

EDITORIAL

TO SEEK AND SAVE THAT WHICH IS LOST

After some nearly 20 years in academia, I returned to pastoral ministry. I still try to keep my hand/mind in academic matters via this editorial position, as co-host of our Theological Conferences, and by staying current on several e-mail forums.

A short time ago we concluded our 13th annual Theological Conference. It was an outstanding program and brought together renowned scholars such as Colin Brown and Anthony Buzzard, plus guests from all over the world from Australia to England.

Topics at a gathering such as that tend to be rather focused on academic, theological questions — inquiries that are not commonly discussed among average Christians.

That is the way it has been recently on the forums with which I am involved. The questions have to do with, on one list, issues regarding the split between Daniel's 69th and 70th week, or perhaps there is properly no chronological split. Who is the King of the North? King of the South? Is he to be equated with the Antichrist? Is the Great Tribulation in process, or yet future? What is the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, and is that same individual in view when Jesus refers to it? And that is just one such discussion.

On another forum the question of the proper mode of baptism has occupied the discussion for some time. Other questions have been regarding pacifism, racism in church and among Christians, and the personality of Satan and demonology. Now all of these are legitimate issues and forums, and journals such as this are appropriate places for such discussions, but I wonder...

I'm reminded of a story told many years ago by Frederick Speakman, then pastor of Fourth Presbyterian in Dayton, Ohio. In his book *The Salty Tang*, he tells the story of the little old lady visiting Westminster Cathedral and being moved by the guide's comments. But as the tour continued she began to have second thoughts. After a bit more time, she finally interrupted the guide to ask if she might be permitted a question. He graciously gave her permission, and she confounded him by posing the question, "But has anybody been saved here lately?"

That's a fair question that needs to be asked frequently as we get involved in the esoteric entanglements of theology. Not that those questions are unimportant. They are and need discussion as we seek to arrive at "truth," but we pointedly need to ask/remind ourselves, "Has anybody been saved here lately?"

That is not a simplistic comment, for it is at the heart of the mission of God in sending His Son — that all the world would have the opportunity to be saved. As soon as I write these words, I envision some readers positing, “But what does it mean to be saved?”

Again a legitimate question, but that was why God sent His only begotten Son that the world could be saved — and that is the mission we are all given to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and the things concerning Christ Jesus.

Let us continue our theological discussions and inquiries seeking truth, but let us ask ourselves frequently, “Has anybody been saved here lately?” Not just in Westminster, but in the halls of theological schools, the studies of ministers of the Word of God, and in our own churches: “Has anybody been saved here lately?”

One of the core subjects of this journal is eschatology. In this issue we pose two studies, each from a different point of view, concerning the time of the end. Our intent is to encourage study of the topics presented as a way to stimulate discussion and theological insights.

We will be continuing such point and counterpoint articles in following issues. Feel free to write with your own point of view. Articles from different perspectives are welcomed, provided they are presented in appropriate theological and academic form.

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