THE VIRGIN BIRTH

That glorious form, that light insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at heaven’s high council-table
   To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and, here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

—John Milton

On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity

“The Virgin Birth at the opening and the empty tomb at the close of Jesus’ life bear witness that this is a fact marked off all the rest of human life, and marked off in the first instance not by our understanding or our interpretation, but itself. Marked off in regard to its origin: it is free of the arbitrariness which underlines all our existences. And marked off in regard to its goal: it is victorious over death to which we are all liable. Only within these limits is it what it is and correctly understood, as the mystery of the revelation of God.”

The Virgin Birth

- “Born of the Virgin Mary…” [natus ex Maria Virgine…] (Apostles’ Creed)

1. Apologetics: The evidence:

   i. Gresham Machen, The Virgin Birth of Christ (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1965)


   iv. Biblical Testimony:

      a. This is not to say that some deny the Bible’s testimony, citing that there no reference to the Virgin Birth exists in Mark, John, Paul or Peter. OR that some deny the very possibility of a Virgin Birth on a priori assumptions that such a thing is impossible scientifically.


         i. Note that there is no “birth narrative” in Mark and John, so in the relevant passages alluding to the birth of Jesus the testimony is 100%.

         ii. “He said, ‘I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy.’ She said, ‘How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?’ He said, ‘Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, “It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.”‘ So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place.” [Qur’an 19:19-22]. (Muslims claim the Qur’an was revealed to Muhammad though Gabriel over a period of 23 years beginning in December 609 CE).

      c. John 1:13 (textual issue):

         i. “who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (ESV).
ii. “who were born” or “who was born”? The singular points to Jesus and therefore to the manner of his birth/conception as supernatural. MSS and patristic evidence: Tertullian, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus etc. See. T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* Ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic; Milton Keynes, Bucks: Paternoster, 2008), 89-90.

d. Galatians 4:4

i. “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.”

1. There was something he knew that caused him to use guarded language.

2. Alternatives to Christian doctrine

i. A JEWISH story:

a. Matthew cites Isaiah 7:

   i. The issue of whether Hebrew: ‘almâ in Isaiah 7 meant “virgin” or simply “young girl” has clouded the entire discussion. Even conservatives have baulked here. There is no evidence to suggest that Isaiah was not intending to say “virgin” (despite claims that a better word in Hebrew would have suggested such). See discussions in Alec Motyer, *Isaiah*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP,1999), 78-79; E. J. Young, *Studies in Isaiah* (Tyndale Press, 1954), 171ff; and G. J. Wenham, “A Girl of Marriageable Age,” in *Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972), 325ff.

   ii. There is every reason, therefore, that despite the fact that inter-Testamental Judaism did not expect a virgin-birthed Messiah, they should have done so.

ii. A PAGAN story:

   a. Fertility cults (eros). But this is completely absence in the NT.

3. The Theological Significance

i. It highlights the supernatural character of Jesus:
a. He comes into the world as a pre-existent being. He enters human nature at the earliest possible point (at conception), but supernaturally.

b. It is a judgment on human nature:
   i. Humanity needs a redeemer but cannot produce one.
   ii. Mary is “non-willing.”

c. Jesus and Original (Adamic) Sin:
   i. Sinlessness of Jesus due Virgin Birth? Not quite!
   ii. Exclusion of the male (Augustine, Aquinas)
   iii. Sinlessness of Mary? Catholic Dogma of the Immaculate Conception:

   1. The **Immaculate Conception** is a dogma of the Catholic Church maintaining that from the moment when she was conceived in the womb, the Blessed Virgin Mary was kept free of original sin, so that she was from the start filled with the sanctifying grace normally conferred in baptism. It is one of the four dogmas in Roman Catholic Mariology. The Immaculate Conception should not be confused with the perpetual virginity of Mary or the virgin birth of Jesus; it refers to the conception of Mary by her mother, Saint Anne. Dogmatically defined on December 8, 1854, by Pope Pius IX in his papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*.

   ii. “Conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance” (WCF 8:2):
      a. Jesus was by the Holy Spirit.

   iii. The role of Mary:
      a. The conception is miraculous; the birth was normal and natural. Better, “Virgin Conception.”
      b. “of her substance”
         i. Patristic tradition.
         ii. “through the 23 chromosomes in the ovum in Mary’s body, Jesus became a member of the human race. These chromosomes were

iii. not ex nihilo but ex Maria.

iv. All that a human mother contributes to her child.

v. *theotokos*

iv. The role of the Holy Spirit

a. Conceived by the power of the Spirit (the Spirit fertilizing the ovum).

b. “Sanctifying” the human nature?

   i. Irenaeus, Barth

   c. Con-created: holy at the point of origin

   d. The Spirit is not Jesus’ Father

4. *Roman Catholicism*

   i. Perpetual Virginity of Mary? (5th Ecumenical council, 553 *aeiparthenos*):

      a. “…that nativity of these latter days when the Word of God came down from the heavens and was made flesh of holy and glorious Mary, mother of God and ever-virgin, and was born from her.”

   ii. Immaculate Conception (Decree of Pius IX, 1854)

   iii. The Assumption of Mary (Pius XII, 1 November 1950)

   iv. Invocation of Mary: *Mediatrix*

      a. In Roman Catholicism three different kinds of worship:

         i. *Dulia*—worship of saints and angels

         ii. *Latria*—worship of God

         iii. *Hyper-dulia*—special category which is more than the worship of saints and angels and somehow less than the worship given to God.
b. What should our attitude to Mary be?

i. Honour her as the mother of the Saviour. “Blessed are you among women” (Luke 1:42, Elizabeth to Mary).

ii. Honour her parenting skills.

5. Conclusion:

i. “One thing at least is clear: even if the belief in the virgin birth is not necessary to every Christian, it is certainly necessary to Christianity. And it is necessary to the corporate witness of the Church. Sad is it when men who will not affirm this doctrine are sent out into the ministry to lead Christ’s little ones astray. Such men are learners, it is said; they will grow in knowledge and in grace; let us deal patiently with them and all will be well. Now we have all sympathy with those who are immature in the faith, and we hope that by the blessing of God they may be led into clearer and stronger convictions as to the truth of His Word. But the place for such learning, so far as the basic things are concerned, is not the sacred office of the Christian ministry. Let these men learn first by themselves, let them struggle, let them meditate, with such help as we and others can give them; and then, if God leads them aright, let them aspire to the holy ministry of the Word. But to send them out before they have attained such convictions, as official representatives of a Church whose faith they do not share—that is simply to trifle with human souls.

“Let it never be forgotten that the virgin birth is an integral part of the New Testament witness about Christ, and that that witness is strongest when it is taken as it stands. We are not averse, indeed, to a certain logical order of apologetics; and in that order the virgin birth certainly does not come first. Before the virgin birth come the things for which testimony in the very nature of the case can be more abundant than for this. To those things no doubt the inquirer should be directed first, before he comes to consider this mystery which was first attested perhaps only by the mother of the Lord. But though that is true, though theoretically a man can believe in the resurrection, for example, without believing in the virgin birth, yet such a halfway conviction is not likely to endure. The New Testament presentation of Jesus is not an agglomeration, but an organism, and of that organism the virgin birth is an integral part. Remove the part, and the whole becomes harder and not easier to accept; the New Testament account of Jesus is most convincing when it is taken as a whole. Only one Jesus is presented in the Word of God; and that Jesus did not come into the world by ordinary generation, but was conceived in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost.”

Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*  
(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1965), 396-397.
Our Missionaries- September 25, 2013

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- Pray for the opportunity for us to visit Russia again, if it is God’s will.

Paul and Missy Robelot – France

Please pray for

- TEAM’s recruitment efforts and training our missionaries to better care for the new recruits
- Good connections with missionaries in the OMCC role. Safety and effectiveness in our travels
- Remaining needed support
- Coworkers, Helio and Annie’s growth through trials
- “Gouter et Voir,” evangelistic seminar on Oct 13
- David Edwards piano concerts among our churches in early December, the needed support. www.davidedwardspianist.com

Andy and Nannette Howard - Sahiwal, Pakistan

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would do miracles: that many people would understand and accept the salvation God offers through Christ!
- We have a good group going at Village 65! Pray that they would keep up the good work and be able to start visiting families in the village to share what they learn I group about Christ and healthy living.
- Please pray for other villages we’re working in: 190, 90, and 86.
- Pray that we could change the paradigm that says the mission only gives.
- Please pray that God would provide in His time…

Jeff and Lisa King- Chile

- We mailed our visa application/paperwork last week. Jeff was able to speak to the consulate Monday- they received our paper, everything looked good and said we should get it within 15-20 days. One thing that will speed up the process is for our Chilean contact to call the Chilean government on Thursday to give permission to give us a visa. Pray for Abelardo to be able to make this call on Thursday
- We took a leap of faith and bought airline tickets to fly to Chile on October 24th. Pray that the visas arrive and we can go pick them up before the 24th.
- Please pray for traveling mercy as we visit Lisa’s family in Florida and for a special visit with Lisa’s grandmother.
Peter is working on a new book and would appreciate your prayers for wisdom, clear logic and just the right words to enlighten God’s saints who will read the book. Pray for the editorial process and that the publisher will accept the manuscript.

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Pray for the use of our very first online course, hosted by Blue Letter Bible. A group reaches millions of people around the world. The course should come online in October. Lord willing.

The blast in Peshawar killing 75 plus included several of Mission Property manager Mark Bhatti’s family, and 120 injured included several of Justice John’s extended family. Please pray for them during this difficult time.
The Incarnation

"Although therefore from that beginning whereby in the Virgin's womb "the Word became flesh," no sort of division ever arose between the Divine and the human substance, and through all the growth and changes of His body, the actions were of one Person the whole time, yet we do not by any mixing of them up confound those very acts which were done inseparably: and from the character of the acts we perceive what belonged to either form. For neither do His Divine acts affect His human, nor His human acts His Divine, since both concur in this way and to this very end that in their operation His twofold qualities be not absorbed the one by the other, nor His individuality doubled. Therefore let those Christian phantom-mongers tell us, what nature of the Savior's it was that was fastened to the wood of the Cross, that lay in the tomb, and that on the third day rose in the flesh when the stone was rolled away from the grave: or what kind of body Jesus presented to His disciples' eyes entering when the doors were shut upon them: seeing that to drive away the beholders' disbelief, He required them to inspect with their eyes and to handle with their hands the still open prints of the nails and the flesh wound of His pierced side. But if in spite of the truth being so clear, their persistence in heresy will not abandon their position in the darkness, let them show whence they promise themselves the hope of eternal life, which no one can attain to, save through the mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ. For "there is not another name given to men under heaven, in which they must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Neither is there any ransoming of men from captivity, save in His blood, "who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6): who, as the blessed apostle proclaims, "when He was in the form of God, thought it not robbery that He was equal with God; but emptied Himself, receiving the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, being made obedient even unto death, the death of the cross. For which reason God also exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow of things in heaven, of things on the earth, and of things under the earth, and that every tongue may confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:6-11).

The Incarnation

**in·car·na·tion** [in-(')kär-ˌ nā-shən]. **Origin**: Middle English (as a term in Christian theology): via Old French from ecclesiastical Latin *incarnatio(n-)*, from the verb *incarnare*. a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or quality.

1. **The necessity of the Incarnation**

   **Anselm of Canterbury** (1033-1109). Archbishop of Canterbury. *Cur Deus Homo*. The treatise presents a discussion between Anselm and one Boso (abbot of Bec; 1124-1136), with whom Anselm had much contact and correspondence, and who is said by Anselm to be “the one who among the rest presses me more urgently to debate with me,” (*Cur*, I.1). Anselm seeks to respond to “many earnest requests that I should commit to writing the proofs of a particular doctrine of our faith,” namely: “For what reason or necessity did God become man and, as we believe and confess, by his death restore life to the world, when he could have done this through another person (angelic or human), or even by a sheer act of will?” (I.1)

   - *Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum* (CDH 1:21 [II 88, 18]. “You have not yet considered how heavy the weight of sin is.”

   **John Owen** (1616-1683). *Commentary on Hebrews*, 7 vols. 2:26-36. On the useless discussion about whether Jesus would have become incarnate if Adam had not fallen.

2. **The Study of the Incarnation**

   a. **Philip Melancthon** (1497-1560): Preface to the *Loci Communes*: “We do better to adore the mysteries of deity than to investigate them.” True and false!


   a. John 1.14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only (μονογενής) Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”

      i. John 1:1, 14 and John 3:16. The Logos who becomes incarnate in v. 14 is the same pre-existent Logos in v. 1. But equally it is the eternal divine Logos who was sacrificed by the Father (3:16). It echoes the language and context of the 1:14 (μονογενής).

      ii. Second person of the Godhead becomes incarnation. *Two dangers:*


1. It is the Son and not the Father or the Holy Spirit who becomes incarnate.

2. It is the Son, *not the divine* nature, that becomes flesh.

iii. “became flesh”

   1. Notice the verb tense in v. 14 (*εγένετο*): aorist middle indicative. Contrast with verse 1: “in the beginning was (*ὁ*) the Word”: imperfect indicative.

iv. “dwelt among us”

   1. He pitched his tabernacle (*ἐσκήνωσεν*) among us—impermanence of Jesus on the earthly mode of existence *NOT* the impermanence of the incarnation as such.

v. “We beheld his glory”:

   1. Mount of Transfiguration, the cross, washing disciples feet?

b. 2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

c. Philippians 2:6-7 (*we will return to this passage in a later study for more intensive study*): “who, though he was *in* the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

   i. Pre-existence: (v. 7). Prior to this servant-form (*μορφῇ θεοῦ*), he existed in the form of God (*μορφῇ θεοῦ*).

   ii. *μορφῇ θεοῦ*: Older theologians identified with “essence,” but more accurate is (LXX) association with “image” and “glory.”

iii. “He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped”: This is a difficult word/phrase (*ἀρπαγμόν*). It is a word taken for booty, plunder. Are we talking about an equality with God that he might want to plunder (i.e. something he did not have but wanted) *or* something he had and didn’t cling to. Is it a thing to be clinged at *or* a thing already possessed and to be clung to?

iv. “*but emptied* himself” (*ἐκένωσεν*). (see later lecture on Kenoticism).
1. CANNOT mean that he emptied himself of his deity or a part of his deity. Incarnation by divine suicide.

2. Translation and dynamic equivalence: “he made himself of no reputation” (KJV). Earlier editions of the ESV:
   a. [2007] made himself nothing
   b. [2011] he emptied himself

v. He emptied BY ADDITION: “taking the form of a servant”

1. *doulos*: servant
   a. “And being found in fashion as a man,”
   b. “he humbled himself,”
   c. “and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”

   d. Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”
      i. The inadequacy of law-keeping on our part to save us.
      ii. Two things Paul could have said but didn’t:
         1. Christ came in the likeness of flesh: DOCETISM
         2. Christ came in sinful flesh. PECCABILITY
      iii. Did Christ assume “fallen human nature”? *(This is not the same thing as asking did Christ sin?)*

         1. Karl Barth: “There must be no weakening or obscuring of the saving truth that the nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in the light of Fall. If it were otherwise, how could Christ be really like us? What concern would we have with him? We stand before God characterized by the Fall. God's Son not only assumed our nature but he entered the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men damned and lost” *(Church Dogmatics I.2, [153]).*
2. T. F. Torrance: “His taking of our flesh of sin was a sinless action, which means that Jesus does not do in the flesh of sin what we do, namely, sin, but it also means that by remaining holy and sinless in our flesh, he condemned sin in the flesh he assumed and judged it by his very sinlessness” (Incarnation, 63).

3. What is not assumed cannot be healed (the so-called, non-assumptio, a mantra of Gregory of Nazianzus in discussions about Apollinarian heresy).

4. Problems with this view:

   a. Fallenness is not intrinsic to humanity.

   b. Is it possible to in a state of fallenness and not be sinful? To possess a fallen nature is to be guilty before God.

   c. Chalcedon: there are two distinct but inseparable natures (divine and human) hypostatically (that is, personally) united in the one person of the Son. But how could the infallible Son of God be joined to a morally fallen human nature?

4. Denials of the True and Perfect Humanity of Christ

   a. Docetism (a form of monophysite teaching:

      i. “Docetism: (from the Greek δοκεῖν/δόκησις dokein (to seem) /dókēsis (apparition, phantom).”

      ii. “Monophysitism: (Greek: monos meaning ‘only, single’ and physis meaning ‘nature’), is the Christological position that, after the union of the divine and the human in the historical Incarnation, Jesus Christ, as the incarnation of the eternal Son or Word (Logos) of God, had only a single ‘nature’ which was either divine or a synthesis of divine and human.”


   iv. His flesh wasn’t “real.”
v. 1 John 4:2-3 “antichrist” is one who denies Christ had come in the flesh. (Marcion and Gnostics).

vi. Islam has problems with it too: Sura 4:157–158 reads: “And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger — they slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain. But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise.”

vii. Greek philosophy and flesh/spirit. The body is the prison house of the soul etc. Cf. Plato’s *Phaedo*.

b. **Apollinarianism**

   i. Apollinarius (361-390), Bishop of Laodicea in Syria; see Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics*, 94ff.

   ii. **Monophysite Christology**

      1. Tragic figure of history. Great defender of the doctrine of the *homoousion* (against Arianism), but went too far!

      2. Jesus had a divine *logos* in place of a human mind/spirit/soul (the principle of rationality and self-awareness).

      3. The one who made decisions was the divine logos at every point.

      4. *See below – a “human mind”*

5. An orthodox (Chalcedonian) assessment of the incarnation

   a. **A True Body:**

      i. Jesus hungers, thirsts, sleeps, experiences weariness, grew, knew pain, perspired, shed tears, was mortal, and in death he was buried.

      ii. Colossians 2:9, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”


   b. **A Reasonable Soul** (Latin: *anima rationalis*)
i. A growing self-awareness

c. A human mind

   i. Human in capacity *and* in the manner of knowing

   ii. There is no reason to think that Jesus *knew* the formula for benzene, or what a Laplace Transformation is!

d. A human will

   i. A human way of making choices, decisions, of setting goals, of choosing options, and includes the element of desire. Was Jesus ever in a dilemma? Gethsemane?

   ii. *Monothelitism*: the view that Jesus Christ has two natures but only one will. Prevalent in Armenia and Syria in 7th century.

e. Human affections/emotions


   ii. Anger, sorrow (tears pouring down his face at the tomb of Lazarus and at Gethsemane), joy (delights to do the word of God), amazement (of the hardness of people’s heart), wonder, etc. There is even a weight of despondence; almost enough to kill him. “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38). Gethsemane: cup, “Not my will, but thy will.”

6. Permanence of the incarnation

   a. He remains God-Man (two natures, one person) forever.

      i. Revelation 7 not only is the lamb standing in the centre of the throne and in charge of the scroll turning the pages of history, but he also occupies the throne as the lamb with its throat cut.

      ii. The post-resurrection Jesus presented himself to Thomas as one whose side was still pierced (John 20).

7. The *extra Calvinisticum*

   a. Lutheran v. Calvinist debate of 16th century

c. Lutheran view of the person of Christ: he had no existence outside of the body. The logos did not exist outside the flesh (in the strict Latin sense of “outside.”) In contrast, the Calvinists said that the divine nature certainly fills the human but also transcends it and is not contained by it. Christ the Logos exists in the flesh but is not confined by the flesh; exists above and beyond the flesh.
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Our Missionaries - October 2, 2013

Dennis and Rhonda Conroy - Philippines

- Praise the Lord for providing an interim principal for our school, Faith Academy Mindanao. Peter Hester, an Australian, will arrive on Oct 10th. He will complete this school year with us. Pray for Peter, who is a retired school administrator, and his wife, Lynnette, as they move from Australia to the Philippines to serve at our school that uses an American curriculum and our student population is 40% Korean. Pray for a good transition for all of us. Pray for our current admin team as we incorporate Peter Hester as our leader.

- Pray for our high school’s Spiritual Emphasis Retreat, March 5–8, 2014. Pray for a great work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Pray for us as we reserve a venue, plan the schedule, and contact potential speakers. Pray for God to send us a speaker, or speakers, who will teach the Word of God with integrity, and also relate well with our 67 students. We are looking locally and also abroad for speakers to come be with us. If you know of a good speaker for an international group of high school students, let them know we are looking. Speakers will need to be sent by others to come. This can be a great mission outreach for a youth pastor.

- Pray for Dennis as he continues to work, via Skype, with translator Andrew. They are 50% done with the typesetting of the Old Testament for the Ki people group. Pray for the people to be prepared and ready to receive God’s Word in the language they understand best.

- Pray for additional financial support needed to keep us on the mission field. Our average monthly shortfall this year is about $1400.

- Praise the Lord that Abigail’s ankle is mending. Praise the Lord that someone had a very helpful brace for her to use. She is now able to participate carefully, with her volleyball team.

Paul and Missy Robelot - France

- Please pray for TEAM's recruitment efforts and training our missionaries to better serve and care for the new recruits.

- Good connections with missionaries in the OMCC role. Safety and effectiveness in our travels.

- Remaining needed support. Pray for continued healing for Helio and Annie’s growth through trials and continued safety.


- David Edwards piano concerts among our churches in early December. Please pray for the needed support. www.davidedwardspianist.com

Miriam Jerome will be in Indonesia 10/04 - 10/24 for the Women of the Harvest. Please pray for safety in travel.
I. The Work Reflects the Worker (or creation reflects the Creator):

Not out of loneliness:

‘Nobody said, “It is not good for God to be alone. So let there be birch trees and bullfrogs and advertising executives.”’\(^1\)

Not out of a sense of incompleteness:

‘The doctrine of creation flows from the infinite perfection of God.’\(^2\)

Not out of boredom:

If God was not compelled to create the world, then creation must have been a deliberate act on the part of God. There was a design and intention. So why did God bring something out of nothing?

Out of who God is:

‘It is he, beneficent in nature, goodness without measure, a worthy object of love for all being endowed with reason, the beauty most to be desire, the origin of all that exists, the source of life, intellectual light, impenetrable wisdom – he it is who “in the beginning created heaven and earth.”’\(^3\)

Out of God’s boundless love:

‘The whole difference between construction and creation is that a thing constructed can only be loved after it is constructed; but a thing created is loved before it exists.’\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Basil, *Hexameron* 1.2

- God loves creation and does not dispose of that which he creates. Even when sin enters into existence and Adam and Eve catapult humanity and the cosmos into complete disarray, God’s plan of salvation is not to save us apart from creation but to save us within creation.

When Adam fell into sin, the whole of creation was utterly dislocated and fractured – thorns, thistles, and pain, shame, toil and sorrow were the result for humans and for creation.

God’s plan of salvation is inextricably linked with creation rejoicing, the wilderness and the barren land rejoicing and celebrating with God’s people:

- **Isaiah 55:12-13**

  ‘For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.’

- Even though Paul tells us in Romans that we along with creation groan in pains of childbirth (Romans 8:22-23), Isaiah tells us that creation’s groaning will turn to rejoicing. *Matter matters to God.*

In sum, we need to stress the immensity and the beauty of creation and the awfulness of the fall into sin. All has been created good, including the full range of human cultures that emerge when humans act according to God’s design.

**II The Creature obeys the Creator**

(a) **Cultural Mandate:**

- Five Imperatives from **Gen 1:28** (cf. Gen 1:22):

  i. Be fruitful
  ii. Multiply
  iii. Fill
iv. Subdue

v. Have dominion

- The creature obeys the Creator (and even reflects the Creator) when blesses them to care for what God has given. God charged our first parents to ‘transform untamed nature into a social environment’ by cultural formation that fits God’s design.

For example, to expand the charge to ‘fill’ the earth we speak languages, build tools and cathedrals, enter contracts, play sports, sing and listen to music and so on and when we do such things we are acting in character as one created in God’s image.

(b) Attempting a definition of culture:

- The task before us is a difficult one; Raymond Williams, a pioneer in the sociology of culture has claimed that ‘culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language’.

  We’re not only trying to define and examine this concept but we’re also trying to understand its relation to theology!

- Speaking of culture in the abstract keeps us from understanding what culture really is. Andy Crouch offers a helpful explanation: ‘Culture always and only comes from particular human acts of cultivation and creativity. We don’t make culture, we make omelets. We tells stories. We build hospitals. We pass laws. These specific products of cultivating and creating… are eventually, over time, become part of the framework of the world for future generations.’

- Vanhoozer’s definition of Culture is helpful: Culture is (a) a work because it is the result of what humans do freely. Culture is what we get when humans work the raw material of creation. Culture is also (b) a world that attempts to create a meaningful environment to live in both physically and imaginatively.

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5 Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (OUP, 1985), p. 87
(c) Necessity of culture:

- Theology can only be done in cultural form.
- Every time we try to interpret the gospel or speak to someone about the Gospel, we’re doing it with the language of our culture.

In Sum:

Creation is God’s good gift to us. Culture is what we do with what God has given to us in creation, with the raw material that includes nature, ourselves, our gifts, our desires, our talents and our inclinations.

We can’t escape culture so the key is whether we’re being cultural in a way that reflects the Creator or we’re being cultural in a way that is determined by sin.

(d) **Christian Responses to Culture**

(a) H. Richard Niebuhr

One person has framed the discussion, almost every discussion, about culture since 1949 when he delivered a set of lectures at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. These lectures were subsequently turned into a book with the title, *Christ and Culture* (1951).

- **Background**: Niebuhr is an American theologian-ethicist. He was born in Missouri in 1884. His father, Gustav, was a minister in the German Evangelical Synod. Richard followed in his father’s shoes and was ordained in 1916.

- **Niebuhr’s Definition of Culture**:

What we have in view when we deal with Christ and culture is that total process of human activity, to which now the name culture… is applied in speech. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, values. It is a social heritage. ‘What the New Testament writers had in mind when they spoke of “the world”’… (p.31).
Niebuhr’s Theological Model of Culture:

Niebuhr put together a typology of 5 ways of understanding the relation between Christ and Culture:

i.) Christ Against Culture
ii.) Christ of Culture
iii.) Christ above Culture
iv.) Christ and Culture in Paradox
v.) Christ the Transformer of Culture

Niebuhr believes that each of the 5 types is a genuine expression of the social implications of the Gospel.

- **His Starting point**: For Niebuhr, the relation of Christ to culture is a problem. Christ lived a perfect life of perfect and complete obedience to God. He was single-minded in his devotion to God. Culture, on the other hand is man-centered and because of sin and diversity, needs to compromise its Christian convictions.

- **Avoiding Extremes**: Some Christians follow Jesus so strictly that they find it necessary to try to separate from culture altogether and retreat into safety. Others identity Jesus so closely with culture that the one endorses the other and there is no real distinction – these are the first two in Niebuhr’s typology and they are the extremes that he wants to avoid.

### III The Redeemed Live Like the Redeemer

(a) Identity of the Redeemer

(Or, we need to be biblically and theologically literate before we’re culturally literate.)

(b) Witness of the Redeemed

(i) One of the first obstacles to bearing witness to Christ is cultural: Christians have adopted the idea that work comes first.

‘The old and honorable idea of “vocation” is simply that we each are called, by God, or by our gifts, or by our preference, to a kind of good
work for which we are particularly fitted. Implicit in this idea is the evidently startling possibility that we might work willingly, and that there is no necessary contradiction between work and happiness or satisfaction’ (Wendell Berry).

- Vocations have become idols: rather than gifts to God, vocations have turned into work which becomes a self-serving way to gain security. To achieve this, we end up feeling like we cannot remain who we are unless we are at the top of our chosen field and it is this which demands that work creeps into time with family, fellowship with believers and community with neighbours.

(ii) To live like Christ, we have to spend time with Christ

‘When we have met our Lord in the silent intimacy of our prayer, then we will also meet him in the market, and in the town square. But when we have not met him in the centre of our own hearts, we cannot expect to meet him in the busyness of our daily lives.’

(iii) To live like Christ, we have to follow Christ

- Phil. 2:1-8: The Pattern of the Christian Life

‘The Christ hymn presents Jesus as the supreme example of the humble, self-sacrificing service that Paul has been urging the Philippians to practice in their relations one toward another.’

The lavish love of God is seen in the high humility of the suffering Servant. We bear witness to this Love in humility, sacrifice, suffering, giving and being spent.

Letter to Diognetus:

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For

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8 Henri Nouwen, Gracias!: A Latin American Journal (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 21
9 Peter O’Brien, The Epistle to the Philippians, p. 262.
they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity... inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all others; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of; and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour’ they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life...

How does this answer the ‘Christ against Culture’ or ‘Christ of Culture’ question?

‘According to God’s intelligence, the way to thrive is to help others thrive; the way to flourish is to cause others to flourish; the way to fulfill yourself is to spend yourself.’

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Our Missionaries- October 9, 2013

**Dennis and Rhonda Conroy** - Philippines

- Praise the Lord that the Tol New Testament, Genesis, and hymns is typeset! The files have been sent to the printer. Pray for a legible print job. Pray for the dedication celebration. Pray for the Tol people to be prepared for the coming of God’s Word. Pray for minds to be renewed and lives transformed.
- Praise the Lord for his grace for Rhonda, Daniel, Elizabeth, and Abigail as they started a new school year. Pray for wisdom and understanding for Rhonda in her role as lead teacher. Pray for our students to live lives worthy of the Lord. Pray for Daniel in his senior year of college, to finish well, and to know the answer to what’s next. Pray for Elizabeth, a sophomore, to manage a variety of responsibilities well. Pray for Abigail who is a senior in high school. Pray for direction after high school.
- Praise the Lord for continued healing for Hannah. Most days she is now able to help a little around the house. Several days a week she is able to do a one hour outing (like to church, or to a mall), interspersed with a lot of resting. Pray for complete healing, and patience with the process.
- Pray for Dennis as he typesets 50% of the Old Testament for the Ki people group. Pray for technology to continue to work well so that Dennis and the translator can work together even though they are on different continents.
- Pray for God’s provision for a principal for our school. We are also needing a 3rd grade teacher for this school year. Pray for God’s grace, mercy, and peace to abound at our school.

**Alex and Irina Ponomarev** - Russia

- Pray that the Lord will strengthen their faith, add to their numbers, and use them for His Name’s glory.
- Pray for a spiritual revival in Russia.
- Pray for small struggling Protestants churches.
- Pray for the opportunity for us to visit Russia again, if it is God’s will.

**Dennis & Cynde Morgan** - Austria

- Praise that we signed a contract for the sale of our house this past weekend.
- Continued prayer for all the aspects of transition between now and December 27th.
- Praise for the growing numbers attending Sunday worship at New City Wien.
- Prayer for the Lord’s leading in supporting raising contacts over the next two months.

**Paul and Missy Robelot** – France

Please pray for

- TEAM’s recruitment efforts and training our missionaries to better care for the new recruits
- Good connections with missionaries in the OMCC role. Safety and effectiveness in our travels
- Remaining needed support
- Coworkers, Helio and Annie’s growth through trials
- “Gouter et Voir,” evangelistic seminar on Oct 13
- David Edwards’ piano concerts among our churches in early December, the needed support. www.davidedwards pianist.com

**Mark and Natalie Witte** - Spain

- Pray for our transition to and housing in Spain
- Pray for all of our boxes to ship to Spain and clear customs without too many problems.
- Pray for the people of Spain, that God will open their hearts to the truth of the Gospel.
- Pray for Vanessa, as she beings school.
Our Missionaries

October 9, 2013

Sebastien and Patti Benicourt - Asia

Please pray for friends we recently visited. One is a former co-worker and for a special visit with Lisa’s grandmother. We took a leap of faith and bought airline tickets to fly to Chile on October 24th. Pray that the visas arrive and we can go pick them up before the 24th.

Pray for friends we recently visited.

One is a former co-worker with whom I was able to share the Gospel quite a bit. He hasn’t been very responsive. Pray for him and his wife and worker with whom I was able to share the Gospel quite a bit.

Pray also for our Turkish friends Emre and Hacer. They see some contact with the religious group that had asked Josh and I to no longer come to one of their offices.

You all, I am sure, are aware of the situation in Syria. May the “spirit of grace and supplication” be poured out upon us that the rod of the oppressor may be broken and that captives may be set free.

Pray for our transition to and housing in Spain.

Pray for all of our boxes to ship to Spain and clear customs without too many problems.

Pray for the people of Spain, that God will open their hearts to the truth of the Gospel.

Pray for Vanessa, as she begins school.

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Jeff and Lisa King - Chile

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Sebastien and Paul Benicotour - Asia

Our Missionaries - October 9, 2013
“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.”
Acts 10:38

“How did Jesus live his life of obedience, resisting temptation and carrying out perfectly the will of his Father? For many evangelicals, who have been taught (correctly) that Jesus was fully God, their instinctive answer would be something along these lines: Because Jesus was fully divine and had all power available to him as God, he was able to carry out all that the Father required of him and obey the Father out of the resources of his intrinsic divine nature. In short, Jesus was perfectly obedient because he was perfectly God… are our evangelical instincts on the right track here?”

Bruce Ware
The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections
(Crossway, 2012), 31

“It could be argued that it is the Holy Spirit that enables the human nature of Christ to perform miracles, rather than Christ’s divine nature, if, say, the divine nature of Christ is not thought to act in and through the human nature of Christ in this way during the Incarnation. But this is not a conventional view of the means by which Christ was able to perform miracles. A conventional view would claim that Christ was able to perform miracles in virtue of the action of his divine nature in and through his human nature in the hypostatic union.”

Oliver D. Crisp, Divinity and Humanity: Current Issues in Theology
(Cambridge University Press, 2007), 25
The Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus

The Question of uniqueness: what accounts for the abilities of Jesus? E.g. his knowledge, his power (miracles), etc.

1. The divine nature supporting/penetrating the human nature: the grace of union

   a. The traditional “evangelical” view? (see quote by Crisp on front page)
      
      i. Divinization of humanity
      
      ii. Greek Orthodoxy: theosis
      
      iii. Mormonism: eternal progression

   b. The Hypostatic Union:
      
      i. The two natures (divine and human) are united in ONE PERSON, or ONE HYPOSTASIS.
      
         1. Greek term: cf. Hebrews 1:3 “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature (hupostasis)” [Latin term: substantia].
         
         
         3. Essentially, it is not the human nature that is dependent but the God-man, the He.

   c. He never appeals to his divine nature: he never “prays” to his divine nature for example.

   d. His human life was effortful, not one that displayed constant supplies from his divine nature. He was tempted, tried, tested.

   e. He could not be “God for man and man for God” unless his humanity endured the same (sinless) constitution and frailty as ours. “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
2. The alternative answer: the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit

   a. Personal communion of Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

   b. The template is that of Old Testament prophets.

   c. Evidence:

      i. Birth narratives:

         1. “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit...that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18, 20).

         2. “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy— the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

         3. The creation of the human nature of Jesus is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

      ii. Baptism:

         1. “And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased’” (Luke 3:22).

         2. “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness” (Luke 4:1).

      iii. Temptation in the wilderness:

         1. “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matthew 4:1).

      iv. Miracles:

         1. “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28).

      v. The Suffering Servant anticipated:

         1. (First “servant song”):
“Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my Spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;  
a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
till he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his law.” (Isaiah 42:1-4)

vi. Psalm 2: The Son is also the Lord’s “Anointed One.”

3. The Nature of the Spirit’s Ministry in the human nature of Christ
   a. The creation of the human nature of Christ (the Virgin Conception)
   b. The sinlessness of the human nature (more on this later)
      i. At the moment of his conception, the human nature of Jesus is  
         without sin. Virgin Birth (conception) does not provide us with the  
         explanation for his sinlessness (see previous lecture).
   c. The character (grace) of Jesus: “I am gentle and lowly in heart” (Matthew  
      11:29). Jesus displayed the fruits of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is  
      love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).
   d. The power by which he performed miracles: no different in essence from  
      that of Moses or Elijah and we do not attribute the latter’s ability to their  
      divine nature but to the Holy Spirit.
   e. His knowledge of his Father.
   f. His knowledge of himself:
      i. Thomas Aquinas (RC):
         1. Human nature of Jesus possessed a threefold knowledge:  
            beatific knowledge, infused knowledge, and acquired  
            knowledge. (Summa Theologica, III, 9-12).
         2. Modified: Catechism of the Catholic Church: “This human  
            soul that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true
human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, ‘increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man’, and would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience. This corresponded to the reality of his voluntary emptying of himself, taking ‘the form of a slave’ (CCC 472).

3. “But at the same time, this truly human knowledge of God's Son expressed the divine life of his person. ‘The human nature of God's Son, not by itself but by its union with the Word, knew and showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God.’ Such is first of all the case with the intimate and immediate knowledge that the Son of God made man has of his Father. The Son in his human knowledge also showed the divine penetration he had into the secret thoughts of human hearts.” (CCC 473).

   
a. Human knowledge

b. Prophetic knowledge

c. “The Son of God incarnate would have had to learn in the same way as ordinary human beings. This means that he not only had to learn the alphabet and numbers, but also that he had to learn the Scriptures. Joseph and Mary (and probably others) would have had to teach him the Jewish traditions and how to pray the psalms. Of course, in the midst of all this learning, he would have come, through the light of the Holy Spirit, to a personal knowledge and understanding of how all of this applied to him as the Messiah. This is all in keeping with his growing in wisdom, age, and grace.” (Thomas G. Weinandy, Jesus the Christ (Huntingdon: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2003), 91.

5. Self-consciousness:

a. “None of this means that in Jesus there are two self-consciousnesses, but it does mean that there are two
levels of consciousness of the one self. There is a divine consciousness that he is the eternal Son of God, and there is a human consciousness of the same fact. These two forms of consciousness remain distinct, united in the one person, communicating through the Holy Spirit.” (Donald MacLeod, The Person of Christ [IVP, 1998], 193).

g. The upholding he experiences in relation to the cross

i. “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14).

h. Resurrection

i. “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you…” (Romans 8:11).

4. Conclusion

a. The role of the Holy Spirit does not exclude the role of God the Father.

i. Opera ad extra Trinitatis indivisa sum: All the external acts of God are acts of all three persons.

ii. At key points in the Son’s ministry, – Baptism, Transfiguration – the Father is involved. “I love you” (Matthew 3:17; Mark 9:7).

iii. It is to Abba Jesus prays, not to this divinity or typically to the Holy Spirit. While there is a key ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is not to the exclusion of the Father. The Father works through the Holy Spirit.

b. The Spirit’s role as agent of the post-resurrection Christ: paraclete
Our Missionaries - October 16, 2013

Our Local Missions

Bethany Christian Services
Child Evangelism Fellowship
Christ Central Ministries / Hannah House
Campus Crusade for Christ
The Cooperative Ministry
Daybreak Crisis Pregnancy Center
Harvest Hope Food Bank
International Friendship Ministries
Missionary Resources Connection
Navigators
Oliver Gospel Mission
Providence Home
Palmetto Family Council
Reformed University Ministries
The Salvation Army
Young Life
Our Missionaries - October 16, 2013

Note: Non-member names in Bold Italics.

Addison Wilson
David Tubley
Kyle Dun Rommack
Chris Merwin
Presbyterian Leesmores
Branden Harvey
Stephen Ellison
David Cullen
Zan Campbell

US NAVY

Matthew Thomson
David Mills
Andrew Mills
Trent Lambecker

USMC

David Kent

USCG

Note: Non-member names in Bold Italics.

Hunter Wilson
James Sheffield
Eric Prunl
John Pulliam
Ben Merwin
Chuck Lynche
Gaill Knight
Wayne Kindle
Daniel Hinecock
Kyan Girdler
Andrew Gosa
Parks Bunch
Brian Bridge

US ARMY

Jackson Whiting
Alex Stevenson
Andrew Mellen
John Kenyon
Sam Kent
Joshua Jerome

USAF
PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

OR

JESUS: THE ETERNAL SON

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.”

Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, A.D. 381
1. Creedal Statement:

a. “And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds” (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, A.D. 381).

i. Contemporary translations add “eternally begotten.”

ii. “worlds” = aeons: before “ages” or time.

iii. Arianism: believed in pre-existence but added, “there was a time when the Son was not.”

2. Specific Biblical Titles (Synoptic Gospels)

a. “Lord”

i. Mark 1:2-3:

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

1. Mark is citing Malachi 1:3 and Isaiah 40:3. In both passages the “lord” is YHWH himself. It is self-evident that if it is YHWH, he exists before his coming.

b. The COMING of the KINGDOM/KING

i. “The time has come, the kingdom of God is near” (Mark 1:15).

1. The kingdom has come, drawn near, because the KING has come, drawn near.

c. SON OF MAN

i. Son of Man sayings are to be understood in light of Daniel 7:13f – a divine figure. (Careful: do not interpret “Son of God” as divine, “Son of Man” as human. BOTH are divine titles.) The “Son of Man” returns “on the clouds of heaven” (Daniel 7:13) – a divine allusion to clouds that often surround God’s appearances (Exodus 24:16; Numbers 9:16; 1 Kings 8:10; Mark 9:7 and Mark 14:62).
3. Specific Biblical Passages:


b. Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is (ὁ ὁμός) and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” [Could be rendered, “the BEING ONE”].

c. John 17:5, the High Priestly Prayer: “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

d. Some (J. D. G. Dunn, for example) argue that John’s testimony is necessarily suspect because he has something of a theological “axe to grind”. Of course, such a case can only be made if one accepts a suspicious view of what is canonical and what is not.

e. Galatians 4:4: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth (ἐξαπέστειλεν) his Son, born of woman, born under the law.” The point: God’s Son exists already if he is being “sent forth”. The verb is inappropriate if this is the point at which he comes into existence. God has a Son to send forth. Note: denial of the pre-existence seriously distorts the nature of the Love of the heavenly Father. The love that is expressive of the father’s gift to us is the love he has for a Son. He did not withhold his precious Son. God gave “his only-begotten Son” (John 3:16). Whilst it is true that God would have a relationship to one newly created in the lifetime of Mary and Joseph, it clearly redefines our understanding of the love of God from the traditional understanding that God the Father “did not spare” One who had been with him “for ever” (cf. Romans 8:32).

f. 2 Corinthians 8:9: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor (ἐπτύχευσεν), so that you by his poverty might become rich.” Note again the aorist tense: a decisive act takes place in his renunciation of a state of richness to one of poverty. Implies pre-existence.

g. Colossians 1:15-17: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” He is “before all things” does not mean superiority of rank; rather, it is a reference to his pre-existence, as the context makes abundantly clear in reference to creation having come about “in and through him.”
i. “firstborn” (πρωτότοκος): it could be argued that this term suggests that Christ has a beginning, that he was after all a created being (albeit the first one). Arians used the term to argue this way.

1. There is a perfectly good word that could have been sued if “first-created” was meant – prōtoktistos

2. LXX used πρωτότοκος to translate Psalm 89:27, “And I will make him the firstborn” – and consequently the term became a recognized Messianic title. “This latter text is especially important for Colossians 1:15, since Psalm 89 rings with messianic allusions, and Paul has just been describing Christ in messianic/kingly terms (vv.12-14).” [Douglas J. Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Apollos: Leicester; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 119].

h. Philippians 2:5-11:

i. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped…” (2:5-6).

1. “though he was (Greek: ὑπάρχων) in the form of God”: is this statement meant to suggest something contemporaneous with the incarnate life of Jesus? i.e. at the same time he was in the flesh, he was also God. (Old Lutheran view, E. H. Gifford; such a view confirms Jesus deity [perhaps] but has nothing to say about his pre-existence.) Rather, the term is suggestive of a condition attributed to Jesus before the incarnation (referred to 2:7-9). He already had existence.

2. “the form (μορφῇ) of God” What does “form” mean?

a. Lightfoot, Trench, Warfield: Classical Greek suggests something like “all the essential properties/characteristics.” Whatever constitutes deity, Jesus had before the incarnation.

b. LXX: μορφῇ

i. It is used synonymously with “image” in passages such as Genesis 1:26 (Man created in God’s image). This suggests that Paul has
in mind an Adam-Christ parallel. Jesus is another Adam. (see below).

ii. It is sued synonymously with “glory” (δόξα). James 2:1, “our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” John 1:14, “we beheld his glory.” Shekinah.

4. Meaning of Pre-existence

a. The doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ is a statement about his PERSON, not his HUMANITY.

b. The human nature of Jesus is not eternal. It began in the womb of Mary. It had no existence in 100 B.C.

c. Note carefully John 1:1 and 1:14: “was” (imperfect tense) and “became” (aorist tense). The WORD was; the WORD became.

d. There existed a WORD (a “HE” or “HIM”) before the incarnation. There existed a WORD (a “HE” or “HIM”) before “the beginning” (Creation/space-time universe/matter).

e. Avoid Monarchianism. A set of beliefs that suggest that God is ONE PERSON (one “arche,” one monarch). Mainly attributed to Paul of Samosata, a bishop of Antioch. Two contradictory moels emerged:

   i. Modalistic Monarchianism: the “Peter Sellers” view of God as one Person appearing to play three different roles. The chief proponent of modalism was Sabellius (Sabellianism). Also emerged as Patripassionism.

   ii. Dynamic Monarchianism: Jesus is not really God in the sense of the Father, but was “adopted” at some point (e.g. baptism, transfiguration, ascension). An early exponent was Theodotus of Byzantium.

   iii. The Son is God, but he is not exhaustive of who God is. There is more than one who is the one God.

f. Avoid Arianism (semi-Arianism). Christ is in essence a created being. There is no part of him that is eternal. He has pre-existence, but at some point he, too, is created.
g. Avoid Subordinationism. The church has been riddled with this view from the time of the Patristic Fathers to our own day. It is why Calvin insisted that Jesus was *autotheos*.

i. “the Godhead is absolutely of itself [*autotheos*]. And hence also we hold that the Son, regarded as God, without reference to his person, is also of himself [*autotheos*]; though we also say that, regarded as Son, he is of the Father. Thus his essence is without beginning, while his person has its beginning in God”. Institutes: 1.13.25.
Our Missionaries- September 4, 2013

Our Local Missions

Bethany Christian Services
Child Evangelism Fellowship
Christ Central Ministries / Hannah House
Campus Crusade for Christ
The Cooperative Ministry
Daybreak Crisis Pregnancy Center
Harvest Hope Food Bank
International Friendship Ministries
Missionary Resources Connection
Navigators
Oliver Gospel Mission
Providence Home
Palmetto Family Council
Reformed University Ministries
The Salvation Army
Young Life
Note: Non-member names in **Bold Italics**.

Addison Wilson
David Tally
Kyle Dru Tomczak
Chris Merriam
Przemyslaw Lesniewicz
Brettley Harvey
Stephen Elliott
David Cullen
Zan Campbell
US NAVY

Jackson Whitling
Alex Stevenson
Andrew Mellen
John Kenyon
Sam Kent
Joshua Jerome

USAF

Matthew Thorntoon
David Mills
Andrew Mills
Trent Emmeeker

USMC

David Kent
USCG
Calib White
Chris Wisdom
Hunter Williams
Jonathan Williams
James Sheffield
Eric Pruit
John Pulliam
Ben Merriam
Chuck Lynde
Galen Kuehn
Wayne Kindle
Daniel Hancock
Rhyann Critzer
Andrew Goza
Parks Bunch
Brian Bridge

US NAVY

Our Missionaries - September 4, 2013
CHRIST: THE SON OF GOD

“… these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”

JOHN 20:31

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord…”

The Apostles’ Creed
1. “Son of God” : applied to more than one in the Bible

   a. We learn in Scripture that Adam is God’s son (Luke 3:38), King Solomon is God’s son (1 Chronicles 28:6), that Israel is God’s son (Exodus 4:22), the peacemakers shall be called the sons of God (Matthew 5:9), and the angels can be referred to as God’s sons (Job 38:7). In what way is Jesus’s sonship like, or unlike, any of these? Why should we think of him as God’s only Son?

2. Some (!) passages where Jesus is assumed, or asserted to be “the Son of God”:

   a. “And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy— the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

   b. (Disciples witness Jesus’s power in stilling the storm, and say) “Truly you are the Son of God” (Matthew 14:33).

   c. Transfiguration: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matthew 17:5).

   d. The Father is resolute that “all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father” (John 5:23).

   e. “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13).

   f. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36).

   g. After the resurrection, Paul preaches Jesus as the Son of God: “And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God’” (Acts 9:20).


   i. Paul preaches the gospel “of God’s Son” (Romans 1:9).

   j. “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” (Romans 8:29).

   k. We are “called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9).
l. God has “delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13).

m. “but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:2)

n. “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

3. Passages where “Son” alludes to Jesus’s role as the promised Davidic King:

a. Foundational text: 2 Samuel 7:13-16, “He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

b. Isaiah 9:6: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder.”

c. Ezekiel 34:10-15, “And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

d. Thus, the Davidic King is called the Lord’s “anointed” (Psalm 2:2) or “Messiah” or Christ. Let’s take a look at Psalm 2.

e. Context of first millennium B.C. Note verses 11 & 12: “Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son...” Note how Paul uses Psalm 2 in Acts 13:33ff: “And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

f. Davidic typology: forward trajectory.
4. The Son of God in Hebrews

a. Hebrews 1:1-3, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

i. Radiance, *apaugasma* (occurs only here). (Effulgence)

1. The “ma” suggests a passive meaning that the Son is the product of the radiance of God shining upon him than than the radiance itself. Geerhardus Vos: “he is the product of the radiation of God.” Vos, *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 80. But this is what is meant by the next word, “exact imprint”.

ii. “Exact imprint”

5. The Son of God in John

a. John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son (μονογενοῦς) from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

b. John 1:18 “No one has ever seen God; the only (μονογενής) God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”

c. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son (μονογενῆ), that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

d. John 3:18 “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God (μονογενός ὑιοῦ θεοῦ).”

e. 1 John 4:9 “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son (μονογενῆ) into the world, so that we might live through him.”

f. Monogenēs Hyios

i. KJV: “only-begotten” – doubtful if this is correct (the word is related to *ginomai* “to become” rather than *gennaō* “to beget.”)


iii. Patristic Theology alleged unique attributes of each Person in the Trinity: Father – Unbegotten, Son – Begotten, Holy Spirit – Proceeds. Cf. Nicene Creed: “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds…”

iv. “Eternal generation of the Son”

v. Christ is a Son by nature; we (and angels) are “sons” by creation and adoption.

vi. “Only son” says nothing about origins since the Son is un-originated.

vii. “Only Son” emphasizes uniqueness

viii. This uniqueness consists in four things:

   1. He is an object of special love
   2. He is the Father’s equal
   3. He is the Father’s likeness
   4. He is an eternal, not an adopted Son

   g. When does Christ become the “only Son”?

      i. Some have said: at the incarnation. John 3:16 (for example) assumes that the one whom the Father sends is already “God’s only Son.”

6. **Subordination?**

   a. John 8:28, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.”

   b. Jesus *prays* to his father!

   c. John 5:19, “the Son can do nothing of his own accord.”

   d. John 14:28, “the Father is greater than I.”
e. Father as *fons et origo*

f. Ontological subordination v. economic/functional subordination

7. **The Transfiguration**
Our Missionaries- September 11, 2013

**Dennis & Cynde Morgan - Austria**
- Pray for the Kingdom to be advanced through the ministries of New City Wien and Heart Works.
- Pray for complete redemption for the freed Bulgarian women.
- Pray for our remaining support.
- Pray for encouragement as we strive to be faithful in the journey.

**Sebastien and Patti Benicourt - Asia**
- We haven’t received any appointment notice regarding my green card paper work. Please pray that it does not interfere with our return date.
- Patti and I both have had dealings with cancerous skin issues. Please pray for His peace to guard our hearts and for healing power.
- Please continue to pray for our diligence in speaking French to our kids.

**Paul and Missy Robelot - France**
Please pray for:
- TEAM’s recruitment efforts and training our missionaries to better care for the new recruits
- Good connections with missionaries in the OMCC role. Safety and effectiveness in our travels
- Remaining needed support
- Coworkers, Helio and Annie’s growth through trials
- “Gouter et Voir,” evangelistic seminar on Oct 13
- David Edwards piano concerts among our churches in early December, the needed support. www.davidedwardspianist.com

**Miriam Jerome - Missionary Resource Connection**
- Pray for MRC as we to minister to the missionaries in Columbia. Good attendance for luncheon and the women will be an encouragement to each other.
- Continue to pray for the MK/TCKs that attended the retreat as they adjust to school and/or work.
- I leave for the Thrive (WOTH) retreats Oct. 4th. Very long trip. Pray for safety, making connections and adjusting to the time zone quickly. Pray for my time with the women, that I will be a source of encouragement to them.
- Pray that I will follow Him in the best pathway. I am thankful for the work that He has given me here in Columbia and many parts of the world.

**Alex and Irina Ponomarev - M.O.S.T. Columbia, SC**
- Please pray for our trip to St. Petersburg, Russia. May the lord provide many opportunities to share about the Kingdom of Heaven and the only way to get there.
- Please pray for the friends of ours who have had numerous opportunities to hear the Gospel but have hardened hearts.
- Please continue to pray for God’s provision for MOST.

**Andy and Nannette Howard - Sahiwal, Pakistan**
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would do miracles: that many people would understand and accept the salvation God offers through Christ!
- We have a good group going at Village 65! Pray that they would keep up the good work and be able to start visiting families in the village to share what they learn I group about Christ and healthy living.
- Please pray for other villages we’re working in: 190, 90, and 86.
- Pray that we could change the paradigm that says the mission only gives.
- Please pray that God would provide in His time…
Please pray for this country— for her people, for her leaders, for our spiritual brothers and sisters. Life is often not easy here.

Please pray for ERSU (Evangelical Seminary of Ukraine) as it looks to its futures. Input comes from Reformed (Netherlands) and Presbyterian (USA) sectors.

Please pray for all of the leadership at the seminary, also, as they interact with the students, teach and find professors.

Please continue to pray for our children. Pray that the Good Shepherd would find these lost lambs and bring them into the fold. Please pray that He would heal their wounds. Nathan has gotten some of his own in all of this. Please pray for the staff at the school as they seek to help us with Amy. Please pray that God would give some of His own in all of this. Please pray for the school as it works to balance home and church and ministry, with their seminary work.

Please pray for and understanding of effective teamwork among the eight pastors in Santa Clara.

Please pray for Christian artists in Holguin to have an impact in the artist community.

Please pray for the formation of a worship team at the Havana church: La Iglesia Los Pinos Nuevos in La Habana Vieja.

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THE NICENE CREED

“The next thing less than the infinite is infinitely less.”

J. Gresham Machen, *What is Faith?*

“Indeed,” Taebing said, “Stay with me. During this fusion of religions, Constantine needed to strengthen the new Christian tradition, and held a famous ecumenical gathering known as the council of Nicea”…

“My dear,” Taebing declared, “until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet… a great and powerful man, but a man nevertheless. A mortal.”

Sophie, apparently stunned at this revelation, stammers, “Not the Son of God?” to which Taebing replies, “Right… Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea.” Now Sophie is flabbergasted: “Hold on. You’re saying Jesus’ divinity was the result of a vote?” (…to which Taebing replies) “A relatively close one at that.”*

[Later, Taebing adds “because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four hundred years after Jesus’ death” – a whole new canon of Scripture was necessary to support it.]

Dan Brown, *Da Vinci Code* chapter 55.

[*Actually, there were two “Nay” votes out of a possible 316. Numbers present vary from 218 to 316]
Creeds

1. “No creed but the Bible.” (Note that this statement is itself a creed!)
   a. Trinity, Hypostatic Union, Substitution…

2. Can history teach us anything?
   a. Postmodern skepticism about historiography
   b. “Chronological snobbery” (C. S. Lewis):
      i. “Barfield [poet, lecturer] never made me an Anthroposophist, but
         his counterattacks destroyed forever two elements in my own
         thought. In the first place he made short work of what I have
         called my “chronological snobbery,” the uncritical acceptance of
         the intellectual climate common to our own age and the
         assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that account
         discredited. You must find why it went out of date. Was it ever
         refuted (and if so by whom, where, and how conclusively) or did
         it merely die away as fashions do? If the latter, this tells us
         nothing about its truth or falsehood. From seeing this, one passes
         to the realization that our own age is also “a period,” and
         certainly has, like all periods, its own characteristic illusions.
         They are likeliest to lurk in those widespread assumptions which
         are so ingrained in the age that no one dares to attack or feels it
         necessary to defend them.” Surprised by Joy (London: Geoffrey
         Bles, 1955), 196

3. Is language adequate to convey and maintain objective truth
   a. Objective truth
   b. The adequacy of language:
      i. Evangelical argument (Revision – Lecture #1)
         o Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Tillich: the Bible is a collection of
           culturally conditioned myths which serve as “symbols of non-
           verbal pressure” that God evokes on the human spirit evoking
           experiences of mystical, emotional, and ethical insight.

         o Idea of the inadequacy of all human language as a means of
           personal communication. Poets like Stein, novelists like Kafka,
           playwrights like Beckett (Waiting for Godo). Philosophers like
           A. J. Ayers and Ludwig Wittgenstein (Tractatus Logico-
           Philosophicus, 1922). The study of syntactics. This is thought to
be true of exchange among humans, let alone between God and man.

- T. S. Eliot (Four Quartets): Words strain, Crash and sometimes break under the burden, Under the tension, slip, slide, perish, Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place, Will not stay still.

- Doubt that language can convey transcendent realities. Runs deep in linguistics (sociology of language, evolutionary dev. from grunts and groans etc.). Words mean “what we tell them to mean, no more and no less”/Humpty Dumpty/Alice in Wonderland.

- Unwillingness of Christian teachers to allow God to inform us through Bible words: liberalism. Kant. Schleiermacher (religion consists in the feeling of dependence). Ritschl out and out hostility to supernatural. Reaction by neo-orthodoxy: Barth-that the Word breaks through from the Bible somehow, and Brunner-that because God is personal his communication cannot be propositional!!

- Response? Jesus! Yes, Jesus. Incarnation: talked (Aramaic?) – using words, nouns, verbs, adjectives adverbs etc. Coherent, intelligible communication in verbal form from God. When Jesus spoke, God spoke.

c. The role of the church:

   i. Does institutional authority have a role to play?

4. Factors which make us skeptical of the past:

   a. See, Carl R. Trueman, The Creedal Imperative (Crossway, 2012)

      i. Science
      ii. Technology
      iii. Consumerism
      iv. The concept of “human nature”
The Nicene (or Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed)

1. The Seven Ecumenical Councils:

   The First Council of Nicea, 325 (Deity of Jesus contra Arianism)
   The First Council of Constantinople, 381 (Deity of Jesus, contra Arianism)
   The First Council of Ephesus, 431 (Two-nature Christology, contra Apollinarianism)
   The Council of Chalcedon, 451 (Two-nature Christology, contra Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism)
   The Second Council of Constantinople, 553 (Two-nature Christology, contra monophyism)
   The Third Council of Constantinople, 680-681 (Two-nature Christology, contra monothelitism)
   The Second Council of Nicea, 787 (Icons)

   *The Eastern Orthodox churches refuse to recognize the ecumenical nature of any subsequent council, while the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges fourteen more, the last being the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Protestants have been dubious about the value of all seven of the early councils, and have only engaged with the first four on any authoritative level.*

2. Emperor Constantine called the First Council of Nicea (Nicea I) to attend to a worsening dispute in the church over the identity of the second person of the Godhead. Since the death of the apostles, the church had been wrestling with the issue of how to identify the exact relationship between the Father and the Son, and these debates came to a head in the fourth century. The issue that drove this was ARIANISM.

   a. Arius (A.D. 250 (? – 336)

   ![Arianism](image)


   c. Nicea I was convened to combat ARIANISM.

   i. Anti-Arian party led by Bishop Alexander (of Alexandria) and afterwards by ATHANASIU. The issue was heavily embroiled in politics as much as religious concerns. No extant writings of Arius exist (they were purged) and therefore we only know about Arius’ beliefs by the statements of his enemies and detractors.
ii. Fundamental to the Arian party was the belief that Christ was not God. He was like God, but not God.

iii. homoousios v. homoiousios: the issue of consubstantiality

d. Council of Nicea with Arius depicted beneath the feet of Emperor Constantine.

e. Nicea (today, Iznik, nestled along the shores of Lake Iznik near Istanbul [Constantinople].

f. Agenda for Lakeside Council:

   i. Date of Easter
   ii. Election procedure for bishops and elders (presbyters)
   iii. Administration of sacraments
   iv. The Person of Christ

g. Only the bishops participated. Elders and laity watched.

h. Arius: there was a time when the Son was not. Pre-existence and eternality; consubstantiality. Christ a created being.

   i. *Homoi* (similar) and *ousion* (“substance” or “essence”)

   ii. “the firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15); *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4)

   iii. *monogenes* (John 3:16) = Christ came into existence

   iv.

i. cf. Jehovah Witness
3. ATHANASIUS (a.d. 296(8)-373)

a. Too young to be a bishop at the Council? (Needed to be 30.)

b. His contribution:

c. i. ONE letter! Contra gentes – De Incarnatione
ii. Make that, one LETTER.

d. Famous jibe: the world woke up one day and found itself at war over an iota! What does it matter if Jesus was like/similar to God or the same as God?!! This is what made the debate so difficult and why it took Athanasius decades to settle the matter. But he said, let me ask you one thing, do you worship him? Well, yes. So you mean you worship a creature. Then you are no better than the pagans. You worship not the Creator but a creature! What was at stake was Christianity itself – a faith in Jesus and that worships Jesus (with Thomas saying, “My Lord, My God.”). The difference between like God and God is enormous (we are like God because we made in his image but we are not God).

e. The later story of Athanasius...

4. “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God (τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν Μονογενῆ), begotten of the Father (τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα) before all worlds (αἰώνων), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again,
with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.
And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, A.D. 381
(Italics – additions to original Nicene Creed, A.D. 325).
Bibliography:

Stephen Nichols, *For Us and For Our Salvation: The Doctrines of Christ on the early Church* (Crossway, 2007).
Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ* (InterVarsity Press, 1998)
**Our Missionaries - September 18, 2013**

**Dennis & Cynde Morgan - Austria**

- Pray for a living situation for our daughter, Heather, who is looking for a roommate and apartment or other housing arrangement between now and the end of the year.
- Pray for the Lord’s blessing on the efforts of the Heart Works staff to have more contact with the prostitutes off the streets. Some have taken groups of women out to lunch, to a museum and there are plans to provide a weekly coffee house.
- Pray for New City Wien’s Apple Festival outing later this month… this popular church event is a great opportunity to invite friends and family to connect with the church fellowship.
- Pray for our stamina as we downsize, sort, pack, store, and sell personal belongings and for the Lord’s will in dealing with our house.
- Pray that the Lord would provide the final support and visas so that when we leave for Vienna in December we are there to stay.

**Sebastien and Patti Benicourt - Asia**

- Would you pray for friends we recently visited. One is a former co-worker with whom I was able to share the Gospel quite a bit. He hasn’t been very responsive. Pray for him and his wife and ask the Lord to reveal Himself to them.
- Pray also for our Turkish friends Emre and Hacer. They seem to have some contact with the religious group that had asked Josh and I to no longer come to one of their offices Aydin.
- You all, I am sure, are aware of the situation in Syria. May the “spirit of grace and supplication” be poured out upon us that the rod of the oppressor may be broken and that captives may be set free.

**Paul and Missy Robelot – France**

Please pray for

- TEAM’s recruitment efforts and training our missionaries to better care for the new recruits
- Good connections with missionaries in the OMCC role. Safety and effectiveness in our travels
- Remaining needed support
- Coworkers, Helio and Annie’s growth through trials
- “Gouter et Voir,” evangelistic seminar on Oct 13
- David Edwards piano concerts among our churches in early December, the needed support. www.davidedwards pianist.com

**Andy and Nannette Howard - Sahiwal, Pakistan**

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would do miracles: that many people would understand and accept the salvation God offers through Christ!
- We have a good group going at Village 65! Pray that they would keep up the good work and be able to start visiting families in the village to share what they have learned about Christ and healthy living.
- Please pray for other villages we’re working in: 190, 90, and 86.
- Pray that we could change the paradigm that says the mission only gives.
- Please pray that God would provide in His time…

**Jeff and Lisa King - Chile**

- We will be submitting our paperwork for our Chilean visas this week. Pray that the process goes smoothly and quickly so we can leave at the end of October. The process should take about a month.
- Pray for us to find and secure temporary housing in Chile for when we arrive.
- Pray for vision for ministry in Chile.
Our Missionaries - September 18, 2013

Rebecca Jones - TruthXchange

Peter is working on a new book and would appreciate your prayers for wisdom, clear logic and just the right words to enlighten God’s saints who will read the book. Pray for the editorial process and that the publisher will accept the manuscript.

This month Peter and I will fly to London, where Peter speaks at a seminar on September 27-29. On his way back from London on October 4-6, he will speak at a weekend seminar at the Coral Springs First Presbyterian Church in Florida. Please pray for both these seminars, that God’s people will be made more aware of the state of our world, but also encouraged to know and love the Lord more, in spite of a deteriorating culture.

Pray for our time with our youngest three children - Tessa, Zoe and Toby - all of whom live in London. May we be a blessing to them in the Lord.

Pray for Joshua and Mary as they hold down the office in our absence. Please keep their families in your prayers as well.

We thank the Lord for Pam Frost, our faithful researcher, who has decided to come to the office one day a week to work with us. We pray that we will be a blessing to her, as she is to us. It’s delightful to have her with us. Pray for her as she must read so many difficult and dark books. Pray that the Lord’s Spirit will protect her mind and heart and lighten her spiritual eyes of faith.

Pray for Mary Eady as she works on project proposals and grants to be sent to foundations and donors.

Pray for our finances. Each year it seems we reach a point at which we must seriously consider cutting back somehow on expenses, or even closing the doors! Yet each year, God has supplied our needs and kept us functioning. We ask Him to make us frugal in our use of funds, yet extravagant in our expectations and hopes for the work of His kingdom. It’s not a bad place to be occasionally.

Pray for our board as we make decisions for the future - we are so enthusiastic about the two men God seems to be calling to work with us, and for the project they are working on, namely a video teaching series for use in church small groups. This will be an expensive project, but we are confident that it will pay for itself and several others, and we want to make sure our message is heard.

Pray for our online course, hosted by Blue Letter Bible, to be available on our platform.

Pray for God’s children who are so often seduced into Oneist thinking and spiritual deception by leaders, books, movements and their own weaknesses. Pray also for those Christians who are short of wisdom, clear logic and just the right words to interpret your prayers for our work.

Praise the Lord that the Tol New Testament, Genesis, and hymns is typeset! The files have been sent to the printer. Pray for a legible print job. Pray for the dedication celebration. Pray for the Tol people to be prepared for the coming of God’s Word. Pray for minds to be renewed and lives transformed.

Praise the Lord for his grace for Rhonda, Daniel, Elizabeth, and Abigail as they started a new school year. Pray for wisdom and understanding for Rhonda in her role as lead teacher. Pray for our students to live lives worthy of the Lord. Pray for Daniel in his senior year of college, to finish well, and to know the answer to what’s next. Pray for Elizabeth, a sophomore, to manage a variety of responsibilities well. Pray for Abigail who is a senior in high school.

Pray for Dennis as he typesets 50% of the Old Testament for the Ki people. Pray for complete translation, and patience with the process. Pray for enough time (where in Ethiopia, a month) to understand a lot of content. Pray for complete translation, and patience with the process.

Pray for Dennis as he travels to Ethiopia to continue his work well so that his learning and the translation can work together even though they are in different continents.

Pray for Dennis, as he works towards the Old Testament for the Ki people. Pray for complete translation, and patience with the process.

Dennis and Rhonda Conroy - Philippines

thinking is essential in our culture’s laws and attitudes.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

Impeccable: ĭmpēc|ăble a. not liable (able) to sin.
Sinlessness: a condition of being without sin.

“Christ, while having a peccable human nature, in His constitution was an impeccable Person. Impeccability characterizes the God-Man as a totality, while peccability is a property of His humanity….

“It is objected to the doctrine of Christ’s impeccability that it is inconsistent with His temptability. A person who cannot sin, it is said, cannot be tempted to sin. This is not correct; any more than it would be correct to say that because an army cannot be conquered, it cannot be attacked. Temptability depends on the constitutional susceptibility, while impeccability depends on the will. . . . Those temptations were very strong, but if the self-determination of His holy will was stronger than they, then they could not induce Him to sin, and He would be impeccable. And yet plainly He would be temptable.”

(William G. T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 2:333, 336)
The Sinlessness of Christ

1. Scripture:

2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

1 John 3:5: “he appeared in order to take away sins, and min him there is no sin.”

1 Peter 3:18: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.”

Hebrews 4:15: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin”.

2. Meaning:

a. He did not commit, nor (therefore) was he guilty of actual sin:

   i. “Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God” (Shorter Catechism 14). Jesus never broke God’s law or failed to comply with its demands in any way.

b. He was not held liable for Original Sin (inherent sin):

   i. The issue of whether the Virgin Birth is an adequate proposition to account for this (“–no”). Jesus had no proclivity/propensity to sin. There is no “inner desire” (lust) to sin.

c. He had a true human body and soul:

   i. Some (e.g. Basil of Caesarea, A.D. 329-379), in order to defend his deity pushed the notion to insist that Jesus was incapable of sinning, and in order to defend a semblance of reality as his temptability, insisted that Jesus did not possess a body like ours.

d. He did not have a “fallen” human nature:

   i. Most of those who affirm “fallenness” deny any real view of an ahistorical Adam, and therefore it is unclear what exactly is being affirmed. We (and Jesus) have a metaphorical fallen condition?

   ii. Examples of those who assert that Jesus took FALLEN human nature:
• **Thomas F. Torrance:**

• **Karl Barth:**
  “There must be no weakening or obscuring of the saving truth that the nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in the light of Fall. If it were otherwise, how could Christ be really like us? What concern would we have with him? We stand before God characterized by the Fall. God's Son not only assumed our nature but he entered the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men damned and lost. (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.2, 153).

• **Thomas Weinandy**
  The clearest indication that Christ’s humanity was “fallen” is the fact that it was subject to death. Employing the Gregory of Nazianzen formula – the unassumed is the unhewed – Weinandy argues that Christ’s humanity had to be in every way like ours ontologically, otherwise we could not be saved. Because Christ’s humanity was sinful flesh, his death was “a consequence of the Incarnation itself. (In *The Likeness of Sinful Flesh* [T & T Clark, 2000], 27-30).

• **C. E. B. Cranfield**

• **Edward Irving 1792-1834)**
  Church of Scotland minister, deposed in 1833.

iii. Examples of those who assert that Jesus did NOT assume a FALLEN human nature (frankly, the majority viewpoint):

• **Oliver D. Crisp** (University of Bristol)
  “[T]he traditional doctrine of sin poses a serious problem for defenders of the view that Christ’s human nature was fallen, rather than sinless. Although it is possible to construct an argument that avoids this problem by revising the way in which
original sin applies in the case of Christ’s humanity, this revision has a number of undesirable consequences for the defender of the fallenness view, and, in any case, appears to be subject to insurmountable difficulties if one wishes to retain a Chalcedonian Christology. If so, the argument cannot be used as a successful defence of the fallenness view. (Divinity and Humanity [Cambridge University Press, 2007], 117).

- Donald MacLeod
  The Person of Christ (IVP, 1998), 221-230.

iv. Arguments as to why Christ’s flesh was “fallen” include:

- The non-assumptio (“the unassumed is the unhealed”): “For that which he has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved” (Gregory Nazianzen, Epistle 101).

e. Christ was dependent on the Holy Spirit.

  i. Previous lecture

f. Christ lived in a cursed environment.

  i. He did not come into a Paradise. He therefore experienced ALL the consequences of sin such as hunger, thirst, pain and weariness. He experienced these in a human way (body, mind, emotions, psychology).

g. Christ was tempted:

  i. It does not require that Jesus be “fallen” for him to be temptable (any more than it did for Adam in the Garden).

  ii. “Hard” and “soft” views:

      - Christ’s human nature was posse non peccare (e.g. Shedd, Strong)

      - Christ’s human nature was non posse peccare (Hodge, Bavinck)

  iii. Unlike us in that there was no temptation from within (lust) – described by James 1.
“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” (James 1:13-15).

We have an in-built tendency to sin – something which Satan take manipulate.

iv. Yet really tempted.

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If [since] you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”’

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.”

How exactly was Jesus tempted?

a. Through natural human needs and instincts (bread, fear of death) – that sinless instinct for self-preservation can become a catalyst for sin. Same as with Eve – part of what she saw was a desire for the food which fed her hunger. “Sinless need.” The fear of death is deeply
ingrained into our psyche and Jesus Christ has to deal with this in the Garden of Gethsemane where he shrinks from death in fear, as a passing temptation.

b. Temptation through holy sources (sonship, gifts) – his being the Son of God is factored into the actual temptations: “if you are the Son of God, then turn these stones to bread”…almost raises the “if” question. Are you sure you’re God’s son? You don’t even have bread! The other temptation is the abuse of his power as the Son of God. Other humans cannot turn stones to bread and if Jesus Christ came to be like them, this is a testing of his kenosis. Satan suggests he use his powers and make himself comfortable. The really important thing is that you should be clear before you start that you are God’s Son – you should settle that first of all, before the rest of the ministry is to start. [NB: this is similar to the pastoral issue of people without assurance: am I a child of God? What they should be doing is simply getting on with the work.] The Devil was exploiting the fact that Jesus Christ was God’s Son. Also tempted through his gifts – time and again, Jesus Christ refuses to perform miracles to gratify his audience. He is not a magician or an entertainer. Also, the use of Scripture. Jesus Christ rebuts the Devil initially by quoting Scripture at him, and so the Devil uses Scripture to then tempt Jesus Christ. The Bible says that Jesus Christ can throw himself off the temple with impunity, so do it!

c. Temptation not through craving but through shrinking (e.g. form the loss of communion with God) – a holy person shrinking from an unholy thing; from the death and loss of communion. He knows he is going into a situation where God will forsake him – he can’t just shrug that off. There is the filial love of a creature as well as the knowledge of always being in communion. Had he not shrunk from the darkness, it would have been in itself a sin.

v. But Christ was not fallen:

- He did not fall personally – first and last Adam – both are tempted, and the first one falls. But Jesus does not fall: there is no point in the life of a second Adam who falls.
• He did not fall in Adam – this picks up the theme we explored with the Virgin Birth: he is not a member of the covenant under Adam, but is part of a new covenant. He not a part of that “gene pool”, but the initiative was God’s, not any human’s. He is a new beginning.

• He was not a fallen person

  a. No guilt of Adam’s sin – if you go back again to Shorter Catechism, “wherein consists that sinfulness in which man fell? It consists in Adam’s first sin.”

  b. No want/lack of Original Righteousness – we are all born Original Righteousness. In the moment of birth, we lack the righteousness that the human race had when Adam was created. Pelagius said we were born in the same state as Adam – wrong. We were formed in iniquity – from conception, from birth (I was conceived in iniquity.)

  c. No corruption of nature – Total Depravity. Someone who is fallen has this as part of the definition. One cannot be only a little bit depraved or a little bit fallen.

  d. Christ did share in our misery of the fallen state. He shares this with us. He comes into an environment, onto an earth which is cursed and suffers all of the same troubles we do. He is an unfallen person sharing the destiny of the fallen: this is utterly paradoxical.

vi. Bear in mind that the human mind of Jesus would not have known that essentially he was not able to sin. He exercised faith, upheld by the Holy Spirit about the nature of his Person. The “He” has one self-consciousness, but two levels of consciousness.
Our Missionaries - October 23, 2013

Dennis and Rhonda Conroy - Philippines

- Praise the Lord that the typesetting of the Ki Old Testament portion is complete. Pray for translator Andrew as he looks for funds to publish the Word. Pray for the Ki people to be prepared and to be transformed by the power of God through the Word of God.
- Pray for Dennis as he works with translators Greg & Carol to typeset the book of Genesis for the Mpur people group. This group is a very remote group. We want them to know that God speaks their language. Pray that they will hear God speak in His Word. Pray for God’s Word to get to the Mpur people soon.
- Praise the Lord for the arrival of our new principal, Peter Hester. Praise the Lord that he is quickly learning our school. Pray for all of us as we transition to our new leader. We’re very thankful he is with us.
- Pray for God’s mighty working through our high school Spiritual Emphasis retreat, March 5 – 8, 2013. Pray for planning, and pray for God to send us the speaker of His choice. Pray for a great working of the Holy Spirit in our high school, Faith Academy Mindanao.
- Pray for additional financial support that is needed to keep us on the mission field. Our average monthly shortfall this year is about $1400.
- Our school, Faith Academy Mindanao is in need of a 3rd grade teacher. (Since the beginning of the school year.) Pray for God to provide. We also need a long term person as principal.

Dennis & Cynde Morgan - Austria

- Our support team is a crucial part of this ministry. Pray for encouragement, blessing, protection, provision and comfort for our supporters. In the past six months five of our supporters have lost spouses.
- Continued prayer for our transition to the field, for strength and encouragement in all the sorting, packing, discarding and moving. Pray also for peace and patience through what has become a sometimes challenging house sale. And please pray for our daughter, for a good roommate and transition into her own place over the next couple weeks.
- Praise for contacts with new prospective supporters, both individuals and churches. Pray that our support goal will be met and that when we go in December we are there to stay.
- Pray for the young adults in Vienna who are believers and those of their friends and acquaintances who are being introduced to the beauty of the gospel. Praise for Vikas who recently expressed his new faith in baptism.

Sebastien and Patti Benicourt - Asia

- Just a couple of lines to ask whether you could be praying for our family the next few days. In a couple of hours, I will be headed to a conference for workers in the Muslim world in another city. I should be back Saturday afternoon or so.
- Due to our new family educational set-up, I wasn’t going to attend but my lovely wife insisted that I go still. Would you pray for Patti and the children while I am gone. For some reason, I always seem to come up with an anxious pit in the stomach whenever I have to go somewhere. Though I am responsible (gladly so) to care for Patti and our children, I am thankful that it is the Lord who is our ultimate Protector. Thank you for continuing to hold us up to the Lord...

Jeff and Lisa King - Chile

- Praise the Lord that we have our temporary residence visas for Chile in hand! We are also grateful for all the support and prayers we have had these two months while being in Columbia.
- Please pray for us as we begin our travels to Chile on Thursday, Oct. 24th. We will be flying out of Charlotte at 1:00 PM and will arrive in Chile on Friday, Oct. 25th at 6:00 AM. Please pray that the children do well on all the flights and that all our luggage arrives safely.
- Please pray that our family will transition well to Chile and that we can quickly adjust.
- One of our first tasks when we arrive will be doing lots of paperwork in order to get the correct documentation we will need to buy a car, rent a house, get services started like electricity, water, internet, etc. Usually this is a long process of waiting in lots of lines. Pray that this will go as smoothly as possible and that we will have grace and patience with each other as well as the Chileans who are helping us through this process.
- Please pray that the Lord will lead and guide us to find a school for the children, and a house to rent.
As the Lord leads you, please pray for:

- God's blessing on our board, steering committee and staff as we seek the right path forward for truthXchange (staffing, financing, projects etc.); we so desperately need to establish the ministry for the generation to come and are eager to hire two young men that God has called to work with us.
- Spiritual protection on all those involved in researching paganism.
- Efficiency and an energetic work ethic (while not becoming stressed out or fearful) as we try to accomplish so much with so few.
- The right people and the right number of people to attend our Think Tank, February 4-7, 2014 (“Shining as Lights: Telling the Truth in the Pagan Utopia”)
- If you know Christian leaders, young or old, male or female, who would benefit from this event, please encourage them to register.
- Just the right financial support—not so much that we think we can depend on it (!) but not so little that we are hampered in accomplishing the tasks God is calling us to do for His kingdom.
- The launch of our first online course, through Blue Letter Bible Institute (They have a wide distribution and are glad for our content. So it is a good partnership. I have completed this first course and am working on the next one).
- Peter as he works on a new book, with a working title of Given Over, But not Giving Up; Wisdom in soliciting the help of volunteers as well as training and incorporating them into the team.
- Wisdom as we seek the right approach and modes of fund-raising; and also, an opening on the part of some of the large foundations as we seek grants.
- Faithfulness to the Lord, his Christ, his church, his Spirit and his Word in all that we do, whether in study, activity or worship;
- A greater zeal to spread the gospel of God’s grace to those millions who do not know him; for courage to open our mouths and let out what is in our Christian hearts!

Nannette Howard

We had our annual CDE Networking Day on September 21st. People from all the locations we’re working participated sharing skits and reports about what is happening in their villages. Please pray for them as they learn and share the Good News in word and deed!

Please pray that all that happens there will be a blessing to God, to the community and the staff.

Please pray for us and many others who are in visa-hungry limbo.

Jim and2 Ellen Carson - MTS

John as he returns home Friday, November 8 (17 hour flight from South Africa) 5-7 November 2013

Schools and Seminaries in South Africa: Please pray for the leaders of Bible teaching a seminar on leadership at the Constitution for Leaders of Bible schools and seminaries, and that the students participating will be of great benefit.

I have submitted the first course and am waiting on the next one.

Please pray that the word to continue to do its work . . . in the final 2 weeks of class and . . . when the students proclaim it in their churches.

Pay them the same WAGE to continue to do his WORK . . .

John and2 Ellen Carson - MTS

Jim and2 Callie Coates - World Mission
PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(Philippians 2:5-11)

Τούτο φρονείτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὡς καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 6 δὲ ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἢγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἵνα θεὸς, 7 ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὑμοίωματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχῆμα εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἀνθρώπος 8 ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. 9 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερψωσεν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάν ὄνομα, 10 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι Ἰησοῦ πάν γόνυ κάμηλη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων 11 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξουμολογήσηται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός.
1. Purpose of the passage:
   a. v.5: ethical-example: to bring the message of the incarnation to bear upon divisions in the Philippian church
      i. vv.2-4: “…. 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
      ii. v.12: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
   b. Cf. elsewhere in NT:
      i. 2 Corinthians 8:9: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”
      ii. 1 Peter 2:21: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”
      iii. John 13 (foot-washing): “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”

2. Overall Structure includes:
   a. Pre-existence of Christ: vv. 6 “who being in the form of God…”
   b. Humiliation (Incarnation and Suffering) of Christ: vv. 7-8: “emptied himself… death on a cross”
   c. Exaltation of Christ: vv. 9-11 “highly-exalted him…”

3. Pre-existence of Christ:
   a. v.6 “though he was in…”
      i. ὑπάρχων: “though he was in…” Question is whether this refers to incarnate state or not. Is it saying:
         • While he was incarnate he was in the form of God… (E. H. Gifford)
            a. This is true, but it is not the truth being taught here.
• Timeless sense of “being”: he was in the form of God and then… he became incarnate. In which case, this is a statement about his pre-existence. BEFORE he assumed a human nature he already was in the form of God.

b. v.6: “the form of God”

i. “ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ”

• Classical Greek: “sum total of essential characteristics” (Warfield, Trench, Lightfoot)

• Greek word morphē conveys “the inner nature or substance of a thing.” Cf. Plato’s “forms” – those substances of ultimate reality such as beauty, truth, justice, goodness… that exist eternally apart from any physical and temporal manifestation. Not mere outward appearance.

• LXX: “image” and “likeness” and “glory” are sometimes rendered “morphē” in the Septuagint.

• Note second use of morphē: “the form of a servant.” In other words, not merely the outward appearance of a servant but the real thing.

c. v.6: “equality with God”

i. “ἴσα θεῷ”

• “I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isaiah 46:9).

d. “a thing to be grasped”

i. “ἄρπαγμὸν”

This is a rather complex issue, but put simply there are two basic ways in which this can be understood:

a. *res rapta:* that Jesus did not “hold on” to his deity (by saying “NO” to the incarnation). This assumes Jesus was already in possession of his deity at the point of the incarnation.

b. *res rapienda:* that Jesus did not need to reach out and lay hold of deity – since it was already his.

c. View “a” is the preferred interpretation. “… he did not grasp or clutch onto the privileged position, rights, and prerogatives that his full equality with God, his Father, afforded him, in order to fulfill his calling to become fully a man who would be, amazingly, servant of all.” [Bruce A. Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 19]. Careful: this is not meant to imply that he divested himself his deity!

4. Humiliation of Christ

   a. “But emptied himself”

      i. (ESV 2011) 2007 edition reads “made himself nothing.” Dynamic equivalent translation!

      ii. “ἀλλὰ ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν”

      iii. third aorist indicative of *kenoō:* “to empty, pour out”

      iv. Empty/Pour out what exactly?

      • Part or all of his deity: *kenoticism*

      • Theory emerged in the middle of the 19th century with a German theologian named Gottfried Thomasius in a major two volume work (1853, 1855). Also, Wolfgang Gess, student of J. T. Beck and a ‘biblicist’ of sorts, who had some impact on British kenoticism…. Charles Gore in his Bampton Lectures on *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1891) and later in theologians such as H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (1912) and P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (1909). For a recent assessment, see Bruce McCormack, 2007 Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference, “The Humility of the Eternal Son: The Failure of the Older Kenoticism and a New Proposal.”
Major influences in this view are a concern to maintain the love of God by suggesting this was the ONE attribute Jesus could NOT divest himself of in the incarnation.

Also a desire to accommodate Higher Criticism.

v. Critique:

ANY attempt to suggest that the deity (divine nature) of Christ is changed or modified in any way would imply an incarnation by divine suicide. IMMUTABILITY of God. Binitarianism.

The verb “empty” is perfectly fine as a translation so long as we carefully explain it.

It views the Godhead almost like the segments of an orange. SIMPLICITY of God.

WHO is governing the universe during the incarnation? Cosmic function of Christ while the Logos was in a state of kenosis.

It represents a doctrine of temporary incarnation. Its basic assumption is that it is impossible to have two true and perfect natures in one nature. It is impossible to be truly God and truly man at the same time. We have a monophysite postulate underlying this theory. During his incarnation, he contracted to a purely human existence. His humiliation consists of renouncing his divinity and securing one (human) nature. If this premise is true, it logically follows that when he (re)assumes his divinity in his exaltation, he must renounce his human nature.

b. “emptied himself… by taking”

i. “λαβών”

Incarnation by ADDITION:

This is similar to C.S. Lewis's statement in Mere Christianity that a painter pours his ideas out in his work, and yet remains quite a distinct being from his painting.

The test-drive of a new car illustration (Ware).
ii. “form of a servant”

- “μορφήν δούλου”
- The humanity of Christ and divine self-consciousness
- A life totally dependent on the Holy Spirit

κρυψις and incognito. Luther and Calvin have wrestled with this. The incognito is from Luther, “This is the greatest incognito that ever was.” There was the defacing of his humanity. Not only does he not look like a god, he does not look like a human! Who is he? Don’t know. He certainly isn’t God. His humanity is completely impenetrable. Calvin’s word is krupsis. He kept his divinity concealed, the veiling of the glory of Jesus. It doesn’t mean that the incarnation consist of a veiling, as though that’s all it was (that would be docetism). There was a real incarnation. That assumption of humanity becomes a veil that obscures his glory and creates a barrier to our cognition apart from the illumination of the Spirit of God. What else? Some have spoken of his divine attributes. The voluntary non-use of his divine attributes in his own interest. It is not that they are not there but that they are not invoked by him. We may say that they are never invoked in the gospel stories. Everything can be explained in terms of his spirit endowed humanity. Even his miracles over nature are not in principle different from Moses separating the sea. There is no point when he invokes his deity to aid him in his mission. That is the point of the temptation by Satan in the desert. You are the Son of God and you have bread in your hands. Don’t be daft. Use your powers to mitigate the pains of the incarnation. That voluntary non-use of his divine attribute may be the key to our reflections on the kenosis.

iii. He did not insist on his rights: in an entitlement age

- “being born in the likeness of men… in human form”
  
i. He retains his personal identity: there is only one “HE” who now has TWO natures. We must AVOID a heresy here – NESTORIANISM (later when we examine Chalcedonian Creed) – of Two Natures and Two Persons.

ii. The absolute humanity: human mind, will, affections, psychology, body etc. Avoid another heresy – APOLLINARIANISM
d. “...he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. “

i. Progressive humiliation/obedience: He humbled himself … right up to the point of death on a cross

ii. OBEDIENCE as a category of understanding the work of Christ:

- “The Scripture regards the work of Christ as one of obedience and uses this term or the concept that it designates, with sufficient frequency to warrant the conclusion that obedience is generic and therefore embracive enough to be viewed as the unifying or integrating principle.” [John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 19].

5. The EXALTATION of Christ

a. “highly exalted”

i. “ὑπερψωσεν”

ii. God hyper-exalts Christ (ὑπερψωσεν). Until this point, the subject has been Christ, but when it comes to the exaltation, it is God the Father (*o theos*, the article always refers to the Father).

iii. The exaltation of HIM: who exists in two natures

- John 17:1, 5: “When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you... And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” Jesus is using not the language of exaltation but glorification. Notice the link with Phil. 2—to the glory of God the Father; glorify your son that your son may glorify you. He glorifies God by giving his people eternal life. God’s glory and our good are inextricably connected. The work of Christ continues in his state of exaltation. He is the one who gives eternal life.

- Hebrews 1:3: “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Notice the link between the work of Jesus and the exaltation. This is regal, coronation language. Christ has entered into his Sabbath; he
sat. His work is finished. In Yom Kippur the High Priest had nowhere to sit. This High Priest has gone right to the holiest of places and sat—a symbol of the finished work of Christ. Yet we should not take the sitting as a picture of passivity. God is always sitting yet always at work. There are other images were the exalted Christ standing.

• Revelation 5:6: “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”

• Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Post-resurrection statement. Phase 1 of Exaltation. Cf. Transfiguration (Mark. 9:2-8)

iv. Follows immediately after death.

• Not simply a general sequence, but a different law is superimposed upon his situation. This doesn’t even wait until the resurrection. The operative word is immediate. His flesh and body saw no corruption and decay. It was arrested in the case of the Christ. Not a bone was broken.

v. Reward for obedience.

• This is seen especially in Philippians 2. Proportionality—a hyper humiliation and hyper exaltation.

vi. Unfolds in four phases

• Resurrection
• Ascension
• Heavenly session
• Second Coming/Parouisa
Our Missionaries- October 30, 2013

Dennis and Rhonda Conroy- Philippines

- Praise the Lord that the typesetting of the Ki Old Testament portion is complete. Pray for translator Andrew as he looks for funds to publish the Word. Pray for the Ki people to be prepared and to be transformed by the power of God through the Word of God.
- Pray for Dennis as he works with translators Greg & Carol to typeset the book of Genesis for the Mpur people group. This group is a very remote group. We want them to know that God speaks their language. Pray that they will hear God speak in His Word. Pray for God’s Word to get to the Mpur people soon.
- Praise the Lord for the arrival of our new principal, Peter Hester. Praise the Lord that he is quickly learning our school. Pray for all of us as we transition to our new leader. We’re very thankful he is with us.
- Pray for God’s mighty working through our high school Spiritual Emphasis retreat, March 5 – 8, 2013. Pray for planning, and pray for God to send us the speaker of His choice. Pray for a great working of the Holy Spirit in our high school, Faith Academy Mindanao.
- Pray for additional financial support that is needed to keep us on the mission field. Our average monthly shortfall this year is about $1400.
- Our school, Faith Academy Mindanao is in need of a 3^rd grade teacher, today. (Since the beginning of the school year.) Pray for God to provide. We also need a long term person as principal.

Dennis & Cynde Morgan- Austria

- Our support team is a crucial part of this ministry. Pray for encouragement, blessing, protection, provision and comfort for our supporters. In the past six months five of our supporters have lost spouses.
- Continued prayer for our transition to the field, for strength and encouragement in all the sorting, packing, discarding and moving. Pray also for peace and patience through what has become a sometimes challenging house sale. And please pray for our daughter, for a good roommate and transition into her own place over the next couple weeks.
- Praise for contacts with new prospective supporters, both individuals and churches. Pray that our support goal will be met and that when we go in December we are there to stay.
- Pray for the young adults in Vienna who are believers and those of their friends and acquaintances who are being introduced to the beauty of the gospel. Praise for Vikas who recently expressed his new faith in baptism.

Sebastien and Patti Benicourt- Asia

- Just a couple of lines to ask whether you could be praying for our family the next few days. In a couple of hours, I will be headed to a conference for workers in the Muslim world in another city. I should be back Saturday afternoon or so.
- Due to our new family educational set-up, I wasn’t going to attend but my lovely wife insisted that I go still. Would you pray for Patti and the children while I am gone. For some reason, I always seem to come up with an anxious pit in the stomach whenever I have to go somewhere. Though I am responsible (gladly so) to care for Patti and our children, I am thankful that it is the Lord who is our ultimate Protector. Thank you for continuing to hold us up to the Lord...

Jeff and Lisa King- Chile

- Praise the Lord that we have our temporary residence visas for Chile in hand! We are also grateful for all the support and prayers we have had these two months while being in Columbia.
- Please pray for us as we begin our travels to Chile on Thursday, Oct. 24th. We will be flying out of Charlotte at 1:00 PM and will arrive in Chile on Friday, Oct. 25th at 6:00 AM. Please pray that the children do well on all the flights and that all our luggage arrives safely.
- Please pray that our family will transition well to Chile and that we can quickly adjust.
- One of our first tasks when we arrive will be doing lots of paperwork in order to get the correct documentation we will need to buy a car, rent a house, get services started like electricity, water, internet, etc. Usually this is a long process of waiting in lots of lines. Pray that this will go as smoothly as possible and that we will have grace and patience with each other as well as the Chileans who are helping us through this process.
- Please pray that the Lord will lead and guide us to find a school for the children, and a house to rent.
Peter and Rebecca Jones - truthxchange

As the Lord leads you, please pray for:

- God's blessing on our board, steering committee and staff as we seek the right path forward for truthXchange (staffing, financing, projects, etc.); we so desperately need to establish the ministry for the generation to come and are eager to hire two young men that God has called to work with us.

- Spiritual protection on all those involved in researching paganism.

- Efficiency and an energetic work ethic (while not becoming stressed out or fearful) as we try to accomplish so much with so few.

- The right people and the right number of people to attend our Think Tank, February 4-7, 2014 ("Shining as Lights: Telling the Truth in the Pagan Utopia"). If you know Christian leaders, young or old, male or female, who would benefit from this event, please encourage them to register.

- Just the right financial support—neither so much that we think we can depend on it (!) nor too little that we are hampered in accomplishing the tasks God is calling us to do for His kingdom.

- The launch of our first online course, through Blue Letter Bible Institute (They have a wide distribution and are glad for our content. So it is a good partnership). I have completed this first course and am working on the next one.

- Peter as he works on a new book, with a working title of "Given Over, But Not Giving Up; Wisdom in soliciting the help of volunteers as well as training and incorporating them into the team.

- Wisdom as we seek the right approach and modes of fundraising; and also, an opening on the part of some of the larger foundations as we seek grants.

- Faithfulness to the Lord, his Christ, his church, his Spirit and his Word in all that we do, whether in study, activity or worship;

- A greater zeal to spread the gospel of God's grace to those millions who do not yet know him—courage to open our mouths and let out what is in our Christian hearts!
“The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.”

*Westminster Confession 8:2*
History

- Imagine trying to get 520 ‘bishops” to agree, but such was the outcome of the Council of Chalcedon.

- The crucial phrase was the work of **Leo the Great** (c.400 – November 10, 461):

- **NESTORIUS** (381-451)
  - Decline of Arianism (condemned at Constantinople in 381). Rise of Apollinarianism (condemned in 377), but continued until his death in 392 and his followers continued throughout the fifth century until Chalcedon condemned it outright.
  
  - Controversy over *Theotokos*: “Mother of God.” In the popular mindset, Nestorius was viewed as denying this, setting Christ’s humanity as a Person in its own right. Problem: was Nestorius a Nestorian? History has not been kind to him.

  - Rise of two schools of thought:
    - **ANTIOCHENE (~ Antioch): [Logos/anthropos]**
      - Lays stress on Christ’s divinity
      - Chief proponent of this view was **NESTORIUS** (381-451): Bishop of Constantinople. Denied unity of person by emphasizing the two natures so as to suggest two persons. He viewed the human “nature” as a person. Basically, two “he’s.” Nestorius would sometimes point out that in the Gospels – this is the human person speaking and elsewhere, this is the divine person speaking.
- **ALEXANDRIAN (~Alexandria): [Logos/sarx]**
  - Lays stress on Christ’s humanity
  - Chief proponent: **CYRIL (376-444): Bishop of Alexandria.** Jesus is one “he.” Cyril was both a ruthless polemicist and politician.
    - The tension between Cyril and Nestorius became increasingly obvious. Following the condemnation of Nestorius’ views at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), Nestorius insisted that he had been misunderstood and that he had always maintained the two natures/one person view; but the die had been cast.

- **EUTYCHES (378-454)**
  - “Archimandrite” of Constantinople (superior abbot in Greek Orthodoxy; i.e. he ran the monastery and was just below the bishop in the ecclesiastical pecking order)
  - Christ is a *third thing: tertium quid*
    - The divine and human join in some way so as to produce a new being. One new and different person fashioned out of two natures. “That is a theological way of saying yellow and blue makes green” (Stephen Nichols, *For Us and Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church*, 106).
    - Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople convened a synod that met at Constantinople in 448. Enter the messy world of politics in fifth century:
      - Eutyches had close ties with the imperial house of Theodosius II (408-450) who arranged for another council in Ephesus in 449 that reversed the decision of Constantinople of 448. Leo the Great would later call this synod a *latrocinium*: the “robber council.” Theodosius’ successor (Marcian [imperial reign lasted from 450 to 457]) would side with Chalcedon and enforce it as orthodoxy.

- **CHALCEDON 451**
  - Called by Marcian, emperor of the East. Chalcedon a few miles NW of Constantinople on the shores of the Black Sea. Political agenda—the need for unity.
• Just before the “robber council” at Ephesus, Leo the Great – the bishop of Rome, sent Flavian (bishop of Constantinople) a letter. It has become known as the “Tome.” It was only about 7 pages in length. The letter was not permitted to be read. After Thedosius II’s death, Marcian convened the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

• Met in five session during October 451. First session overturned the synod of Ephesus in 449, the “Robber Council.” The Council of Ephesus was presided over by Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria. At the first session of the Council of Chalcedon, Dioscorus went into hiding and never appeared at the Council again.

• Eutychus was condemned. Need for a statement of theology.

• Second Session: two groups emerged:
   The “let’s simply go back to the Nicene Creed” group which said nothing about the two natures of Christ, simply affirmed his deity.
   The “it is time to scotch this issue once and for all” group. This group won over and the Council chugged along.

• Fourth Session: enter Leo’s “Tome”:
   “Without detriment therefore to the properties of either substance which then came together in one person, majesty took on humility, strength weakness, eternity mortality: and for the paying off of the debt, belonging to our condition, inviolable nature was united with possible nature, and true God and true man were combined to form one Lord, so that, as suited the needs of our case, one and the same Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, could both die with the one and rise again with the other.” [On the Feast of the Nativity, I].

• Fifth Session: October 22 – “two natures in one person”
• CONTROVERSIES AT CHALCEDON

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<th>Apollinarianism</th>
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<td>Eutychianism</td>
<td>Eutyches of Constantinople (c. 378-454)</td>
<td>Christ is neither divine nor human, but a new, singular nature; denies two natures of Christ</td>
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**Key Concepts of Chalcedonian Christology**

1. In Christ there are two natures
2. Each nature retains its own specific properties
3. The two natures do not constitute two persons, but one
4. The union between the two natures is personal/hypostatic

And in particular:

• **Theotokos (God-bearer)**
  - “God-bearer” rather than “Mother of God”
    - Scripture never says God/the Logos was born of the virgin. We are told he became flesh.
  - Theotokos was not incorporated into earlier creeds, nor into Reformation creeds.
  - It tended to obscure the humanity of Christ
  - Suggested the idea that Mary was the Mother of God/the Godhead/the Trinity. Polemically, what people hear is Ave Maria.

• **Hypostatic Union**
Cyril was the first to use this phrase in his second letter to Nestorius: καθ ὑποστάσιν ἐνώσις. The use of this word had a polemical edge. He convinced the church that according to Nestorius there were two hypostasis in Christ (divine and human).

Misguided analogies of the idea of hypostatic union:

- Union in the Trinity. This breaks down because the Trinity is three persons but Christ has two natures in person.
- Soul/body in a human body. Soul and body are not distinct natures but different aspects in one nature.
- Christ and his people (cf. Donald Baillie, God was in Christ). But the church is not the enfleshment of deity.

Christ is one person and the union arises from the fact that the divine and human natures belong to the one person. The two natures are integral to the very being of the Lord Jesus. He is human and divine. They are not mere attributes.

This one person, the Son of God, is the agent behind all the Lord’s actions. There is only ever ONE “HE.”

**Communion of/in attributes (communicatio idiomatum)**

The attributes of each nature are attributable to the person, but not to each nature.

“Since then the properties of both natures and substances were preserved and co-existed in One Person, humility was embraced by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity; and to pay the debt of our condition the inviolable nature was united to a passible nature; so that, as was necessary for our healing, there was one and the same ‘mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ,’ who was capable of death in one nature and incapable of it in the other…So, then, the Son of God enters upon this lower world, descending from his heavenly seat without retiring from the Father’s glory, generated in a new order by a novel kind of birth. In a new order, because he who is invisible in what belongs to himself was made visible in what belongs to us, the Incomprehensible willed to be comprehend, he who continued to exist before time began to exist in time, the Lord of the universe took upon him a servant’s form shrouding the immensity of his majesty, the impassible God did not disdain to be passible man,
nor the Immortal to be subject to the laws of death…” (Leo’s “Tome”)

- Are the attributes of one nature communicated to the other?
  - Is it possible the attributes of the divine nature can be communicated to the human and vice versa?
  - NO! But, Acts 20:28, “the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood.

- **Anhypostasia**
  - The human nature of Jesus is not a person (hypostasis) in its own right.
    - Not a denial of the individuality of Jesus
    - Not a denial of a “personality”
    - His human nature did not have an independent, autonomous existence over against his divine person
We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.
Literature:

Stephen Nichols, *For Us and for Our Salvation* (Crossway, 2007) 99-118.

Frances M. Young, with Andrew Teal, *From Nicea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010)


THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

“It is widely believed that one of the main barriers to world peace is religion, and especially the major traditional religions with their exclusive-claims to superiority. It may surprise you that, though I am a Christian minister, I agree with this. Religion, generally speaking, tends to create a slippery slope in the heart. Each religion informs its followers that they have “the truth,” and this naturally leads them to feel superior to those with different beliefs. Also, a religion tells its followers that they are saved and connected to God by devotedly performing the truth. This moves them to separate from those who are less devoted and pure in life. Therefore it is easy for one religious group to stereo-type and caricature other ones. Once this situation exists it can easily spiral down into the marginalization of others or even to active oppression, abuse, or violence against them.

Once we recognize how religion erodes peace on earth, what can we do about it? There are three approaches that civic and cultural leaders around the world are using to address the divisiveness of religion. There are calls to outlaw religion, condemn religion, or at least to radically privatize it. Many people are investing great hope in them. Unfortunately, I don’t believe any of them will be effective. Indeed, I’m afraid they will only aggravate the situation.”

Timothy Keller, The Reason for God

“In the world it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair … the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die.”

Dorothy L. Sayers, The Other Six Deadly Sins
1. Scripture:

   a. “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6).

   b. “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

2. Is Jesus the ONLY way?

   a. Alan Watts (1915-1973): [A British-born philosopher, writer, and speaker, best known as an interpreter, who popularized Eastern philosophy for a Western audience. Born in Chislehurst, he moved to the United States in 1938 and began Zen training in New York. Pursuing a career, he attended Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, where he received a master's degree in theology. Watts became an Episcopal priest then left the ministry in 1950 and moved to California, where he joined the faculty of the American Academy of Asian Studies.]

   The problem he found was that Early Christianity seemed utterly resistant to being incorporated into a global religion:

   “There is not a scrap of evidence that the Christian hierarchy was ever aware of itself as one among several lines of transmission for a universal tradition. Christians ... did not take at all kindly to ideas that even begin to question the unique and supreme position of the historical Jesus .... Christianity is a contentious faith which requires an all-or-nothing commitment to Jesus as the one and only incarnation of the Son of God.... My previous discussions did not take proper account of that whole aspect of Christianity which is uncompromising, ornery, militant, rigorous, imperious and invincibly self-righteous. They did not give sufficient weight to the church's disagreeable insistence on the reality of a totally malignant spirit of cosmic evil, on everlasting damnation and on the absolute distinction between Creator and creature. These thorny and objectionable facets of Christianity cannot be shrugged off as temporary distortions or errors.” (Preface to Beyond Theology: The Art of Godmanship [Vintage, 1973], xii).

3. Pluralism:


      i. Three kinds of pluralism:

         1. **Empirical Pluralism:**

            a. We live in a diverse society (language, ethnicity, worldview – American cultures). Christianity is losing its moral force. A growing fascination with the East. The growth of Islam. People make up religion as they go along. Pick-and-mix.

“Sheila Larson is a young nurse who has received a good deal of therapy and describes her faith as "Sheilaism." This suggests the logical possibility of more than 235 million American religions, one for each of us. "I believe in God," Sheila says. "I am not a religious fanatic. [Notice at once that in our culture any strong statement of belief seems to imply fanaticism so you have to offset that.] I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheilaism. Just my own little voice." Sheila's faith has some tenets beyond belief in God, though not many. In defining what she calls "my own Sheilaism," she said: "It's just try to love yourself and be gentle with yourself. You know, I guess, take care of each other. I think God would want us to take care of each other." Like many others, Sheila would be willing to endorse few more specific points.”

2. Cherished Pluralism:

a. This goes beyond the fact of religion to its value: it is to welcome pluralism and value it. He cites (page 18) Leslie Newbigin: “It has become a commonplace to say that we live in a pluralist society—not merely a society which is in fact plural in the variety of cultures, religions and lifestyles which it embraces, but pluralist in the sense that this plurality is celebrated as things to be approved and cherished.” (The Gospel of a Pluralist Society, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989, 1.)


3. Philosophical Pluralism:

a. Alvin Plantinga responds to the charge: the only reason you are Christian is due to sociological conditioning. “If you were born in Morocco, you would be a Muslim.” This is true in all likelihood. But so is the counter allegation that if you were born in Morocco, you would not be a pluralist either!

b. A sociopolitical ideology: This view demands pluralism. It refuses to allow that any worldview or metanarrative can claim to be the whole truth. “Any
notion that a particular ideological or religious claim is intrinsically superior to another is necessarily wrong. The only absolute creed is the creed of pluralism. No religion has the right to pronounce itself right or true and the others false” (Carson, 19).

“All Faith Chapel, Vanderbilt

“This place is for all faiths. Its dedication consists of many acts and of one. There is diversity in our unity, and there is unity in our diversity as we dedicate this space and add to its light, each in the way of a distinctive tradition.

c. Religious Pluralism can be traced to Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). It has three fundamental weaknesses:

i. A false modesty: eschewing all religious imperialism, it presents itself as humble. No formulation of the faith is final. But it is arrogant in itself and lacking humility to sneer at expression of divinely revealed objective truth and treat those who accept such truth as intellectually inferior.

ii. A false charity: Pluralists charge exclusivists, (and inclusivists) as lacking love towards most of the world’s inhabitants.

iii. A false belief: a) that all religions are essentially the same and b) that any one of them, or all of them collectively have anything in common with New Testament Christianity. The essence of the difference between “DO” and “DONE” and the New Testament thesis on the way of justification.
d. “Clearly post-Christian, post-liberal, post-Marxist, and post-modern—and reflecting skepticism about every world-and-life view from the past, whether religious, philosophical, scientific, or romantic—today’s pluralism directs that public policy be based not on public acknowledgement of universal truth and standards but on a purpose of enabling everyone to pursue personal options. Pluralism knows that that the global village that we call the world is full of metanarratives, that is, accounts of reality that claim to make sense of the human story and to declare the meaning of human life; every religion has one, and antireligious viewpoints like Marxism and evolutionism have them too. Pluralism professes to tolerate and, other things being equal, to protect all these views, but it throws a dark canopy of uncommittedness over them and thus reduces them to private interests that must not be allowed to rock, let alone steer, the community boat. This is a huge break with how things have been everywhere up to now, or at least until a generation ago, and what will come of it remains to be seen.” (J. I. Packer, “Paul Against Pluralism: The Relevance of the Athenian Speech Today,” in Tough-Minded Christianity: Honoring the legacy of John Warwick Montgomery, Eds. William Dembski and Thomas Schirrmacher [B&H Academic, 2008), 2-3.

4. Christian Response to Pluralism:

a. Christianity recognizes empirical pluralism. Bible written in a pluralistic society. Moses in Egypt. Daniel in Babylon. Paul in Rome. “And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Josh. 24:15).

b. Acts 17:16-34

“Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So ihe reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, ‘What does this babbler wish to say?’ Others said, ‘He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities’—because he was preaching Jesus and the
resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.’ 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, “To the unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live upon all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for

“In him we live and move and have our being’;

as even some of your own poets have said,

“For we are indeed his offspring.”

29 Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but know he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” 33 So Paul went out from their midst. 34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.


ii. 16-21: Paul’s reaction:

1. “provoked” (16) by polytheism. Civic religion in Athens, a free city within the Empire, promoted the worship of ATHENA and
APOLLO (the city’s patron) and in addition a range of nature
gods:
  Poseidon the sea god
  Demeter the harvest goddess
  Bacchus, the god of wine and energy, Etc.

2. Athens had its philosophers, too:
   Epicureans: committed to a withdrawn lifestyle, tranquil,
   unattached, free as far as possible from all forms of business
   and trouble, including the worship of gods
   Stoics: a stern, elitist moralism in which reason and fate,
   pantheistically conceived, were the ultimate realities and
   fortitude [strength, courage, resilience] the ultimate virtue.

3. The Epicureans (?) dismissed Paul as a “babbler” (seed-
picker); Stoics (?) thought he was adding two gods to the
   pantheon: a goddess, Anastasis (‘resurrection’) and Jesus.

4. Paul is summoned to the Areopagus: verse 19 claims legal right
   to judge Paul’s claims.

5. Some (mistakenly) think Paul was “showing off” as a
   philosopher and the small number of converts is God’s way of
   telling him off for doing so! Hence Paul (as he moved to
   Corinth) “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus
   Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). i.e. a renouncing
   of his Athenian modality.

6. Paul began with polytheists and philosophers, giving them the
gospel which (if he had been allowed) would have embraced
six lines of thought; God, man, history, salvation, fellowship
and heaven.

   a. A basic lesson in Christian theism: there is ONE God
      whose existence they acknowledge despite their
      ignorance and who will break one day into history to
      judge the world (23-25):

      i. By their own admission (an altar to the
         Unknown God), they do not know the true God

      ii. THIS God is their Creator

      iii. He is their SOVEREIGN LORD
iv. He is infinite and omnipresent (not localized to buildings)

v. He is eternally self-sufficient and self-sustaining (aseity)

vi. He is the source of every good thing, which requires thanksgiving on our part.

b. A basic lesson in anthropology: their plight under God’s judgment (26-30)

i. The unity of the human race

ii. Sovereignty of God in human history

iii. Knowing God is the true purpose of our lives

iv. Dignity of each human being: we are his offspring/image bearers

v. Since Greek poets (Epimendes and Aratus, sources of wisdom) have testified to this relationship it is inexcusable to imagine God as an idol

vi. God holds each one of us guilty for our idolatry

c. A basic lesson about history (Paul never got any further and he was howled down (32):

i. God’s forbearance about our disregard from him is coming to an end. A call to repentance: a denial of pluralism.

ii. God has fixed a day when he will stop the flow of space-time history (Greek view of cyclical history).

iii. God’s executive agent in that judgment is Jesus.

iv. God has given public proof of this by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

5. A call to evangelize all other faiths
Further Reading:
Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009)
Dinesh D’Souza, *What’s So Great about Christianity?* (Washington: Regency, 2007)
Timothy Keller, *The Reason for Go: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (Dutton, 2008)
Our Missionaries- November 20, 2013

Dennis and Rhonda Conroy- Philippines

- Praise the Lord that the hurricane moved quickly and did not stay around to wreck more havoc than it has. Pray for the central Philippines, for shelter, food, and drinking water is needed for many who are displaced. Pray for God’s comfort for those who lost loved ones. Destruction abounds. Pray.
- Pray for Dennis as he helps a group create web sites for minority language groups. During the two week workshop a dozen minority language groups will be trained and hope to successfully launch web sites that include the Bible in the heart languages of thousands of people. Pray.
- Pray for our school, Faith Academy Mindanao. We need teachers to teach the children of parents who are involved in a variety of ministries throughout Asia. Click the links below to see a video that tells about our school. Share the video with your church and friends. (Abigail is at the end of the video. She is #14.) There are several formats, all for the same video. If you need help viewing, let us know.

Dennis and Cynde Morgan- Austria

- Thanks for your faithful prayer support. Here are our most recent prayer requests:
  - Pray again for the sale or rental of our house. Our buyer's loan was not approved so they were unable to fulfill the contract.
  - Pray for upcoming meetings with prospective supporters and that November would be a "big" month for new financial pledges.
  - Pray that we effectively cast our burdens on the Lord, grow in trust, and experience his peace, care and strength.
  - Because of changing regulations the prostitutes on the streets have been dislocated. Pray that the workers can continue to have contact with them and that the Lord would free the oppressed.
  - Pray for the NCW fellowship that they continue in love and unity as a witness to the city of Vienna.

Scott and Victoria Andes- Ukraine

- Please pray for Scott and I to have wisdom WAY beyond our experiences. Please pray that we would walk closely with the Lord, consciously depending on Him. Our children really reveal our need for a savior. Now. Today. Every minute. Pray that we would not lose heart in doing good, and that we would consciously remember that the Lord is in control, not us. Please pray that the Good Shepherd would find our little lambs and bring them into the fold. He is worthy of our trust!
- Please pray that we would show integrity, grace, and love in all we say and do. Please pray for our former teammates, as they take a different path, now.
- Please pray for the building committee of the school board. Please pray that the Lord would provide just the right place and protect the school in all of the transactions that have to happen. Please also pray for the school itself, which is its teachers and students, not the building. There are pros and cons to small Christian schools, but we are really grateful for KCA. Satan doesn’t want harmony and peace. So, please pray for the administration and teachers, that they would be wise and attentive, and that the Lord would protect them in all ways. Please pray for the student body - that the kids would love the Lord and love each other.
- Please pray that against all odds, what is best for most Ukrainians would be done. Please pray that the Lord’s people here would be salt and light, even in difficult circumstances and situations. Pray for leaders with integrity. We are grateful to get to serve here!

Paul and Missy Robelot- France

- deputation and support raising - need to raise final 15% our support has dropped off some
- Planning missionary care trips for the next couple of weeks to Chad Nov 17-Dec 2.
- Involvement teaching and preaching at the church
- Julie and Susie's ministry at Croissy Church
- Daughter Nathalie's wedding in July, joyful times!!
- Continued Education search for Julie for fall 2014, American University of Paris? perhaps if scholarships given she wants to work with CEF in Paris
- Planning trips for Jan, Feb, and April for member care.
Our Missionaries - November 20, 2013

- 10 Concerts for David Edwards Music and Missions Trip really excited about this, pray for his funding (Dec 1-19)
- Mark and Vanessa Witt - Spain
  - Juan Carlos and Carlos, two non-Christian men married to women in our small group. Both of these men have been attending the weekly studies, and Juan Carlos has been asking very good questions regarding what it means to be a Christian.
  - Bureaucracy. We are still working on and waiting for our official residency cards. It takes a lot of work and patience to legally be in Spain.
  - Our kids, Vanessa and Alex.
  - Our language acquisition. That all of us will continue to make strides in understanding and being understood.
  - Our local church in Camarma, Spain. That we can be a blessing to them and that God will raise up several more Spanish elders to share the ministry load of the church (currently they only have 2).

- Andy and Nannette Howard - World Witness
  - Please pray for a visa!
  - Please pray for these schools that we would be able to continue with the building project and that many children would get a good education.
  - Please pray that the God would use it to spread His kingdom.

- Alex and Irina Ponomarev - Ukraine
  - Please keep in your prayers those who have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Like my former colleagues in St. Petersburg, Russia.
  - Pray that there will be more people excited to hear the Good News, the true way to Heaven, the joy of Knowing God as Savior, as Lord, and as a Father.
  - Pray that the Lord will sustain missionaries who bring the Gospel to Russia and the most remote places in the world.

- Our ARP missionaries to Turkey, Rob and Rachel Turner. Today Rachel is being operated on for breast cancer in Greenwood, SC, her home town.

- Pray for our ARP missionaries to Turkey, Rob and Rachel Turner. Today Rachel is being operated on for breast cancer in Greenwood, SC, her home town.