immortal soul, David would have "made it" to heaven, and he would have been there when Peter made his speech. But that doesn't appear to be what Peter believed. And the reference to the throne would definitely have been taken by his Jewish listeners as a kingdom on this earth. Peter did not say otherwise, giving weight to the assumption that he concurred. No Jew would have imagined the Messianic Kingdom of God to be located in heaven.

Peter made the point that Jesus was the *first man* who had ever been resurrected, fulfilling the word of the prophets and giving hope to mankind. The dead being raised was no run-of-the-mill event! And it is nonsense to say that Peter was making a distinction between a body and an immortal soul. Luke himself doesn't seem to recognize the difference between a body and a soul, because he reports in the same chapter that three thousand "souls" were added to the church that day, and that fear came upon "every soul" who saw the wonders performed by the Apostles. Would Luke write Peter's words without explanation, if he himself meant something different by the same word?

Another staple of modern theology that fails when matched against the words of the Apostles is the idea that Jews had a false view of the Messiah. We've all heard this — that Jews were looking for a political leader, but that Jesus established an ethereal kingdom. But this is not what Paul evidently believed.

In Acts 23, when Paul was speaking to the Sanhedrin, he sided with the Pharisees, saying he had the same Messianic hope in the future as they did, prompting them to spring to his defense. "We find no evil in this man," they said. Would they have so strongly defended a man who differed with them about basic elements of their faith, such as the fate of man after death and the nature of God? No, Jews of the time demonstrated again and again they preferred death to blasphemy. It was about that time that the Roman emperor Caligula tried to erect a bust of himself in the temple at Jerusalem. Thousands of Jewish leaders knelt before Roman soldiers and offered their necks to the swords, so they would not have to see such blasphemy, and the Romans relented. The Jews who defended Paul brooked no dissent, but they did not find Paul's core beliefs objectionable. How could that be if Paul preached a non-Jewish message?

The point is even clearer in Acts 24, when Paul is making his defense before the governor, Felix. "I worship the God of our fathers, believing *everything* laid down in the law and the prophets, having a hope

in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust.” He reiterates that he believes what the Pharisees taught about the future, which is the same gospel of the Kingdom that was preached by Jesus. People who argue that the Jews were wrong about the Messiah’s role in this world and God’s future plan, and that Christians taught a whole new message, are arguing against Paul himself!

Many modern commentators accuse Peter and Luke of having a *primitive*, under-developed Christianity, the idea being that God revealed Himself more fully as time went on. In order to believe this, one must conclude that we today know more about Jesus and his mission than his closest associates did. We would also have to believe that God revealed more to men like John Nelson Darby than He did to Moses and Abraham, who met God and angels face to face. Upon reflection we should dismiss such an idea as ludicrous.

I hope that one day the mainstream church will get back to a teaching that reflects the mind of Jesus, Peter, Paul and the Apostles. Until then, the church offers the world a poor reflection of the message of Christ. The current Gospel lacks the full-blooded hope of God’s Kingdom coming at the return of Jesus. And it promotes a Savior who is really God Himself and barely human. ✧

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John’s Test for Christianity

Some modern free paraphrase translations make it quite clear that the Jesus they wish to proclaim preexisted his birth and is fully God. *The Living New Testament* (now in 47 languages and millions of copies) paraphrases John 1:1-3: “Before anything else existed, there was Christ with God. He has always been alive and is Himself God. He created everything there is — nothing exists that He didn’t make.” *The Living New Testament* adds this comment: “The magnificent truth — for each of us who really cares to find out — is that the person who masterminded all creation was once breathing, sleeping, and eating on this planet Earth, just as you and I are — and we can get acquainted with Him. The creator God Himself invaded our planet. We had a ‘visitor from outer space,’ the second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ...God came here in physical form...Jesus Christ, the awesome Creator-God.”

Those who produced this very distorted rendering of the Greek text of John 1 would have done well to

consider the words of systematic theologian Dr. Brown, general editor of *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*: “It is a common but patent misreading of the opening of John’s Gospel to read it as if it said: ‘In the beginning was the *Son* and the *Son* was with God and the *Son* was God.’ What has happened here is the substitution of *Son* for *Word*, and thereby the Son is made a member of the Godhead which existed from the beginning.”

A leading evangelical of our time, Charles Swindoll, shares the misleading view of *The Living New Testament* when he approves the words of Max Lucado: “Angels watched as Mary changed God’s diaper. The universe watched with wonder as the Almighty learned to walk” (C.R. Swindoll, *Jesus: When God Became a Man*, p. 10). Roman Catholics hold the same notions about Jesus when they declare (as was heard on TV recently): “God came to Mary and said, ‘Mary, will you please be My mother?’”

All “orthodox” commentaries make it clear that belief in “God become man” (Incarnation) is the first principle of Christianity. Yet dissenters from the traditional view maintain that Jesus was fully human — supernaturally begotten (Luke 1:35) — not God and man at the same time. Jesus’ “history” is essential for our knowledge of him. If he brought with him a consciousness of having been alive since eternity, he seems to have forgotten about this in Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s accounts of him. Matthew sees Jesus’ origin in a supernatural begetting granted to the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18, 20; I John 5:18, not KJV). Luke sees Jesus as descended from Adam, who was “son of God” (Luke 3:38). Mark relates that Jesus fully upheld the strict Jewish monotheism of the Old Testament (Mark 12:28-34). Luke 1:35 says that the Son of God *came into existence* in the womb of his mother. You cannot come into existence as Son if you have *already been in existence* as Son.

The Old Testament predicts a Messiah who will be born a descendant of David (2 Sam. 7) and who will arise in Israel as a “prophet like Moses” (Deut. 18:15-18). A Messiah who was God before he became man would not fit this prediction, and would therefore be a false Messiah. A Jesus who was alive before he was born would be another Jesus (2 Cor. 11:4). The whole point of the Messiah in the Bible is that he must be a member of the human race originating within the human biological chain.

And yet many current commentators insist that if you deny that God became man, while not ceasing in

any way to be God, you put yourself outside the Christian church.

Commentators are *right* to point out that “Gnostics rejected the Old Testament and denied that the Christian Savior was the Jewish Messiah” (*Century Bible* on 1 John 2:22). They admit that “John’s epistle was written to combat errors about the Person of Christ” (*Ibid.*, p. 78) and “that a sharp struggle for the control of the churches had broken out between the Christians who were faithful to apostolic teaching and those who opposed them” (p.88). Gnosticism “professed to give its approval and patronage to the Gospel,” but taught that the universe “must have been created by some inferior power” (*Pulpit Commentary, Epistles of John*, p. iv).

Is Gnosticism a relic of the past? Was it successfully overcome in mainstream Christianity? The crucial question is whether modern Gnostics, *now calling themselves “orthodox,”* continue to deny the full humanity of Jesus while accusing the original Truth about Jesus of being the error. Thus the *Pulpit Commentary*: “The denial of Jesus as the Christ means the denial of Jesus as the *eternal Son* of the Father, and the consequent *denial of the Incarnation*”¹ (*Ibid.*, p. 44). But who in the Bible ever said that Jesus was the “eternal Son of God”?

That Jesus is *the Messiah*, the Son of God (not God the Son) is a revelation given as a supernatural enlightenment by God the Father (Matt. 16:17). Jesus’ church is founded on the bedrock (NASV margin) of Peter’s confession about Jesus’ Messiahship. Belief in Jesus as *the Messiah* is the cornerstone doctrine of the whole of Scripture.

Appropriately John writes, “*There is no falsehood so great as the denial of the Messiahship of Jesus.* The man who denies that is the real Antichrist, because with that falsehood he denies both the Father and the Son. No one can deny the Son without denying the Father also...This is how you can distinguish the Spirit of God: every utterance that proclaims Jesus to be the Messiah in actual flesh and blood is of God, and every such utterance that denies the statement is not of God. This latter is the spirit of Antichrist, about whose coming you have heard. It is now already here in the world” (1 John 2:22, 23; 4:2, 3, *New Testament Letters Paraphrased* by J.W.C. Wand, D.D., 1946).

John does not “drive down the middle of the road,” unable to decide which side is statutory. He

¹ Note: the Son of God/Messiah has been mysteriously transformed into the eternal Son/God the Son.

makes an absolute distinction between Truth and Lie. John’s test must be applied rigorously. John insists that a proper understanding of the identity of Jesus is essential for genuine faith. Does your understanding of who Jesus is measure up to the standard provided by John and the Bible? ✧

“We have been drifting into a muddle and a mess.” With these provocative words one of the world’s leading New Testament scholars challenges the churches to reconsider their traditional view of life after death. The Bishop of Durham, N.T. Wright, says, “We should remember especially that the use of the word ‘heaven’ to denote the ultimate goal of the redeemed, though hugely emphasized by medieval piety, mystery plays, and the like, and still almost universal at a popular level, is *severely misleading* and does not begin to do justice to the Christian hope. I am repeatedly frustrated by how hard it is to get this point through the thick wall of traditional thought and language most Christians put up...I have come to the conclusion that what we do and say in church at this point is increasingly at odds with anything that can be justified from the Bible or the earliest Christian traditions...And nothing is said in the NT or very early Christianity about the death, or state thereafter, of the mother of Jesus...We have been putting together bits and pieces of tradition, ideas and practices in the hope that they will make sense. They don’t” (*For All the Saints*, SPCK, 2003, pp. xii, xii, 21, 23).

Finally a call for a return to the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles on the Christian future and what happens when we die! The status quo in churches is anything but satisfactory. It represents a dangerous paganism and needs urgent overhaul.

Comments

“Every teacher wants to learn from his students, or he should. I am especially grateful that you alerted me to the writings of Sir Anthony Buzzard. I had no idea that anything so earthshaking as his evaluation of Church tradition was afoot. I will be watching to see the reaction from Church leaders.” — *New York*

“I just wanted to express my thanks and appreciation for your book *Our Fathers Who Aren’t in Heaven*, which you gave me while I was visiting Atlanta Bible College. My husband and I thoroughly enjoyed the class we sat in on and so did the two youths we brought.” — *Illinois*

“Your books have been a great help in my search for the true Judaic understanding of ha Shem’s vision of his word and his Massiach Yeshua. Your latest newsletter article has for me thrown new light on salvation. Currently I have been using your books to challenge the Trinitarian views of my prayer partners; they are currently

prayerfully considering their current beliefs. The only down side is that a changing vision makes fellowship with strong Calvinistic/amillennial believers who are longstanding brethren more and more difficult without serious confrontation and separation.” — *England*

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 Philipians 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-cogec.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

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**Return with check made out to: Atlanta Bible College,
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\$69 before April 7 \$79 after