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Contributors

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What's in a word? / by the Editor

ELDER

What a troublesome little word for Advent Christians!

We are gradually shrinking in numbers, and some people think that tinkering with the administrative machinery will help to stop the decline. Should we become Episcopalian? Presbyterian?

In the beginning (150 years ago), Advent Christians were debating ecclesiastical polity. Coming from a variety of denominational backgrounds, they brought their views of church governance with them into the Millerite movement and into the Advent Christian denomination after its organization in 1860. The denomination has always been congregational. A number of times, however, people have called for a tighter governmental structure.

In the early 1980s a number of articles on ecclesiastical polity were published in *Henceforth ...*. Issue 12:3 (1983) has five articles in connection with the national United Outreach program. Issue 13:2 (1984) has eight items dealing with local church governance. It includes a passionate advocacy of presbyterianism and a strong defense of congregationalism. Two more dispassionate articles follow. In *Henceforth ...* 18:1 the executive director of the denomination advocated an episcopal form of government in which presumably he would be the archbishop. Half of *Henceforth ...* 20:2 (1993) is devoted to ecclesiastical polity.

In connection with the government of the local church, these words are particularly significant: **elder** (presbyter), bishop (overseer, episkopos), shepherd (pastor; poimen), and deacon (diakonos). It is generally recognized that in the first century bishop, elder, and pastor (shepherd) were synonyms for the same position. Advent Christians in the last thirty years have given most attention to the **elder**.

Elder is an essentially generic term. Presumably elders are called elders because they are elderly. It is presumed that wisdom increases with knowledge and experience. Practically all societies have them, whatever they may be called, whether their position is formally or spontaneous recognized. The word is used 198 times from Exodus to Revelation — 130 times in the Old Testament, 12 in Matthew, 18 in Acts, and 7 in the writings of Paul (all of them in 1 Timothy and Titus), and a dozen in Revelation. Apart from a reference to the elders of the Moabites and of the Midianites, the OT references, those in the gospels, and many of those in Acts are to “the elders of Israel” or “the elders of the Jews.” The twelve in Revelation refer to the twenty-four elders seated around God. Seventeen relate to the Christian church (the figures are taken from the NIV c2010 via Biblegateway.com).

The generic nature of the word elder is clear in Paul’s advice to Timothy not to treat an elderly man (presbyter) harshly (1 Timothy 5:1). Peter also makes clear the age connections when he says, “In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders” (1 Peter 5:5 NIV).

Unlike the diaconate, the origin of which is recorded in Acts 6, the existence of elders is taken for granted without any explanation of their origin or composition. The disciples in Antioch, for example, took up a collection for the needy in Jerusalem, “sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:29–30). During Paul’s revisit to the churches he had established on his first missionary journey, he and Barnabas “appointed elders for them in each church” (Acts 14:23). Titus was left in Crete to appoint elders (Titus 1:5). When a debate arose in Antioch about the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers, it was referred to “the apostles and elders” in Jerusalem (Acts 15:2). Paul urged Timothy, “Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you” (1 Timothy 4:14).

These references all seem to suggest an authoritarian appointment of elders (by Paul, Barnabas and Titus) or an

authoritarian board of elders (Jerusalem). On the other hand, the church members pick out their own deacons in chapter 6. The answer to the Jewish/Gentile problem was issued by “the apostles and elders, with the whole church” (Acts 15:21). An early church manual (circa 100 CE), The Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles), instructed the congregations to “Choose for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons” (15:1).

Note again that Paul does not mention elders outside of the pastoral letters. He does refer in Philippians to “overseers and deacons” (Philippians 1:1; NIV 2010 translates episkopos as overseer). Even in 1 Timothy and Titus he first describes the qualifications for overseers (episkopos) and later in the letters refers to elders (presbyteros). Paul’s meeting with the leaders of the Ephesian church is particularly instructive. Luke refers to the leaders as **elders** (Acts 20:17). Paul calls them **shepherds** and **overseers**:

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**. Be **shepherds** of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul lists gifts given to the church: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.” George E. Ladd states,

The language of Ephesians 4:11 suggests that pastor-teacher is a single office embodying a twofold function: that of shepherding or overseeing the flock, and of teaching. It is probable that this term designates leaders in the local church and is basically the same as presbyteroi and episkopoi. (533).

The Didache uses familiar terms:

Choose for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not; for they are your honourable men along with the prophets and teachers” (15:1–4).

As George Ladd points out a few times concerning the first century church, “The form of the church in a given city is not clear” (532). We can at least say that it had a plurality of leaders as is true in large churches today. The churches in Jerusalem and Antioch, for example, each had several thousand members. The monepiscopate (single “bishop”) soon developed of necessity for smaller churches — as is true today. Up to a hundred “sheep” at least can be pastored [Microsoft Word changes this word to pastured, not entirely inappropriate] by one bishop-elder-shepherd — with much help from “all Christians” who “serve and minister” — especially deacons. Baptist churches have generally had a pastor and deacons. Notice that in Acts 6 the deacons were responsible for, but not limited to, ministry to the poor. Stephen is an outstanding example of a much wider ministry.

In the midst of strong words about church government, note Robert J Mayer’s calm and wise article in *Henceforth ...*, “Church Government: A Time to Evaluate.” He places the origin of Adventist congregationalism within the context of popular feelings about democracy in 1860 and of the influence of a group of believers known as the Christian Connexion which was thoroughly congregational. Mayer wants to retain congregationalism but in a modified form. The local church should not be isolated from other churches, especially those in its own denomination. Mayer sees in the New Testament three principles for effective church government: (1) “accountability, not autonomy”; (2) “being a leader means being a servant”; (3) “churches should be organized to accomplish the mission that God has given to them” (61–65).

I assert that the New Testament does not teach any particular form of church government. The Scriptures do provide principles for churches to follow but a specific footprint is not discussed. (63)

And again in the conclusion:

I sense the Bible is not so much concerned with the purity of a congregation's form of government as about the willingness and ability of the congregation to make disciples for Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of hurting men and women, and to bring believers into a mature relationship with Jesus Christ" (64).

For affirmation of this position by a scholar outside of the Adventist tradition, note the words of George Eldon Ladd:

It appears likely that there was no normative pattern of church government in the apostolic age, and that the organizational structure of the church is no essential element in the theology of the church. (534; similarly Dayton 70; Forrester 696)

Churches which carry out their divinely given mission, whether presbyterian, episcopalian, or congregational, may flourish. Churches which compromise or abandon the faith decline. Note the current trends within the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Church of Christ (congregational), each of which seems to be committing ecclesiastical suicide. The problem is apostasy, not polity.

Good news and bad news

The Good News

Advent Christian churches need not be concerned about governmental structure. Almost all of them have a mixture

which includes a pastor (teaching elder and probably ruling elder at the same time; a mini-bishop?) and deacons or the equivalent. Most of them have close relationships with the conference, the region, and general conference. A rather striking example took place on October 11 this year (2010). Margaret McIntyre died during the wee hours of the morning, and before noon, Clinton Taber, the regional superintendent, had driven from Rochester, New Hampshire, to Springfield, Vermont, to be of aid to pastor McIntyre.

The Bad News

Having a workable governmental structure does not guarantee success. The question is, are our churches accountable, servant minded, and “accomplish[ing] the mission that God has given to them?”

Basically all churches are congregational. The individual members vote with their pocketbooks and their feet. If the church is corrupt, people stop giving, then leave.

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THE MILLENARIANS AND REFORM REFORM ACTIVITIES DURING THE CIVIL WAR ERA

Thomas Dean

Millenarianism was an offshoot Protestant sect that came into being during the early nineteenth century. Based on the beliefs and teachings of William Miller, the Millerites, as they came to be called, believed in the literal and imminent return of Jesus Christ. In his book, *American Reformers 1815–1860*, Ronald G. Walters states,

Millenarians usually had an anti-reform cast of mind. They generally maintained that times will inevitably get worse until the reappearance of Jesus and that godly people must withdraw from the sinful world and passively await judgment.¹

Walters' assertion does not properly assess the effect that the millenarians had on society, post the Great Disappointment. The Millerites were not visually active socially during the years leading up to 1843, which was the year that Christ was predicted to return and establish his kingdom on the Earth. After Christ did not appear, the Millerites continued to organize and become increasingly active in the social reforms of the day. Millenarians were vigorously anti-tobacco, pro-temperance, anti-war, and active in establishing military exemptions. Many of the leaders of the movement were reformers, such as Joshua V. Himes, Miller's second in command.

The activities of these people were extolled and promoted by such newspapers as *The World's Crisis* and *The Advent Herald*. It is in searching these newspapers that the reform activity of the millenarians can be ascertained. I have chosen to research the period leading up to the civil war, and also reforms supported during the war itself. When Walters mentions passively awaiting

the kingdom of God, he does not take into account that the Millerite converts came to follow the ideas of many of their leaders; of whom many were reformers prior to conversion to millenarian ideas. While conformity was not unanimous (as it never is), converts were believers and therefore attempted to embody the ideals of the movement, many of which were socially minded.

In 1816, a farmer, William Miller, was challenged by a friend about the validity of his faith. For the next two years, Miller studied the Bible, reading and rereading the scriptures with a critical eye. At the end of his two-year search he came away with more than a solid belief in his faith. Miller came away with a belief that the end of the world would occur in twenty-five years. Miller then reexamined his conclusion, not wanting to find his conclusion built upon a weak or flawed supposition. Miller then spoke to some close neighbors, and felt called by God to become a pastor. These apocalyptic views and beliefs of Miller began to spread. Many mainstream denominations denounced Miller's belief. Miller said, "I believe that the second coming of Jesus Christ is near, even at the door, even within twenty-one years, or on or before 1843."² This radical claim was ridiculed and Miller was often called a visionary and a fanatic by both the secular and Christian world.³

The doctrine of William Miller continued to spread from the countryside to the city. The movement found a friend and unifier in Joshua V. Himes. Himes was a great organizer and began many of the newspapers that the Millerites used to put forth the ideas of the movement. Himes was an ardent abolitionist and also a radical in his day. Himes was a close friend of the well-known William Lloyd Garrison.⁴ He saw "Christianity as a guide to reforming the world and entered any cause which seemed to promise such success in some degree."⁵ With Miller lecturing and Himes promoting, the cause of millenarism grew in number and area.

As the day of Christ's predicted return grew near, the activities of the Millerites grew. Unfortunately for Miller, Himes,

and the rest of the Millerites, Christ did not appear on March 21, 1844 as predicted [the last day of the Jewish year]. It was known as the First Disappointment. The date was reset at the end of the year by a follower of Miller who claimed to have found the flaw in Miller's prediction. Christ did not return then either. Following the Great Disappointment, the movement grew away from setting dates of the Lord's return, but still believed that the return was nigh. Many of the leaders in the movement were social reformists, but while the return of Christ was still predicted to return, they promoted what to them was the more important issue: the end of the world. In the years following 1844, the millenarians continued to organize and grow. Himes continued to guide and publish newspapers until his death in 1895. This helped to unify the sect post-1843. The millenarians attempted to change society in accordance to biblical standards, and such standards places millenarians squarely in the midst of many of the reforms of the day.

Women's Rights

The millenarians were pro-women's rights, and the position that millenarians took is visible in the articles in the many newspapers of the day. Although it is not the equal rights that we now comprehend, for their time they were radical. According to F.D. Huntington, women were to be held in high esteem for their accomplishments.

Let man learn to be grateful to woman for this unbounded achievement of her sex, that she, far more than he, and too often in despite of him, has kept Christendom from lapsing back into barbarism; kept mercy and truth from being overborne by those two greedy monsters, money and war. ⁶

Huntington argues that it is women who have kept Christianity pure, and that it is men who have led the church though greed

and war to the brink of destruction. Women are to be thanked and not ignored. Huntington continues in his description of how women should be treated:

Let not man ... manufacture opinion for her, and force it on her lips by dictation. Let them [men] not crucify her emotions, nor ridicule her frailty, nor crush her individuality, nor insult her independence, nor play off mean jests upon her honor in convivial companies. Let them [men] multiply her social advantages, enhance her dignity, minister to her intelligence, and by manly gentleness, be patron to her genius, the friends of her fortune, and the equals, if they can, of her heart.⁷

Here Huntington calls for women's unhindered independence and calls for social equality. This is a very radical position that he has taken, and one with which many millenarians agree. Women however are still considered to be the weaker of the two sexes, yet Huntington is still calling for social equality.

Tobacco

The stance that the millenarians took on tobacco is very obvious, and shows a reform-minded position. Tobacco was viewed as a sinful and filthy habit. The idea in the mind of the publishers was that "the habit of using tobacco is ... evil, [as is] its influence."⁸ Christians of any denominations should not be polluting their body with tobacco. Using tobacco defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is the body of the Christian. The millenarians considered tobacco use evil and, they also tied the influence of tobacco to many undesirable situations. The use of tobacco led to "many ailments that affect fallen humanity."⁹ The evil influence of tobacco had a very long reach: the habit wasted time, money, injured the body and brain, led to drunkenness, and death.¹⁰ The effects of tobacco were horrible as it was a self-inflicted injury, and many considered the habit as easy to break.

The millenarians considered tobacco to be a highly visible social ill that needed to be addressed. In attempting to achieve change in society, the evils of tobacco were described by doctors, lending an air of respectability to the case for abstinence. A person could disagree with the theological underpinnings that a millenarian believed, but who could disagree with a doctor's report on the effects of a drug. One particular article that was published on May 19, 1863 listed the effects of tobacco on the body, and the doctor who had performed the research. Dr. Woodward connected tobacco use with insanity. Dr. Rush found the link involving memory loss and pulmonary consumption, while Dr. Cheyne showed that tobacco led to epilepsy.

The article contained the names of thirteen doctors and eleven diseases, including neuralgia, dyspepsia, and apoplexy.¹¹ The use of a doctor's name and professional terminology would appeal to those who did not accept the religious reasons for discontinuing the use of tobacco. This information called for all people to abstain completely from the use of tobacco in any form. There was no gradual elimination of the habit; quitting cold turkey and total abstinence for life were promoted.

I hereby promise to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and from the use of tobacco, totally and forever.¹²

Pledges such as this one appeared with much frequency and in various forms. One was geared specifically for the youth which, it was hoped to keep maturing children from ever trying the substance. In forcefully promoting abstinence from tobacco, the millenarians were attempting to create change within society. Although opposition to the use of tobacco does not lead to a lasting consequence, such as the Prohibition Amendment, it is the attempt to change society that demonstrates the reform ideals of the millenarians.

Alcohol

Another issue, which the millenarians wanted to reform, was the use and abuse of alcohol. Much like the issue of tobacco, the Millerites wanted complete and total abstinence. Alcohol was another poison that desecrated the temple of the Holy Spirit. The stance of the millenarians was as follows:

Whereas, We believe the vice of intemperance to be one most dreadful in its tendencies and results, and the trafficking [sic] in ardent spirits a dishonorable and unworthy calling; and

Whereas, Many worthy persons, young men particularly are by this vice lured from the path of duty, virtue, morality, and religion, therefore

Resolved, That we earnestly recommend all connected with us in Church or Conference capacity, to resort to every and all means which wisdom may dictate to *put down* this soul-destroying and far spreading evil. ¹³

This resolution came as a result of deliberations at the Illinois Annual Conference. Alcohol was classified not as a drug or addiction, but as an evil, much like tobacco. The Christians were to be both separate from and hostile to evil in all forms. It is not enough to eschew alcohol in your own life, but the vice must be fought in the city and state because it is morally reprehensible. Not only was alcohol an evil, but also it was a strong evil. In the article, “Twelve Ways of Shortening Life,” the fifth way stated, “Beginning in childhood on tea and coffee [both of these drinks were considered stimulating and the abstinence of these drinks was also promoted], and going from one step to another, through chewing and smoking tobacco, and drinking intoxicating liquors, by personal abuse and physical excesses of every description.”¹⁴ While the use of tobacco was a sin, the use of alcohol was a more damaging sin. Tobacco was the gateway

drug, which led ultimately to the hard-core evil of drunkenness, and drunkenness led to death.

The temperance movement was very strong and vocal within these newspapers. Arguments were made from the scriptures. In the argument against alcohol, clarification was given concerning the Gospel story of Christ's first miracle, that of changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. A Dr. E. Nott had recently exhumed a statue of Baccus from the ruined city of Pompeii. Now there were some who argued that if Christ turned water into wine, then not all alcohol was evil. The statue of Baccus was examined and, according to Dr. Nott, confirmed the idea that the grapes were unfermented, and thusly unintoxicating. This conclusion led to the belief that Jesus was not pro-alcohol, because the wine he created was not intoxicating.¹⁵

This call for temperance was due to the destructiveness of alcoholism and the societal problems that it created. According to Dr. Franklin, "Temperance puts wood on the fire, meal in the barrel, flour in the tub, money in the purse, credit in the country, contentment in the house, intelligence in the brain, and spirit in the whole constitution."¹⁶ When one forsook alcohol completely a new life was started. The use of alcohol wasted money that could and should be used to heat the home, feed the family, save for the future, and give strength to the bone. Temperance was much to be esteemed because it would lead a man to change his life for the better. There are a number of arguments which use a phrase similar to this: "One who has been a slave to strong drink ..."¹⁷ This analogy shows the evils of both alcohol and slavery. The use of alcohol bound a man in the chains of sin and depravity. These chains were wrong because they destroyed a man's freedom.

Slavery

The millenarians were also very anti-slavery. As with the chains of alcohol, the chains of slavery were evil. To most millenarians, the existence of slavery was a blight upon the soul

of the nation. How could the United States claim to be morally superior to its European neighbors?

But after all that has been said and written, after all our boasts of Freedom, how much real freedom does the world enjoy? Even our own land, which professes to be the freest on the face of the globe, rivets the accursed chain of slavery upon the helpless hands of millions. This is the Freedom of the “freest land on earth!” ... Our country enslaves blacks ... such has been and will be the case with more or less of the earth’s nations, till the dawning of the glorious day of universal Freedom — till the time that the great God shall emancipate the down-trodden. ¹⁸

This is the viewpoint that is found in the Adventist newspapers of the day. The paradox of freedom in the United States, while the economy of the South is built off the backs of African slaves, is mentioned and a call for change is heralded. Although it may appear at first that the above quote supports Walters’s idea that the millenarians sat back and waited for the return of Christ to change the status quo, a close analysis of other articles appearing, needs to be taken in evaluating the reform position of millenarians. At the Illinois Annual Conference, slavery was also discussed. The following shows the reform position of many millenarians:

Resolved, That we look upon American Slavery as not only degrading and demoralizing in its influence, and so unworthy of a civilized Nation, but as an institution directly opposed to both the spirit and the letter of Christianity.

Resolved, We believe except this great Nation speedily repent of this great National crime, God’s afflictive judgments cannot be long delayed — if the last

judgment does not come — on which account we should not cease to cry day and night. ¹⁹

The minutes in this conference show that while the ultimate hope was the return of Christ, in the meantime, the millenarians were not going to sit around and wait for it to happen. For some the crying day and night for the end of slavery was very radical indeed. In Natick, Massachusetts, the citizens came together and signed an anti-slavery pledge. This pledge was written “without regards to political or religious creeds” ²⁰ and was signed by all in the town. The people promised:

Whereas, resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, therefore, *Resolved*, That it is the right and duty of the slaves to resist their masters, and the right and duty of the people of the North to incite them to resistance, *and to aid them in it.* [italics mine] ²¹

This shows that these millenarians were able to cross religious and political ideologies to fight against slavery on a large scale. The aiding and abetting of slaves in resistance to their masters is active reform. The abolitionist stance is found in many Adventist circles and also among its leadership. Joshua V. Himes who was the second-in-command to Miller, and was now a highly visible leader of the movement, was close friends with William Lloyd Garrison, ²² and “was active in reform movements to the end [of his life].” ²³

Conscientious objection to war

As the civil war progressed, the beliefs about slavery did not change, and also the specter of what a Christian’s civic duty consisted of began to appear. Slavery stayed as a pivotal evil that must be fought against, but should a Christian actually be fighting? This became the most focused on reform during the Civil War itself. C. Churchill made this call for reflection in 1861:

Hence in fighting to restore the Union and maintain the laws [laws such as the fugitive slave law of 18 September 1850], we are fighting for slavery, to sustain it where it now exists. And the Southern Confederacy is fighting us, to extend slavery into free territory and to enslave the free. Hence, virtually speaking, all the fighting that has yet been done has been to sustain slavery. ²⁴

The call is still about the evils of slavery. At this point, President Lincoln is fighting to preserve the union and not to end slavery. This reflection questions the usefulness of fighting to preserve the institution of slavery as it is because slavery is reprehensible. The millenarians are not sitting and waiting passively for Christ's kingdom to come. They are actively attempting to right the wrongs of the day.

The position against slavery came to a foremost position during the Civil War. The war was going on and, following the Emancipation Proclamation; it became a war to end the horrors of slavery. Amongst this context another reform issue rises to prominence: that of conscientious objectors. For the period up to the civil war, some millenarians had argued that Christians should not take an active role in government. I.C. Wellcome assumed such a position. He writes:

We say with Dr. Ting, "that all human governments, ancient and modern, are but the organization of man's apostacy [sic] from God, whose will has never been adopted as the rule of human government. Britain and America no more adopt the divine authority than did Babylon and Persia." ... we do not recognize civil rulers as "Christian rulers." ²⁵

Wellcome argues that Christians are citizens in heaven and owe no binding allegiance on Earth, to any power that is corrupt and sinful. Again he states:

Let Caesar take care of his own household. Let Christians follow Christ, by the cross to glory.²⁶

Christians belong to heaven, and while they need to render to Caesar his due, no more can be given to him. Caesar represents the governments of the earth, which, not being Christian in nature, are in direct contention with God's will for mankind. When the Civil War started, the issue of Christian participation in government added a new dimension. Should Christians fight in war? We have already seen Churchill's call to not fight prior to the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation, because slavery was essentially being preserved. The argument now was, should Christians fight in the army, and the central question became if drafted, what should a Christian do. The majority of millenarians believed that war was wrong, even if the war was fought for just reasons.

The army is no place for a man that loves the Lord ... Everything connected with killing men on the battle field is unlike the character of Jesus, and the spirit he taught us to manifest.²⁷

The Christian is to live a life that embodies the character of Christ. Fighting in war is directly contrary to the peaceful ideals that Christ taught. I.C. Wellcome also called millenarians to abstain from fighting. Wellcome states:

In all things that which do not conflict with Christ's law, we should be careful to observe all human law ... Yet when required to act a part in conflict with our master's law, we will do as the apostles and early christians [sic] did — obey God rather than men.²⁸

Wellcome argues that the laws of God supercede the laws of men, and when the laws come into conflict with each other, the Christian should obey that law which is greater: God's law. The

millenarians argued vehemently against conscription when the conscience of a man is being violated. The status of conscientious objectors was what the millenarians wanted, much like the status that the Quakers possessed. This would exempt a man on the grounds that his conscience could not allow him to participate in violence. Once again, the proponents of millenarianism attempted to change society.

Non-governmental Social Action

This argument for abstaining from government brings up the question of how can groups of people effect reform without participating in government. For a group of people to espouse ideas such as:

Could a true Union man of the United States government be an officer, a soldier, or a voter in the Southern Confederacy? All will answer, no. How then can a citizen, a soldier, or an officer in Christ's government, be a citizen, a soldier, or an officer in the government of this sinful world? This is unequal yoking with unbelievers, with the godless, graceless, careless, faithless, shameless of this poor rebel world. Consider this, ye christian[sic] fighters, officers, and voters.²⁹

Wellcome once writes not only that Christians should accept a non-participation stance in the war, but that Christians should also refuse to hold office or citizenry of this country. The call to abandon citizenship in ones country is not necessarily a call to renounce the idea of citizenship. Citizenship in heaven supercedes any allegiance to nations on earth. While Wellcome sounds a call for radical separation from government, not all millenarians called for such drastic change. The Reverend L. Delos Mansfield states:

We are under the same obligation to co-operate with God in making and supporting the best government

practicable, that we are under to establish and maintain the best church and the most perfect social relations possible.³⁰

His statement argues that Christians have an obligation to enact wholesome government if within their capabilities. Delos's position is the minority of the group, but it still calls for Christian action in maintaining the social relations.

The reforms that were promoted and worked for by millenarians were accomplished by means outside the political arena. Many groups that were unable to vote have fought for and received change, such as women and the right to vote. Obviously, women could not vote to receive suffrage, but instead held demonstrations and conferences and publicized the injustice that was being done to women. The millenarians used similar venues to facilitate change. Many camp meetings were held and hundreds of people, both believers and the general public attended. The use of newspapers was very proliferate and highly successful. Newspapers reached many readers, both to those who subscribed, and those who received papers free. *The World's Crisis* was one of the most prominent papers. Its readership stayed around 3,000 subscribers, not including the free distribution.³¹ While 3,000 subscribers is not an astronomical number, the readers of the papers would typically share the papers with the congregation and where they worshipped. Newspapers such as this one promoted conferences and speakers, and detailed theology.

Another way in which the papers attempted to influence change was by the use of poetry. Poetry was represented in most issues of *The World's Crisis* and dealt with the issues of the day. One such poem, titled *The Drunkard* by James Hatton tells of the evils of alcohol.

Ah, how silly is the drinker swallowing more than he can need!

To the eye of every thinker he must seem a fool indeed:
So he hurts his constitution, adding drunkenness to thirst,
All for want of resolution not to yield to drink at first.
Was he used to work and labor, honest industry his pride?
Idle now, a wretched neighbor hurts himself and all beside.³²

This poem continues on for another thirty lines. Poetry allows the reader to remember specific aspects about an issue. The drunk is depicted as weak willed and foolish. The poem may perhaps be cut out of the paper and passed along to friends and family. The poem helps to circulate the ideals of the millenarians in a memorable manner.

The millenarians also had an advantage that other non-religious social groups did not have. At the many conferences, people were urged to turn to God as their Savior. These calls for repentance meant that the millenarians grew in number through conversions. These converts to millennial Christianity became “true believers” in the ideas of the church. These believers would take and hold true the teachings of prominent writers of the day.

Another logical argument that needs to be addressed is that of action. Are the articles found within the newspapers only reform ideas, or do they represent the actions of the group. The people of Natick, Massachusetts, have already been mentioned, but their solemn resolution speaks volumes about the reform actions that the ideas heralded in the millenarian’s newspapers brought. The people claim not only that it is the right and duty of slaves to rebel against those who owned them, but also “the right and duty of the people of the North to incite them to resistance, and to aid them in it.”³³ This is a radical call to action. In this the people are not passively awaiting God’s coming kingdom, neither are they only agreeing with the majority. The people are attempting to create change through active participation.

The millenarians were not only opposed to war. They were very active in promoting the right of men not to participate in the draft. In the year 1862, Miles Grant, editor of *The World’s Crisis* published a petition. It stated:

We, the undersigned, Christians looking for the coming of the Lord, have no sympathy with secessionism, and are willing to sustain the government in every lawful way, which does not conflict with the law of Christ; but it is a matter of conscience with us that the New Testament is strictly against Christians using carnal weapons, and as we should die for these principles rather than renounce them, and as this country has granted the sacred privilege to all to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, we ask at your hands that favor may be shown us in this case.³⁴

This petition was to be copied, signed, and sent to President Lincoln asking for the right to be “excused from bearing arms because ... it is a violation of the principles of Christianity.”³⁵ The action of the readers was swift. Two weeks after the printing of this petition, 361 people had signed and sent the petition to the President.³⁶ These people also contacted *The World’s Crisis* to let the paper know that action was being taken against conscription. Petitions were not the only means of active and visible reform. Passive resistance was also advocated. I.C. Wellcome wrote the following concerning the Christian’s response when drafted:

“Go to jail then, but go as *christians*[sic], in meekness and in faith, not as traitors or rebels...; but submit to the powers that be, suffer for Christ’s sake.”³⁷

He also encouraged his fellow Christians to “say nothing against the men of the world who enlist, nor the government which calls for its subjects to sustain its laws.”³⁸ This is a blatant call for non-violence and peaceful resistance. Those who were drafted chose to be incarcerated for their personal beliefs rather than take up the weapons of this world and thereby violate their conscience.

The young members were also active in the signing of pledges. A number of youth pledges were printed in *The World’s Crisis* to

which the youth of the millenarians were called to abstinence and purity. One such pledge called for the signers to “abstain from tea, coffee, tobacco, and all intoxicating beverages.”³⁹ In calling upon the youth of the movement to become active members, the movement looked forward to future growth and work. The youth who never smoked or imbibed would be a young adult willing to continue the fight against such social vices.

Another object that demonstrates participation in fighting public ills is the formation of societies. One such was the American Anti-Tobacco Society. The object of this society was to “break up a death-like, prevalent stupidity in relation to the evils of tobacco, and ‘by light and love’ create a public conscience, which, we trust God will lead to the removal of so great a curse.”⁴⁰ Societies such as these looked to organize people into groups that actively pursued a common goal, such as the removal of tobacco.

CONCLUSION

The millenarians were a group of Christians who espoused ideas that were the exception rather than the norm. These people, who looked to the return of Christ as the ultimate end of social injustice, were not content to wait for the Lord’s return. It is not enough that the people of God accept the social wrongs of the times, while prior to 1843, the Millerites were more focused on the event that would end the world, and the subsequent years were years that were filled with the attempt of these Christians to mend society. Tobacco and alcohol were vices that ruined good men and otherwise wholesome families. Women were not second-class citizens, to be held in contempt. Slavery was poisoning the soul of the nation. All of these problems led millenarians to fight for change, from the youngest to the eldest.

The reform mindedness of the millenarians helped to shape American culture. In their time, the millenarians saw the abolition of slavery occur. Some of the reforms promoted would not come to fruition until much later. The temperance movement of the early twentieth century and subsequent women’s

right movements occur many years after the millenarians had promoted those same causes. The millenarians were able to reap only a part of the seeds of reform that they endeavored to sow, but the United States has continued and will continue to reap those benefits forever. L. Reimer said, “Never approach the poor in any other way but with the intention to do him some good.”⁴¹ It is this approach, one of rescuing the poor of spirit, those trapped in the bondage of tobacco or alcohol or slavery, which paved the way for the millenarians to facilitate reform in America.

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3. *Ibid.*, 50.

4. David Tallmadge Arthur, “Joshua V. Himes and the Cause of Adventism 1839–1845” Dissertation for the University of Chicago (1960) located in the Jenks Collection, Aurora (Illinois) University, 10.

5. *Ibid.*, 17.

6. F.D. Huntington, “What is Due to Woman?” *World’s Crisis*, 21 November 1860, 44.

7. *Ibid.*

8. F.H.B., “Tobacco, My Experience in the Use of Tobacco,” *World’s Crisis*, 20 January 1860.

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12. George Trask, “Tobacco and Hard Times: An Appeal to

a Poor Man to Give up Tobacco — Six Reasons,” *World’s Crisis*, 1 May 1861.

13. “Abstract of the Illinois Annual Conference Minutes,” *World’s Crisis*, 28 July 1858.

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15. “Wine Drinking,” *World’s Crisis*, 27 June 1860.

16. “Temperance ... ” *World’s Crisis*, 11 December 1861.

17. “The Slavery of Drink,” *World’s Crisis*, 13 March 1861.

18. J.O.E., “Freedom,” *World’s Crisis*, 9 June 1858.

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24. C. Churchill, “The Northern States Fighting for Slavery,” *Advent Herald*, 9 November 1861.

25. I.C. Wellcome, “Should Christians Fight?” *Advent Herald*, 30 November 1861.

26. I.C. Wellcome, “Should Christians Fight?” *Advent Herald*, 7 December 1861.

27. “No Place for Christians,” *World’s Crisis*, 12 May 1863.

28. I.C. Wellcome, “Humans and Divine Government #7,” *World’s Crisis*, 19 February 1862.

29. I.C. Wellcome, “Humans and Divine Government #8,” *World’s Crisis*, 26 February 1862.

30. L. Delos Mansfield, “Our National Perils — The Duty of Christians,” *Advent Herald*, 26 October 1861.

31. Clyde E. Hewitt, *Responsibility and Response* (Charlotte, North Carolina, Venture Books, 1986), 30.

32. Jon[sic] F. Cotton, “Seamen Sometimes Poetical,” *World’s Crisis*, 26 September 1860.

33. "Stirring Times," *World's Crisis*, 14 December 1859.
34. Miles Grant, "A Petition," *World's Crisis*, 13 August 1862.
35. Ibid.
36. "One week after petition . . .," *World's Crisis*, 27 August 1862.
37. I.C. Wellcome, "Call For Soldiers," *World's Crisis*, 30 July 1862.
38. Ibid.
39. "Youth Department Pledge," *World's Crisis*, 27 April 1862.
40. "Report of the Doings of the American Anti-Tobacco Society for 10 Years," *World's Crisis*, 6 June 1860.
41. L. Reimer, "To Give is more Blessed than [sic] to Receive," *World's Crisis*, 18 June 1862.

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HISTORY OF THE EVANGELICAL DEBATE ABOUT HELL 1990–2010.

1. Introduction and Summary 1982 through 1999.
2. A Dozen Basic Sources On The Debate.
3. Central Issues.
 - Areas of Agreement.
 - Areas of Disageement.
 - Some questionable arguments from either side.
4. Conclusions.
5. A Selective Annotated Bbibliography.

1. Introduction and Summary 1982 through 1999.

The evangelical debate about hell began in earnest with these words from John R. W. Stott:

As a committed evangelical, my question must be — and is — not what does my heart tell me, but what does God’s word say? And in order to answer this question, we need to survey the biblical material afresh and to open our minds (not just our hearts) to the possibility that Scripture points in the direction of annihilation, and that “eternal conscious torment” is a tradition which has to yield to the supreme authority of Scripture. (*Evangelical Essentials* 315).

It would be difficult to think of a more incendiary theological statement by one of whom Billy Graham says, “John Stott is the most respected evangelical clergyman in the world today” (Dudley-Smith, back of slipcover). J. I. Packer called it “putting the cat among the pigeons” (“Evangelical Annihilationism” 37). A firestorm of criticism arose about the topic. Serious voices were raised against “annihilationism,” chief among them being Stott’s old friend and coworker in gospel causes, Packer

himself. He was a keynote speaker at the Evangelical Affirmations conference in 1989, the year after Stott's annihilationism had been brought out of the closet. Packer spoke on "New Challenges to the Gospel," annihilationism being one of them, and Stott was named as a miscreant. Packer was soon superseded by Robert A. Peterson as the chief defender of the traditional view of eternal conscious punishing.

A Dozen Basic Sources On The Debate: Two Chapters, Five Books, Two Journal Articles, And Three Complete Journal Issues

The last issue of *Henceforth* ... promised a comprehensive bibliography on hell in this one. On second thought, a bibliography of that size would require a disproportionate number of pages, and it would be tedious reading for some. It is better to focus on a selected list of essential material on the subject. A comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list is available, either print or digital. An e-mail request to the *Henceforth*... editor would be sufficient to acquire it. You can grasp the historical and theological basics through a study of these twelve items (see full documentation in the bibliography), plus a selective annotated bibliography.

Two Chapters

The two chapters are Stott's "The Gospel for the World," in *Evangelical Essentials* 273–331, and Packer's "Evangelicals and the Way of Salvation: New Challenges to the Gospel: Universalism, and Justification by Faith." In *Evangelical Affirmations*, 107–136.

Five Books

Edward Fudge, the Houston lawyer and Church of Christ cleric, makes a comprehensive case for conditional immortality in his *A Fire that Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment* (1982). This work is three decades old, but it is still a

basic text, and it is often cited. Robert Peterson, the Presbyterian seminary professor, in his *Hell on Trial* (1995), argues fervently and cogently for eternal conscious punishing. A relatively easy way to grasp the issues is the interchange between Fudge and Peterson in their *Two Views of Hell* (2000).

Australian pastor-scholar David Powys' *'Hell': A Hard Look at a Hard Question*: (1998; 478 pages of fine print, began as a doctoral thesis at the Australian College of Theology. It is a masterful survey of the subject, examining the church fathers, modern theology, the Old Testament, the Greek and Hasmonian eras, the Roman Empire, the rabbinic traditions, and the New Testament. Powys is frequently cited by proponents of each view. His conclusion:

The tentative finding of this study is that the unrighteous will have no life after death, save possibly to be raised temporarily to be condemned. The unrighteous, whoever they prove to be, will find that God respects them, in death as in life — true to their own choice they will have no part in the restored kingdom of God, indeed severed from the source of life, they will be no more. (416; his emphasis)

Moving again outside the realm of North America, *The Nature of Hell* is a most important work. It was produced in the United Kingdom by ACUTE (The Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals), established in 1995 by the Evangelical Alliance in England “to work for consensus on theological issues that test evangelical unity” (IX). ACUTE recognized that traditional views of hell had recently been challenged, first by universalism then by conditionalism. This change was accelerated by John Stott's publication of his views in 1988. Consequently, ACUTE and him established a working group of five to do “research, consultation and reporting” on the

subject. A first draft was submitted to ten peer reviewers. After two years, seven meetings, and much communication, this 148 page report was approved by the Evangelical Alliance in late 1999.

Like most works dealing with the eternal destiny of unbelievers, this one examines background issues — death, resurrection, judgment, the intermediate state, purgatory, and the scope of salvation” (7). Then concerning hell itself, it looks at intertestamental and patristic material, biblical references, the history of views of hell, and the current evangelical debate between traditionalism and conditionalism. It became apparent that if there were to be unity among Evangelicals on this topic, it would be on the basis of mutual tolerance, not on the basis of agreement on the details. Among the twenty-two “conclusions and recommendations,” this one is nineteen:

We recognize that the interpretation of hell in terms of conditional immortality is a significant minority evangelical view. Furthermore, we believe that the traditionalist-conditionalist debate on hell should be regarded as a secondary rather than a primary issue for evangelical theology. Although hell is a profoundly serious matter, we view the holding of either one of these two views of it, over against the other to be neither essential in respect of Christian doctrine, nor finally definitive of what it means to be an evangelical Christian. (134)

Two Articles 2007

The first journal article issues from another corner of the British Commonwealth, New Zealand, showing the geographical spread of this topic throughout the English-speaking world. Glenn Peoples was a Ph.D. student in NZ when his article was published in the prestigious *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS)* in 2007. The title: “Fallacies in the Annihilationism

Debate: A Critique of Robert Peterson and Other Traditionalist Scholarship.” He demonstrates that the same scholar can have a sharp mind and a sharp tongue.

Peoples presents a good case for conditional immortality, but he is more than a bit impolite to Robert Peterson. He correctly points out that Peterson

has made a literary career of defending the traditional doctrine of eternal torment against the challenge posed by annihilationism ... It would be fair to say that more than any other evangelical author Peterson has been a bastion of the traditional doctrine of hell in recent times and the most vocal critic of annihilationism. In particular, Peterson has taken on the task of writing a number of articles specifically directed at various defenders of annihilationism and critiquing their arguments, seeking to show that they have each failed. Here I pick up on this method, only this time the tables will be turned. I will critically examine some key features of Peterson’s own case and suggest that while it may constitute the strongest case available against annihilationism, it has some major shortcomings and is ultimately unsuccessful. (329)

Bold words for a young PhD-to-be! And three cheers for Peterson who works hard to promote scriptural truth as he understands it.

Peoples first accuses Peterson of misrepresentation. In *Two Views* Peterson accuses Fudge of faulty Christology because he says that the human nature of Christ was annihilated on the cross but not the divine nature. Peoples denies that Fudge ever said such a thing. The point is “that the whole person Jesus Christ truly died and rose three days later” (331). “Peterson has created a straw man, and intentionally or not, the scene is cast where Peterson is portrayed as the champion of orthodox Christology against the annihilationist heretics” (331).

The problem may be a combination of Peterson's expertise as a professional theologian thoroughly versed in the intricacies of Chalcedonian Christology and the deceptive connotations of the word "annihilation." It appears that we evangelicals, traditionalist and conditionalist alike, agree on the doctrine of substitutionary atonement and on the nature of Christ. If Fudge speaks incautiously or unclearly about the nature of Christ, that is not a mark against conditionalism. On the other hand, it may be expecting a bit much of Fudge to ask him to do what Calvin condemned in Osiander — trying in his "impious boldness" ("perverse speculation") to "know more than God has ordained" (Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine* 23–24). The label "annihilation" should not be allowed to play the red herring.

Peoples next accuses Peterson of "missed points." He first misses Fudge's point about Revelation 20:10. When Fudge speaks of the beast and the false prophet, he does not deny that the devil and some humans are involved, but he points out that whatever the fire is, you cannot attribute torment to it since the beast and false prophet are personifications, not real individuals. Personifications can be destroyed, but they cannot feel pain (333). Other impersonal entities, death itself and the whore of Babylon, also come into consideration.

The Apostle Peter makes a transparently clear statement that "by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes [God] condemned them to extinction and made them an example of what is coming to the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6). Peterson maintains that the reference could be interpreted in annihilationist fashion but need not be. Peoples quotes Fudge in response: "If Peter could hear the conversation, he would probably scratch his head and wonder how you could have possibly written more plainly" (339).

Fudge called attention to a host of destruction passages which support conditionalism but do not refer to torment. Peterson, Peoples says, calls this an argument from silence. Not so! These passages make a positive statement that literal destruction is the fate of unbelievers. Then Peterson turns around and uses an

argument from silence in connection with Isaiah 66:24 — “and they shall go out and look at the dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me, for their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” Note that “the reference is not to living people suffering for eternity in hell, it is to dead bodies being consumed by fire and maggots” (342–343). Peterson says that the fact that the fire never goes out proves that the people in it are alive.

Whatever the quality of the theological arguments, the civility factor was disappointing and unequal. Peoples called into question Peterson’s integrity, intelligence, diligence, and scholarship. Peterson acknowledges that he had missed a point that Fudge was making and that he had erred in defining argument from silence. Otherwise he was able to answer well without the *ad hominem* element in “Fallacies in the Annihilationism Debate: A Response to Glenn Peoples.”

Three Complete Journal Issues 2002–2009

Numen 56 (2009), *Areopagus Journal* 8:5 (2008), and *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (2002) are issues devoted to the subject of hell. The last two are evangelical; the first is not.

1. *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002)

“Hell: Putting the Fire Out?” is the theme of this issue. It includes six articles plus the editorial introduction. The two by Horton and Helms are particularly helpful. The editor introduces the issue thus:

One [idea] that sets it [conditional immortality] apart from what the church has historically confessed is the notion that hell is not a literal place. The punishment for those who do not believe in Christ ... is ceasing to exist. In other words, hell does not need to be a literal place because those who fail to confess Christ are simply no more. (D.G. Hart 2).

No matter how often, how long, or how loudly conditionalists proclaim their belief in a general resurrection and judgment, conscious suffering (physical and/or emotional), and a real hell, many misrepresent them.

Michael Horton in “The Very Idea of It” (15–20), deals with three objections to the traditional view. 1. “God’s Justice Does *Not* Require It.” Horton pays respectful attention here to Fudge’s *Fire that Consumes*, along with Stott, Hughes, et al., because the book “breathes a high respect for biblical authority” (15). 2. “God’s Justice *Cannot* Require It.” This view “is speculative rather than biblical.” It is represented by Marilyn McCord Adams and Clark Pinnock. “Personal revulsion seems for Pinnock to take on the quality of an unassailable logical demonstration” (17). 3. “God’s Love Conquers All.” Here is an example of the triumph of the therapeutic.” It leads Pinnock et al. to the view that “God’s love trumps everything else.” It leads Pinnock to a form of purgatory (18). But God “loves justly as well as mercifully.” “The horror that Christ endured on behalf of sinners is meaningless if we as sinners are not in ourselves worthy of suffering the same fate. How could the Substitute’s torture on the cross be taken seriously if those for whom he substituted himself could not be justly sentenced in the same manner?” (19).

Paul Helm, writes on “Hell and the Nature of God” (30–35). Divine justice is obligatory; divine love is not. He distinguishes between commensurability and disproportionality in determining the validity of eternal punishment. Universalism is out. Helm suggests the traditional view, but he does not definitively rule out conditional immortality.

Brian J. Lee’s contribution is “Lewis’s Reflections on Hell.” (25, 28–29). “ ... The implication is that God suffers hell as an unfortunate consequence of human freedom. Given that his offer of forgiveness is freely rejected by sinners, all that remains

is to ‘leave them alone.’” “ ... The doors of hell are locked on the inside” (28).

Tom J. Nettles wrote on “He Descended into Hell” (38–41). Christ’s agony of soul in the Garden, “his inexpressible anguish, pain, terrors, and hellish agonies,” along with his actual death, are incorporated in the reality of “he descended into hell.”

John P. Pless writes in “The Consummation of the Law” (36–37, 51) that “To refuse the gift of the gospel of reconciliation is to be left only with the law that accuses and finds its final consummation in hell.” Universalism is out. Pless favors the traditional view, but he does not definitively rule out conditional immortality.

2. *Areopagus Journal* 8:5 (September–October 2008)

At the end of 2008, a complete issue of the *Areopagus Journal* was devoted to hell. Bright flames adorn the cover. The editor, Craig Branch, calls attention to the cultural move away from traditional views of eternal punishment. He notes that a few evangelicals struggle with the philosophy involved. “Prominent evangelical figures who have retreated from hell include John Stott, Philip Edgcombe Hughes, John Wenham, F. F. Bruce, Clark Pinnock. ... Some, like John Stott, attempt to argue their case for annihilationism from Scripture” (4). Does he not know that all of these men argue on the basis of Scripture?

In the first article, “Eternal Punishment: The Biblical Evidence” (8–16), E. Ray Clendenen, states, “The church traditionally has taught that God will send every person to hell to suffer forever who hasn’t trusted Jesus Christ as the only source of forgiveness, mercy, and goodness” (8). He disposes of universalism quickly then deals with conditional immortality which he defines thus: God “punishes unbelievers by just leaving them as they are, dead and gone, no longer existing” (9). What is the trouble with this definition? It is not what evangelical conditionalists believe.

Clendenen seeks to make a case for the traditional view from the words of Jesus. He cites Matthew 5 which speaks of those who deserve to be cast into the “gehenna of fire.” In Matthew 18 Jesus refers to several offenses which deserve the flames. When Jesus warns the disciples to “fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in gehenna” (Matthew 10:28), destruction must mean something more than annihilation. “For example, Jesus describes the after death experience of the callously selfish ‘rich man’ who ignored Lazarus’s needs as being in torment (*basanos*) and agony in the flames of Hades (Luke 16:23–28).” Many, perhaps most, of those who hold the traditional view consider this use of the parable illegitimate. The author refers to the “forever and ever” of Revelation 9, 14, and 20.

Clendenen finishes with the crux interpretum, Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31–46). The last verse clinches the parallels between the two groups. “They (the goats) will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (RSV). Ramsey Michaels at the end of a class session on the parables half a century ago at Gordon Divinity School, said, “If you come across anyone who believes in conditional immortality, just show them this passage.” In other words, it is evident that if the righteous live forever, so do the unbelievers. As Clendenen puts it, “To avoid the understanding that Jesus taught that the destiny of unbelievers will be never ending conscious suffering, one must do serious damage to normal principles of interpretation” (12).

Clendenin cites Douglas Moo who considers 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9 “the most important Pauline text on the doctrine of hell” (14). Unbelievers “will pay the penalty [dike] of eternal destruction [olethros] from the Lord’s presence and from His glorious strength in that day when He comes to be glorified by His saints” [the two preceding brackets are in the original]. To be separated from God, the person must exist.

In his conclusion, Clendenin states that, apart from Christ, “there is no other source of hope beyond the grave — even the hope of immediate or eventual unconsciousness or extinction”

(15). He considers annihilationism to be a (vain) hope of unbelievers.

Steven B. Cowan asks, “Can a Just and Loving God Send People to Hell?” (17–22). Not surprisingly the answer is yes. The following points supposedly justify the traditional view:

1. The sinfulness of man;
2. Sinfulness deserves the wrath of God — the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).
3. Sinfulness is an offense against the eternal dignity of God;
4. The sinner continues to sin;
5. God is not only loving, he is just;
6. The notion of love that eliminates eternal punishing is unbiblical.
7. One can love and punish an individual at the same time, but love does not override justice.

Conclusion: “The idea here is that the doctrine of hell, if it were true, would not cast negative aspersions on God, but on us!” (20–21).

In the fourth article, Gregory Cochran dampens the enthusiasm for hell a bit by explaining “Why Preaching Hell Is Insufficient for Saving Faith” (24–28). “Christ’s preaching is characterized by ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand.’ Christ did not preach, ‘Repent or you will burn in Hell’” (25). “Hell is not the point of the Gospel; it is a consequence. ... The Lord will award a crown not to those who feared Hell but to those who loved his appearing” (27).

In response, the editor of *Henceforth* ... wrote a letter to the editor of *Areopagus Journal*. Published in 9:1 (2009), it raised three points. 1. Most conditionalists including those cited believe in a general resurrection of believers and unbelievers. 2. Although these scholars may share a natural revulsion for the idea of eternal torment, their views are shaped, not by “secular sentimentalism” (contra Packer, Peterson, Carson, et al.) but by their study of Scripture, as Wenham claims and Packer eventually

acknowledges. “The nub of the whole debate is the question of the natural meaning of the texts” (Wenham, “Case” 81). “Both men [Stott, Wenham] embraced it [conditionalism] for the right reason — ... because they thought they found it in the Bible” (Packer, “Evangelical Annihilationism” 43).

3. The letter writer raised another point — the discontinuity between the penalty which Christ paid for sin and the penalty which unbelievers pay for themselves. Both traditionalists and conditionalists believe firmly in substitutionary atonement — “Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.” ... Christ’s literal physical death was prefigured in the Levitical sacrificial system in which the animals were killed, not tortured. But the unbeliever according to the traditional view pays a very different penalty. I have not found an explanation of this point in Packer, Peterson, the *Areopagus Journal*, et al. (8).

Dr. R. Ray Clendenin, one of the writers, responded kindly to the three points. Concerning the last he says, “This is an excellent question, and one I have pondered a lot” (9). His explanation is not very precise.

3. *Numen: International Review of the History of Religions* 56. (2009). Special Issue: “The Uses of Hell.” An interesting glimpse of the subject from a non-evangelical viewpoint.

This volume has an editorial and a dozen chapters on hell, only four of which relate directly to Christian doctrine. The others deal with ancient history and/or classical religions. The editorial maintains that generally heaven has received more attention than hell has (Thomassen 139). That tilt is probably true of the general population which prefers not to pursue the topic. It is not true about evangelical Christians, especially theological scholars. This issue of *Numen* looks at the historical origin and development of ideas about hell in various religions and asks “about the cultural ‘work’ that these ideas do” (139). The articles are listed in the annotated bibliography below.

Much more on the evangelical debate about hell has been published in the last decade. Most of it is included in the annotated bibliography below.

3. Summary of Issues.

The issue: The nature, severity, and impact of the doctrine of final punishment.

Points of agreement.

(1) The Bible is the only source of information on this subject. No “surely God” rationalizations are permitted. Pinnock, at least some of the time, begins with a “surely God” argument. “Surely God would not torment any person for eternity.” Geisler states, “Surely God would not kill any of his human creations” (see below). How do we know what God would surely do except by what he has revealed about himself?

(2) Hell is an extraordinarily serious reality. A classmate in high school used to say, “Don’t swear; it sounds like hell.” I should have responded, “Don’t joke about hell; it is a serious business.” Traditionalists and conditionalists agree. Pinnock puts it well:

Whether the wicked perish or suffer endlessly, hell is a very grim prospect, and I and the others are not trying to lessen it. To be rejected by God, to miss the purpose for which one was created, to pass into oblivion while others enter into bliss, this will mean weeping and the gnashing of teeth. I do not think we have to be at one another’s throats over this. I commended Christianity Today earlier and the Criswell Theological Review now for their willingness to examine the issue of annihilation. (CTR 4 ([1990])).

(3) Traditionalists and conditionalists agree that the punishment for unbelief is eternal. For the traditionalist it is

equivalent to a **judicial sentence of life without parole** in a federal penitentiary. For the conditionalist, it is a **judicial sentence of death after an appropriate length of time on death row** (see John Grisham's *The Innocent Man* for a taste of The Row).

(4) Human beings are psychosomatic units, each part (one, two, or, three) essential for full functioning in this life and in the next.

(5) Most interesting perhaps is the agreement between most traditionalists and conditionalists that the soul is not by nature immortal. Whether in heaven or hell, life depends on God's sustenance, not some inherent quality in the person.

Points of disagreement:

(1) The relative weight of the torment passages and the destruction passages;

(2) The value of life, and the severity of being deprived of it;

(3) the effect of one's view of the treatment of unbelievers on the doctrine of God. (theodicy).

(4) the degree of physical and/or psychical discomfort in hell (mostly an intra-traditionalist issue);

(5) whether God assigns the unrepentant to hell or whether s/he chooses to jump into it to avoid God's presence (again, a primarily intra-traditionalist issue).

(6) practical implications — Does hell fire scare people into believing? (Definitely yes, Peterson) Does the idea of a God who would torment people for eternity turn people away from Christianity? (Definitely yes, Pinnock)

Some questionable arguments from either side

(1) The traditional view originated in platonic philosophy and continues to be sustained by it.

(2) It would not be just to punish infinitely a finite sinner for finite sins.

(3) You have to be conscious to be punished.

(4) Surely God would not annihilate a creature bearing his own image.

(5) Conditionalists did not derive their doctrine from the Bible but backed into it as a result of secular sentimentalism. It is likely true that some of the increasing popularity of conditional immortality is because it seems gentler than eternal conscious punishing and more traditional than universalism. That can hardly be attributed to the prominent list of adherents who have been involved in this debate. Packer in one of his lighter touches demolishes this charge. “Both men [Stott and Wenham] adopted annihilationism, in which they may be wrong, but they embraced it for the right reason — not because it fitted into their comfort zone, though it did, but because they thought they found it in the Bible” (“Evangelical Annihilationism” 43).

4. Conclusion.

Does the conservative resurgence require adherence to the doctrine of eternal conscious punishing? Can conditional immortality be admitted as a viable evangelical alternative? Packer still says No. Some are more positive.

I believe that the ultimate annihilation of the wicked should at least be accepted as legitimate, biblically founded alternative to their eternal conscious torment. (John R. W. Stott, EE 320)

... discussion as to whether hell means everlasting punishment or annihilation after judgment . . . is both a waste of time and an attempt to know what we cannot know. (Peter Toon, cited by Packer, “Evangelical,” last paragraph)

One might speculate about differences in the way theology is worked out in the United States as compared to the rest of the English speaking world. Does a degree of proto-fundamentalism characterize the American approach, while others are not quite

as uptight? Do they feel freer to explore the options? Note the evangelical conditionalist Hall of Fame: John Stott, John Wenham, Stephen Travis, Philip Hughes, Michael Green, et al. ACUTE can recognize traditionalists and conditionalists on roughly equal footing. Evangelicals in the United States tend to be condemning of other views. An indication of this tendency is the insistence of the American delegation at the founding conference of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846, that the clause “the eternal punishment of the wicked,” be inserted in the original Basis of Faith. It was removed in 1970 (*Nature* 63–65). Traditionalists in the U.S. are more apt to be condemning: Robert Peterson, John Gerstmann, JI Packer for a while. At least one prominent American voice agrees with ACUTE. Roger Olson (Truett Seminary, Baylor U.) states:

The rise of interest in and affirmation of annihilationism has predictably given rise to a reaction; many conservative evangelical theologians have resurrected the old polemical labels of heresy and aberrational teaching to marginalize those evangelicals who would dare to embrace a belief that was once relegated to the sectarian margins of Protestantism. This hardly seems like a valuable expenditure of time and energy. Annihilationism does not strike at the heart of the gospel or even deny any major Christian belief; it is simply a reinterpretation of hell. More importantly, its harsh condemnation by a few fundamentalists should not deter Christians from accepting one another as equally believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ in spite of differences of opinion about the nature of hell. Contrary to what some fundamentalist critics have charged, annihilationism is not tantamount to universalism or apokatastasis. It is simply a minority view of the nature of hell, not a denial of hell” (Olson 329).

A SELECTIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS ON THE EVANGELICAL DEBATE ABOUT THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF UNBELIEVERS

(Items handled extensively above are not annotated here.)

Evangelical Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth Among Evangelicals. *The Nature of Hell*. Carlisle, the UK: Paternoster, 2000. A masterful work showing that conditionalist and traditionalists have an unequal number of adherents but equal status in the Anglican Church.

Bacchiochi, Samuele. *Immortality or Resurrection? A Biblical Study on Human Nature and Destiny*. Biblical Perspectives 13. Berrien Springs Michigan: Biblical Perspectives 1997. 304 p. "In recent years, numerous biblical scholars, philosophers, and scientists have examined the traditional dualistic view of human nature, consisting of a material, mortal body, and a spiritual, immortal soul. They have found such a view to be contrary to Scripture, reason, and science." "Both body and soul, flesh and spirit are an indivisible unity, part of the same person who ceases to exist at death until the resurrection" (15). "The biblical view of human nature and destiny has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years. Leading scholars of different religious persuasions have addressed this question in articles and books. A survey of the studies produced in the last fifty years or so, reveals that the traditional dualistic view of human nature has come under massive attack. Scholars seem to outdo one another in challenging traditional dualism and in affirming biblical wholism" (20). Seventh-day Adventist.

Barton, Freeman. "Evangelicals in Defense of Hell — An Annotated Bibliography with Extended Introduction." *Journal of Religious & Theological Knowledge* 2:2 (1996): 73–94. Bibliographic study of the debate, particularly 1988–1992. Takes no position.

- . "Dear Editor." *Areopagus Journal* 9:1 (2009), 8.
- Bonda, Jan. *The One Purpose of God: An Answer to the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. The evangelical rarity — a book favoring universalism.
- Branch, Craig. "Veritas: Hell." *Areopagus Journal* 8:5 (2007), 3-7.
- Buenting, Joel. *The Problem of Hell: A Philosophical Anthology*. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2010. These thirteen chapters are written by professional philosophers who teach in five public universities, five Christian colleges, two evangelical seminaries, and by the director of the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Intellectual Discipleship. One would expect a generally evangelical orientation, so the lack thereof is surprising. Scripture references are few, and exegesis is conspicuously absent.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gaggling of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. Conditional immortality is attractive for sentimental reasons.
- Clendenen, E. Ray. "Eternal Punishment: The Biblical Evidence." *Areopagus Journal* 8:5 (September–October, 2008), 8–16.
- . "Dear Reader." *Areopagus Journal* 9:1 (2009), 9.
- Cochran, Gregory. "Why Preaching Hell Is Insufficient for Saving Faith." *Areopagus Journal* 8:5 (September–October), 24–28.
- Cowan, Steven B. "Can a Just and Loving God Send People to Hell?" *Areopagus Journal* (8:5 [September–October]), 17–22.
- Crockett, William, ed. *Four Views on Hell*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. Walvoord advocates eternal physical torment, Crockett eternal psychic torment, Hayes the RC purgatorial view, and Pinnock conditional immortality. Each responds to each of the others. Very little exegesis.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? The Witness of the New Testament*. London: Epworth Press, 1960.
- Dudley-Smith, Timothy. *John Stott: A Global Ministry — A Biography — the Later Years*. Downers Grove, Ill.:

- InterVarsity Press, 2001. See p. 351–355 on the reaction when Stott's bent toward annihilationism became public.
- Edwards, David L. and John R. W. Stott. *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- Ellis, E. Earle. "New Testament Teaching on Hell." In *Eschatology in Bible & Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium*. Ed. Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliott. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997. 199–219. Traces conditionalism through the patristic literature., the intertestamental material, the OT, the NT, OT & NT "represent individual personality as a complex and totally mortal monism, a unity that can be viewed from different perspectives" (211). Objects to "a reading of the New Testament with glasses ground in Athens" (212) and to "a dualistic Platonic anthropology that shifted the Christian hope and the judgment of God from the parousia of Christ and the resurrection of the dead to the departure of the soul to heaven or hell at death" (216).
- Fernando, Ajith. *Crucial Questions about Hell*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991. Foreword by J. I. Packer. The author, an evangelist in Sri Lanka, studied theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and he spent a sabbatical year doing research at Gordon-Conwell. The book is another popular presentation of traditional views "Annihilationists say that the word destroy, which is used often to describe punishment, should be taken to mean what it literally means. If that was so, then the destroyed person would cease to exist. But we know that much of the vocabulary describing judgment is figurative (41). "Can the bliss of heaven coexist with hell?" Yes. "In heaven we will be freed from the subjectivity brought about by emotional ties. So we will be able to agree wholeheartedly with the judgment of God upon our lost loved ones" (68). In heaven human ties do not matter, only being "enraptured by the glory of Christ" (69).

- Fudge, Edward. "The Final End of the Wicked." *JETS* 27 (1984): 325–334. Excellent summary of the arguments against eternal torment and for conditional immortality.
- Fudge, Edward, and Cousins, Peter, ed. *The Fire That Consumes: The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality*; 2nd rev. ed. Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1994. 210 p.
- Reviewer: Peter M. Head (Oak Hill College, London). *Anvil: An Anglican Evangelical Journal for Theology and Mission* 12:3 (1995):271–272. Respectful but thoroughly unconvinced. He argues, especially from Jubilees and 1 Enoch, for "a combination of eternal torment and destructive judgement" (272). He is mistaken at least that "the heart of Fudge's argument" is the OT (see, e.g., Tony Gray's review).
- Reviewer: John E. Colwell. *Evangelical Quarterly* 68 (July 1996). 274–275. Colwell (Spurgeon's College, London) writes a respectful review which nevertheless doubts that the "eternal torment" passages can be interpreted in such a way as to allow "annihilation." Recommends that someone write a book looking at such passages (namely Daniel 12:2–3; Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 14:9–11) in depth. Another point against Fudge's contention that destruction would be a more serious penalty than eternal torment: "the annual suicide figures together with the contemporary debate concerning euthanasia." On the other hand, the vast majority cling tenaciously to life and fear death.
- Reviewer: Tony Gray. *Themelios* 20 (May 1995):29. (Wolfson College, Oxford). A very positive brief review. "Even if the arguments are not conclusive, Fudge presents a work that will not let conditionalism disappear, and which calls for traditionalists to seriously re-examine their presuppositions and their exegesis."
- Reviewer: Warren Prestidge. *Stimulus* 3:39–40 (F 1995).
- Fudge, Edward. *The Fire that Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment*. Falbrook, Calif.: Verdict Publications; Houston: Providential Pr., 1982. ca. 500 pp. Masterful comprehensive survey of the case for

conditional immortality by a Church of Christ minister and Houston lawyer who was converted to the view in the process of researching the subject. An Evangelical Book Club alternate selection, it with Stott's book has been instrumental in arousing debate about conditionalism.

Fudge, Edward W. "The 'Minority' View: An Interview." *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002), 42–45.

Fudge, Edward William, and Robert A. Peterson. *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Geisler, Norman L. "Annihilationism." *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.

---. "Everything You Wanted to Know about Hell but Were Afraid to Ask." *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 87 (1995): 31–35. Letters in response 87 (Sept.–Oct. 1995):14–15. "Nor is annihilation an option. Annihilation of the wicked is contrary to both the nature of the immortal God and the nature of humans made in His image. It is not consistent with an all-loving God to snuff out those who do not do His wishes. What would we think of an earthly father who killed his children when they did not do what he wanted them to do?" (33) (What a strange argument for an eternal tormentor!)

---. *Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2005. V. 4: *Church, Last Things*. The first three paragraphs of chapter 10, "The Final State of the Lost: Hell," Geisler's treatment of the subject comes into question. He says, "even some otherwise evangelical Christians, such as John Stott (b. 1925), have denied it [the existence of hell]" (327). Not so! And he says "The Old Testament Hebrew word for hell is *sheol*. ... The New Testament Greek word for *hell* is *hades*" (327). Neither *sheol* nor *hades* (generic words for "the grave") is the hell which Geisler goes on to deal with — the place for dispensing with unbelievers.

Green, Michael. *Evangelism through the Local Church*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990. The god who torments

- humans throughout eternity “is not the person revealed in Scripture as utterly just and utterly loving” (69).
- Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment*. General editors: Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. A scholarly work, well written, generally fair, and compellingly interesting. Its nine contributors, all eminent evangelical scholars, set out to defend the traditional view — “everlasting conscious punishment away from the joyous presence of God” (12). “Hell is under fire” by a “disturbing” number of evangelicals. The alternative “aberrations” are universalism and annihilationism (conditional immortality; 11). See an extensive review in *Henceforth ...* 32 (2005), 113–117.
- “Hell: Putting the Fire Out?” *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002), 11–51.
- Helm, Paul. “Hell and the Nature of God.” *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002), 30–35.
- Horton, Michael. “The Very Idea of It’: *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002) 15–20.
- Hughes, Philip E. *The True Image: the Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Keith, Graham. “Patristic Views on Hell — Part 1 (Origen).” *Evangelical Quarterly* 71 (July 1999): 217–232. Rather than being univocal, the patristic period was polyvocalic.
- Lee, Brian J. “Lewis’s Reflections on Hell.” *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002), 25, 2–29.
- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Petersen, editors. *Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. Ten chapters by nine current evangelical scholars aiming almost exclusively to oppose conditional immortality.
- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson. *What is Hell?* Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2010. 36 p.
- Nettles, Tom J. “He Descended into Hell.” *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002), 38–41.

- Olson, Roger E. "Life Beyond Death: Continuity and Discontinuity." *In The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002. 307-330. Relax, traditionalists; conditionalism is not subversive.
- Packer, James I. "Evangelical Annihilationism in Review," *Reformation & Revival Journal* 6:2 (Spring 1997): 37– 51. A much lighter note than in the next item nearly a decade earlier.
- . "Evangelicals and the Way of Salvation: New Challenges to the Gospel: Universalism, and Justification by Faith." *In Evangelical Affirmations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. 107–136.
- . "The Problem of Eternal Punishment." *Evangel* 10(1992): 13–19.
- Peoples, Glenn. "Fallacies in the Annihilationism Debate: A Critique of Robert Peterson and Other Traditionalist Literature." *JETS* 50:2 (2007):329–347.
- Peterson, Robert A. "Basil Atkinson: A Key Figure for Twentieth-Century Evangelical Annihilationism." *Churchman* 111:3 (1997): 198–217.
- . *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983.
- . "Does the Bible Teach Annihilationism?" *BS* 156:621 (Jan.– Mar. 1999):13–27.
- . "Fallacies in the Annihilationism Debate? A Response to Glenn Peoples." *JETS* 50:2 (2007):349–355.
- . "The Hermeneutics of Annihilationism: The Theological Method of Edward Fudge." *Presbyterion* 21:1 (1995):13–28.
- . *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995. Probably the best book for obtaining a comprehensive grasp of the traditional view.
- Reviewer: N. E. Barry Hofstetter. *WTJ* 58:1 (1996):169-70. "... does a more than adequate job of not only taking them [Stott, Hughes] to task for their departure from orthodoxy,

but of presenting the positive case for the traditional position.”

Reviewer: Robert P. Lightner. BS 153:610(1996): 236. “meets an urgent need”

Reviewer: Robert A. Pyne. *Presbyterion* 25:1 (1996): 63–64. “a thorough, compelling case for the doctrine of eternal punishment.”

Reviewer: James C. Rosscup. MSJ 7:1 (1996): 136–139. “the most careful, recent, overall theological argument for eternal punishment.”

---. *Hell under Fire*. See Morgan.

---. Review of *Crucial Questions about Hell* by Ajith Fernando. *Presbyterion* 21:1 (1995):62–63.

---. Review of *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* by Jerry L. Walls. *JETS* 40:3 (September 1997): 503–506.

---. Review of *If I Should Die Before I Wake: Help for Those Who Hope for Heaven*, by Scott Oliphant and Sinclair B. Ferguson. *Presbyterion* 22:2 (1996): 128.

---. Review of *The Battle for Hell* by David George Moore. *Presbyterion* 21:2 (1995): 126–127.

---. Reviews of *The Other Side of the Good News* by Larry Dixon, *Repent or Perish* by John Gerstner, and *Death and the Afterlife* by Robert A. Morey. *Presbyterion* 19:1 (1996):58–60.

---. Review of *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell* edited by Nigel M. de S Cameron. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. *JETS* 38:4 (1995):24–626.

---. *Two Views*. See Fudge.

---. “Undying Worm, Unquenchable Fire.” CT 44:12 (October 23, 2000):30–37.

---. What Is Hell? See Morgan.

Pinnock, Clark. “The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent.” *CTR* 4 (1990): 243–259. Passionate presentation of annihilationism, with the recognition that he will face the disapproval of much of evangelicalism. It is interesting that he is allowed this forum. (Reprinted in *The Radical Reformation* 2:1 [Fall 1992]: 4–21.)

- . "Fire, Then Nothing." CT, March 20, 1987, pp. 40–41.
- Pless, John P. "The Consummation of the Law." *Modern Reformation* 11:3 (May–June 2002), 36–37, 51.
- Powys, David J. "Hell": *A Hard Look at a Hard Subject: The Fate of the Unrighteous in the New Testament*. Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs. Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 1998.
- Stott, John R. W. "The Logic of Hell: A Brief Rejoinder." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 18 (Jan. 1994): 33–34. Corrects the idea that annihilation is an alternative to eternal punishment. Suggests that there are two theories of destiny, universalism and eternal punishment (either torment or destruction). Pleads again for openness. "I am disturbed by the excessive dogmatism of those who claim that only one view is biblical and that those who are not committed to it forfeit the designation 'evangelical'" (34).
- . *Evangelical Essentials*. See Edwards, David.
- Wenham, John W. "The Case for Conditional Immortality." In *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*. 161–191. Ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. Clear extensive case for conditional immortality by an English scholar and educator. An address at a conference.
- . *The Enigma of Evil: Can We Believe in the Goodness of God?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985 (reprint; originally published by InterVarsity Press in 1974 under the title *The Goodness of God*). "The ultimate horror of God's universe is hell" (27).
- . *Facing Hell: The Story of a Nobody: An Autobiography 1913–1996*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998. Conditional immortality was a dominant theme in his life!
- . *The Goodness of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1974. Cautious proponent of conditionalism. "The aim has been to discourage those who hold traditional orthodoxy from surrendering it lightly, while encouraging the serious consideration of the case for conditional immortality ... But as far as the thesis of this book is concerned, we shall

consider ourselves under no obligation to defend the notion of unending torment until the arguments of the conditionalists have been refuted” (41).

Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperOne, 2008. Wright is an intriguing fellow. He certainly is anti-dualistic, and he puts great emphasis on the bodily resurrection and the new heavens and the new earth. As to eternal destiny, a short quotation suggests the need to explore further.

When human beings give their heartfelt allegiance to and worship that which is not God, they progressively cease to reflect the image of God. One of the primary laws of human life is that you become like what you worship. ... Forms of idolatry combine in a thousand ways, all of them damaging to the image bearing quality of the people concerned. ... My suggestion is that it is possible for human beings so to continue down this road, ... that after death they become at last, by their own effective choice, *beings that once were human but now are not*, creatures that have ceased to bear the divine image at all. ... they pass simultaneously not only beyond hope but also beyond pity. (182, Wright's emphasis).

ADVENTIST HERITAGE REVIEW

A Tribute to Dr. Wendell Stearns

Wesley A. Ross

Faith Bible Chapel, Westerly, RI
11:00 AM • April 17, 2010 •

Let me begin today by bringing the greetings and love of your many friends at Hope Church and also from generations of former students and colleagues at Berkshire Christian College. I have heard from many who are unable to be with us, but who want to convey their profound gratitude to God for the life of Wendell Stearns. I want to invite some former faculty colleagues (Oral Collins, Joyce Collins, Joan Cooper, and Steve Brown) along with a number of others from Hope Church who are here (Tom and Marcia Zikan, Noreen Blair, Suzanne Ross, LaVonne Brown, William Levi, and Nechemyah Levi) to stand for a moment.

Today, I am reflecting upon the life of a truly great man — one who was a very important influence upon my life during my formative years. As a student at Berkshire Christian College in the late 1960s, I learned to deeply respect Dr. Wendell Stearns for his spiritual wisdom and academic prowess. I believe that more than anyone else, he was responsible for causing BCC to achieve status as a member of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. With much labor on his part, he shepherded the application of BCC through to eventual acceptance. All subsequent graduates of BCC are indebted to Dr. Stearns for his commitment of time and expertise on this noble project.

But he was certainly much more than an academician. He lived a life of sacrifice and self-denial because he believed in the spiritual mission of BCC and was deeply devoted to the Lord. While he had a well-deserved reputation for setting high

academic standards for the students in his care, his life was a testimony of his love and concern for all who knew him. He was committed to helping young believers like me to follow the path of spiritual development and preparation for future service to the Lord. As one who grew up in a pastor's home myself, I am sure that his willingness to sacrifice for this goal was at times felt by his family, too, and I am grateful for your role in this godly effort. On behalf of generations of BCC students, thank you for all the times that his commitment caused life to be more difficult for you.

In the late summer of 1969, Suzanne and I were vacationing at Lakeside Camp near my hometown of Waterville, ME. Suzanne had recently graduated from BCC and I had graduated a year earlier. We had married in August of 1968 and were living in married student housing at Thompson Hall while she completed her work at BCC and I commuted to UMass in Amherst working toward a Master of Music degree. Dr. Stearns and I had discussed the possibility of my return to BCC as a faculty member "someday," but that day was certainly in the distant future in my mind. Imagine my shock to receive a desperate phone call from Dr. Stearns at Lakeside asking me to consider accepting a position for the fall of 1969 — only a few weeks away! Warren Whitney, longtime successful head of the music program, had left BCC to take a position at Piedmont Bible College in NC and his full-time assistant, Frank Johnston, had unexpectedly been drafted. (These were the troubled days of the Viet Nam War.)

With fear and trepidation, after a week or two of prayer and a hasty trip to Lenox with Suzanne to scout out housing possibilities, I accepted the job. I will never forget my first "official" meeting with Dr. Stearns in his academic office. After going over the details of my contract, he said to me, "Now Wes, I want you to call me Wendell." I replied, "OK, Dr. Stearns." (I'm not sure that I was ever able to call him Wendell.) Then he did another thing that made a very deep impression upon me. He said, "Before you leave today, I'd like for us to pray together." He got up out of his chair, and knelt down before it as he prayed

for God’s blessing to be upon my work at BCC. Neither of us could have known then that I would serve at BCC for the next 18 years — perhaps the most fruitful years of my life. I am forever grateful to Dr. Stearns for giving me that opportunity and for his wonderful model of devoted Christian leadership.

Not too many years later, the Stearns family decided to move to Israel to answer a unique call to mission work in the Holy Land. It was my privilege on many occasions to have you meet with us for an evening in Tiberias during annual BCC (and later BICS) Bible Lands Tours. On those occasions we would hear of your adventures as part of a fledgling evangelical congregation on the banks of the Galilee — experiencing the persecution of slashed tires and other acts of those opposed to that work. We also heard of the progress of the great work of publishing the first Bible to include both the Old and New Testaments bound together in Hebrew.

Who could have guessed that one day we would live in the very house that Wendell and Betty built on Stockbridge Road when BCC moved from Brookline to Lenox in 1958? We have now lived there for 27 years.

But my favorite memory will always be of Dr. Stearns on his knees praying for me. I wonder how many other students and faculty members over the years have a similar memory — surely many! It has only been a few months since we lost my Dad, so Suzanne and I understand all that you are feeling right now. We join so many of your friends and family in praying that the Lord will be a source of comfort, blessing and peace. And we pray that the promise of the coming kingdom and reunion with Dr. Stearns will sustain you all through this time of great loss.

We love you all,
Wes Ross

A Tribute to Dr. Wendell Stearns

Steve Brown

Faith Bible Church Westerly, RI
April 17, 2010 • 11:00 AM

Thank you for this invitation to bring tribute to a great man, Dr. Wendell Stearns. I am confident, however, that he would have eschewed such an appellation and would object to any such description to his life or his work. Even so, let me explain to you why he was, indeed, a great man.

Dr. Stearns was a leader. I learned that when I arrived on the campus of Berkshire Christian College in Lenox. Confident, brash and obnoxious, this freshman knucklehead soon understood that Dr. Stearns was in charge. He labored with little hesitation in letting us know how to integrate into college life. He was kind, seemed friendly, a bit distant, but obviously focused on the mission. We were there to learn, and he was all about making sure that would happen. He was not excited about youthful nonsense that threatened to disrupt a class or distract fellow student-pilgrims on the way to a degree. He knew what was required to navigate the deep educational waters. I learned later that he was largely responsible for shaping the curriculum at BCC, a certain justification for his strong leadership.

Dr. Stearns was a learner. Of course, I knew there was a reason to call him “Dr.” but I could not appreciate then the level of achievement and ardor he brought to his vocation. Not until later in life, when in the work of the ministry, did I look back upon Wendell (and I hesitate to refer to him by his first name — from our student days, I am sure) with appreciation for his commitment to learn and invest his learning for the sake of developing people. That model was powerful to me, embedded deeply in the man. In those early years of my BCC experience, he taught courses for freshman, “required” courses like psychology, orientation, Advent Christian heritage and, of course, the advanced issues in education. I didn’t necessarily

like the subjects, but I did admire the man who taught them. He was a learner. His own words are testimony to how deeply he was committed to learn. He wrote in the preface to his book, *Biblical Zionism*: “I can testify that opening myself to the Spirit of God as my teacher ... has been one of the most rewarding learning experiences of my life. (xiv). When a freshman, I did not profoundly appreciate his learning, but I do today.

Dr. Stearns was a believer. During those college days and since, there has never been a doubt that he was a devout and engaged follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I initially thought of him as a dispenser of divine justice. You have to understand that on more than one occasion I had to go into Wendell’s office to account for my shortcomings and avoidance of righteous adherence to the laws of the College. But I also came to understand him as a vessel of God’s love — a man of passion for the Lord’s church and dedicated to the promise plan of God for the ages. Many years later, while on travel seminars to Israel, Wendell and Betty would come down to our Tiberius hotels and spend an evening describing their passion for the Jewish people and how that motivated their lifework in Galilee. It was then, most vividly, I learned that his love for the Lord was the central motivation for his engagement in faith’s work. To me, that made him a great man.

Dr. Stearns was loyal. Married to Betty for 60 years, he demonstrated loving loyalty as a marker to which the rest of us should aspire. More than that or maybe because of it, Wendell’s loyalty to God and His Word permeated his life. As evidence, I simply refer you once again to his written work on Zionism. That book exists as a testimony of Dr. Stearns fidelity to God. It is so full of Scripture and allusions to Scripture that it is a dead giveaway of the passion of his heart. He sought to be loyal to the Lord and the divine promises impelled him to think out of a Christ-centered view of history. His readers might disagree with his conclusions, but they can never deny his core commitment. He was loyal to that which God has laid down as his plan.

Again, I thank you for inviting me to participate in this memorial service for Dr. Stearns. He was a great man.

BOOKS

Review Essays

The Doctor and the Soul: from Psychotherapy to Logotherapy, by Viktor E. Frankl. 2nd expanded edition. Nw York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965. 284 pages. Reviewed by Melodie S. Dean, MA.

Viktor Frankl's manuscript for this, his first book, was sewn into his coat lining and taken from him in the German concentration camps. Schooled in Freudian psychoanalytic psychotherapy (highlighting consciousness) and Adlerian individual psychological psychotherapy (emphasizing responsibility) Frankl later formed his own school combining consciousness and responsibility as tenets of what it means to be human. His response to depth psychology (looking into the layers of man) was that we should look into the heights as well, that man was not only a physical and psychic being, but also a spiritual being. The goal of both psychoanalytic and individual psychology is the reshaping of the outer life. Philosophical and religious questions were often devalued, debunked and the patient treated as a neurotic. Patients would seek a doctor's help for existential frustrations (the inner questions of who am I? why am I here?, where am I going?, what should I do?) and leave with tranquilizers. Frankl realized that to bring wholeness and health to the psycho-physical-spiritual entity man is, a psychotherapy in spiritual terms was needed, in spite of the fear that the doctor might impose his values onto the patient.

His creation of logotherapy (an existential analysis whose psychotherapeutic starting point is consciousness of responsibility) sought to bring to awareness spiritual realities. It was a therapy that could stand alone or be supplemental to other therapies or fields (for example what good would it be for a surgeon to spare a life by amputating the leg if the patient took his life, not seeing how he could find meaning in life missing a leg. Therefore it would be good for a surgeon to know how to use logotherapy). "Responsibility implies a sense of obligation. A

man's obligation can, only be understood in terms of a 'meaning' — the specific meaning of human life. ... ” (26), “and can be approached in various ways” (31). A logotherapist would bring up “that man's freedom is a 'freedom despite dependence'” (32). He still is subject to the natural laws, subject to a “higher power” or Providence (33).

To many patients pleasure was the meaning of their lives, but as “pleasure is not the goal of our aspirations, but the consequence of attaining them” (35), the logotherapist would attempt to help them look beyond the pleasure principle. A logotherapist would emphasize the uniqueness of the individual and how he is situationally placed for his singular / particular task. If the patient decries his meaningless job, he would be shown that it is not the job that gives a person value / meaning, but “who” is doing the job and “how” the job is done.

Frankl talked of three kinds of value: “creative” value — how one does his work, “experiential” value — from relationships, art or beauty, and “attitudinal” value — one's response to suffering, hardship, or disaster. The religious man interprets his existence in terms of being responsible for the task(s) assigned by the Taskmaster. Man might ask what the meaning of life is, but in reality, “It is life itself that asks the question of man. ... he has to respond by being responsible; and he can answer to life only by answering for his life” (62). Frankl argued that even in a concentration camp one did not have to submit to the camp's psychic deformation (97).

The techniques of paradoxical intention and de-reflection were shared. In paradoxical intention the problem is anticipatory anxiety — the fear or anxiety that often produces the situation feared. A case was shared of a young physician who was prone to sweat profusely in the presence of an authority. He was encouraged in each event that his anxiety should reoccur, to deliberately show how much he could sweat, to tell himself, “I usually sweat one quart, this time I'll sweat ten.” The result was, his problem was gone in a week. This treatment consists of a reversal of the patient's attitude. His fear is replaced by an

imaginative exaggeration of the fear. This forces the patient to cease fleeing his fear and in a detached, exaggerated, humorous way face it (223).

De-reflection is a technique used to counteract the compulsive inclination of self observation. This works to the degree to which the patient's awareness is directed toward positive aspects. The patient must be de-reflected from his disturbance to the task at hand ... reoriented toward his specific vocation and mission in life (258). Frankl illustrated the problem with the story of a centipede that ran very well until he decided one day to observe just how he ran. The more he became conscious of the process, the more difficult it was to function and finally he could only lie in a ditch in despair (256). Many examples were given of how logotherapy helped persons struggling with neurosis or psychosis. Logotherapy is applied differently in psychosis versus neurosis especially in suicide ideation. What works for one could result in a suicide attempt in the other, so the practitioner needs to know how to diagnose (261–262)!

The fear of the doctor imposing his values on his patients was answered in the earlier statement that the primary fact of human existence is to be conscious and responsible. Existential analysis aims to lead men to be conscious of their responsibility “to what” or “for what, yet the “to what” is determined by the patient (275). The task of existential analysis is to help the individual to discern his tasks, evaluate his work and rank his values (275). The physician is not to take responsibility from the patient, but rather to empower him to make his own choices (276). Frankl acknowledges that medical ministry is a borderland between medicine and philosophy, and any on this border will be watched. It may be a no man's land it and it also is a land of promise (284).

I enjoyed this book. Frankl had a sharp mind and was full of wisdom. I feel that his first written manuscript prepared him to not only survive, but to thrive and help others in the concentration camp. This is book is not for the average layman, but it would be appreciated by a psychologist or someone who had some psychological understanding. It would be stretching

for the pastoral minister but stretching is good for all of us. I am the richer for my “experience” of reading and reviewing it.

A Step-by-step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity, by Christopher B. Adsit. Nashville: Nelson, 1988. 384 pages. Reviewed by Carol Clark.

This book was recommended in one of the Advent Christian Witness quarterly magazines, so I ordered it and diligently read through it. I wanted something to help give me ideas and some new direction in mentoring/discipling other women in the church. Mr. Adsit has a wonderful program of development for a believer to be mentored by another individual, with scheduled weekly meetings and time commitments of several months by each party involved. The idea is great, and at the end of the book he gives general guidelines to determine where the disciple might still need help with growth, and how to pursue this once the disciple has finished going through the twelve objectives. He addresses these objectives first to the discipler, then explains how to pass them on to the disciple.

What I’m finding in my commitments to other women in our church is that they want one-on-one meetings, just as the book suggests, but they don’t want to add another regular program to their schedule. They want to get together on a casual basis, sometimes with their kids, and talk about what’s going on in their lives. When the occasion permits, I ask them general questions about their walk with the Lord, and sometimes they bring up the subject, but what I see is more of them watching what I do, how I make decisions, how I spend my time. I give them tips on an ad hoc basis, rather than trying to tell them how to be “a better or grown-up Christian, and I show my love for them by spending time with them, being interested in what interests them. Many of them do not yet understand that a maturing believer is not someone who tries to be better, but is someone who is becoming

like Christ in their innermost being and the fruit of a consistent walk becomes evident in their lives.

I appreciated Adsit's training objectives, and particularly his points on time management and assessing personal priorities, defining life goals, and how they fit into God's plan for their lives. I had not thought about this "mission statement" goal for my personal life as I had for my business ventures, so it was quite helpful.

If the occasion was to present itself, with someone who wanted a regular meeting for an extended time, this book would be a great asset in disciple-making. Otherwise, it's a good read with helpful points for anyone wanting to see others mature in Christ.

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The Throne and the Lamb and the Dragon: a Reader's Guide to the Book of Revelation, by Paul spells more. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2002. 157 pages.

This is a small, neat, introductory commentary on Revelation. The author starts with a little different emphasis than does Robert H. Mounce who suggests that "anyone can grasp the basic message of Revelation if the book is approached in the right way" (What Are We Waiting For? viii). Spilsbury declares, "Revelation is a difficult book to understand, sometimes even a difficult book to stomach — more people are killed or struck down with disease than in any other biblical book. ... On top of all that, the book is an enigma — as if written in code ..." (17). He is less concerned with understanding than with accepting. "Revelation is not a book for the faint hearted. Its message is deeply disturbing. It unsettles us. It urges us to reevaluate the most fundamental of our convictions, our loyalties and commitment ... What will you be willing to die for?" (15).

After asking "What kind of book is this?" (19), he critiques historicism and futurism, both of which are allegorical

interpretations which minimize its meaning for the original recipients of the letter. “However we come to read Revelation, we must take into account what those original readers found so powerful in it” (21).

All of this is from chapter 1, “Reading Revelation.” The second, “Holding It Together” is also preliminary to an interpretation of the contents. It deals with the structure of the book. Chapters 3–5 present the heart of the book in terms of the main characters, “The Throne” (God), “The Lamb,” and “The Dragon.” Concluding chapters are “Wrath and Judgment” and “No More Tears.” As J. I. Packer says in the Foreword concerning Spilsbury and the book, “His work delights me ... ; he has got the hang of the book and is on the right track with it all the way” (10).