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TSF BULLETIN

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Pro-Family

Saddened by the rise of divorce and the subsequent pain, we affirm the family—married couples, parents with children, single parent families, extended family units—as a gift from God and a peculiar theatre of Divine Grace. We also affirm the family as a place for the mutual support, honor, protection, and the growth of every member toward the realization of his or her potential. We urge the church to actively demonstrate love to all women and men and to minister to them regardless of their chosen relationships.

Pro-Justice

We affirm justice for all without regard to race, sex, color, creed, or sexual orientation. Therefore, we call upon Christians to encourage societal institutions to respect and honor all persons. We call on political leaders to respond without discrimination to the needs of the handicapped, the unemployed, the aged, the poor, and the imprisoned. That equality before God which works for human dignity is affirmed, lest we support injustice by benign neglect.

Pro-Creation

We affirm our responsibility to protect and care for God's creation. We deplore the exploitation of the earth resulting in air and water pollution, the depletion of natural resources, the impoverishment of peoples, the brutal treatment of domestic animals, the extinction of wild life and natural habitats, and the socially irresponsible use of the land. Therefore, we call for such stewardship of creation as shall exercise right reason and compassion in the distribution of food and protect and advance the particularity and worth of all the world's peoples.

Pro-Morality

We affirm that God's creation, the ancient law of Israel, and our covenant with Jesus Christ call us to moral responsibility. We therefore urge an appropriate critical response to the loss of personal and public moral standards evidenced in the rise of pornography, suggestive television programming, the exploitation of sex in advertising, the lack of self-discipline, the diminution of honesty and integrity in business and government, both as practiced in public policy and among individuals, and the increase of terrorism and violence. We affirm the need for empathy and openness toward those whose lifestyles and values are religiously and culturally different from ours.

Pro-Nation

We affirm that a sense of peoplehood is a gift of God. It is natural, therefore, that people love their place and country but such a love dare not become idolatrous. We should be critical of our country in order to promote the ideals of pluralism, peace, justice, and freedom for all. We call on Christians in all countries to warn against a blind trust in nationalism, to distinguish between Christianity and civil religion, and to speak out against materialism and against any messianic trust in militarism.

Pro-Peace

We affirm that the quest for peace among nations is a right obedience to God's will. We also affirm that peace is more than the absence of war. We recognize that materialistic lifestyles can wreak violence and destruction on others as devastating as war, and we also recognize the fundamental interdependence of countries. We therefore call upon all people, especially Christians, to seek and promote such lifestyles and relationships among people and countries as shall relax tensions, meet basic human needs, and promote mutual understanding. We also call upon them to use every means available to avoid military confrontation, aggression, holocaust, and the channeling of resources into destructive weaponry.

Pro-Human Rights

We affirm and uphold the right to self-determination, the freedom of speech and religion, and the right to offer critical appraisal of any human situation. We therefore call upon the church to affirm the dignity of every woman and man to pursue her or his own goals within the boundaries of reason and common sense.

We support peaceful protest against those nations, corporations, and groups that deny basic human rights.

We make this witness in humble recognition of our inability to be comprehensive, of the variety of interpretations that may be attached to these words, and of the reservation some of us may have about parts of the statement. Yet we offer it as a symbol of our witness to a faith that transcends blind patriotism, coercive legislation, and unwarranted uniformity. The church as a community of believers, proclaiming the Gospel, witnessing to its values, and confronting evil through vulnerability and love, must invite people to enter in faith, to ponder its ethical commands, and to live its witness. We call upon that church and all Christians to speak and act with courage where Christian convictions are clear, with humility in areas of permissible disagreement, and with love and compassion in all matters.

WHERE ARE THE TSF GROUPS?

Is there a group of students meeting on your campus to discuss Theology? Ethics? Spiritual Formation? Theological Students Fellowship would like to assist in developing a network of such groups in order to help make helpful resources (publications, conferences) conveniently available to seminary and religious studies students. Please write and let us know what is happening on your campus. Theological Students Fellowship, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703.

FOUNDATIONS

(Doing theology on the basics of classical faith)

WHICH ESCHATOLOGY FOR WHICH CHRIST? (Part II)

By Vernard Eller, Professor of Religion, University of LaVerne (CA).

The first half of this paper, which originally was delivered at a conference on the Believers Church, appeared in our September-October issue. There, Professor Eller discussed categories for sorting eschatological themes. He favored biblical foundations over philosophical ones. In between "demythologized" versions on the left and "literalistic" calendarizing on the right, Eller chose "realistic" eschatology centered on God's past, present and future involvement in human history. Third, rejecting options that consider eschatology totally "realized" or totally "futuristic," Eller sided with an "in-the-process-of-realizing-itself" position. Finally, seeing "speculative" eschatology as an intellectual and exegetical activity that fails to engage the believer, Eller called for a "lived" option which involves every aspect of a Christian's life.

Eller continued by developing a contrast between "secularists" (whom he compared to "flatlanders") and "eschatologists" ("round-earthers"). Eschatologists look at the same landscape as secularists, but they can also see beyond the "horizon" (knowing that the earth actually is round, and that God is active before, during and beyond human history to accomplish his purposes). A Christian eschatologist, then lives his or her life in response to the realities which are hidden beyond the secularist's horizon.

In this final section, Eller considers what kind of Christology is most appropriate and helpful for the community of Christian

eschatologists, developing a perspective which directly confronts how one can legitimately respond to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have received Dr. Eller's permission to edit his manuscript to conform to our editorial policy concerning inclusive language. Eller provides a critique of the contemporary stress on inclusive language in his new book, forthcoming from Eerdmans, Language of Canaan.

III. The Eschatological Jesus

The material of the final third of this paper can be found in a different form in my article, "The Course of Discipleship" (*Brethren Life and Thought*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, Winter '81). I am here having to stand things on their heads, although that presents no problem. There I started with the concept "discipleship" and set out to show that it is essentially eschatological. Here I want to start with eschatology and show that Jesus and discipleship belong in that context. There I related to my own specifically *Brethren* background; here I want to open out to the broader Believers Church tradition. No sweat; things come out the same either way.

Regarding Christology now, my proposal is not simply that the Believers Church tradition holds a distinctive position but that its very approach and methodology — even down to its statement of the problem — is quite different from that of classic, creedal, churchly orthodoxy. There the matter customarily is addressed as formal, intellectual, and conceptual in nature. Christological thought may (or may not) start with the New Testament witness as its basic datum. In any case, the problem quickly is posed as a *theological* one, calling for rationalization, systematization, and almost inevitably the help of philosophical categories. Consequently, more often than not, Christology becomes *ontology*, the effort to define divine "being" and human "being" and how these two are related in the person of Christ. All this may be claimed as *rooting* back into God's biblical self-revelation; yet it is obvious that it has had to go far beyond that starting point and have recourse to concepts that are quite foreign to Scripture.

But where the classic tradition sees the problem as a "formal" one, the Believers Church has seen it as "existential." "Function" rather than "ontology" is here the focal orientation. Not "How is Christ to be comprehended in his eternal being?" but "What do I need to know of Jesus if I am to be his true follower?" — this question sets the agenda. Christology is not now the professional findings of *thinkers* but requisite information for *doer-disciples* who have to know whom they are to follow and why. And when it is done so, Christology can afford to stay within the New Testament language-game rather than being forced to proceed into philosophic speculation.

The key issue is whether "Christology" belongs primarily to "discipleship" or to "theology." However, the bare word "disciple" ("discipleship") is not in itself adequate for making the distinction as clear and as powerful as it needs to be made. Yes, I know that "disciple" is actually a very close translation of the Greek word used in the Gospels and that, as long as it is defined by its New Testament context, the word "disciple" functions very well. Yet, on the basis of the sheer semantics involved, the German term *Nachfolge* is much more useful to our Christological purposes.

The English word "disciple" comes from a Latin term identifying "one who *learns*," clearly the correlate of the term meaning "one who *teaches*." Etymologically, then, "discipleship" points directly to a Teacher/Disciple (learner) relationship.

"*Nachfolge*" is quite different. It is constructed from two German words meaning "after" and "following," pointing to the idea of an "after follower" — the correlate of which would be a "leader-lord." Thus the implied relationship is Leader-Lord/Follower.

If we trace out the implications of each of these models, we will discover that *Nachfolge* leads straight to the Believers Church/New Testament understanding and that *Discipleship* leads quite elsewhere. Let's do it.

Both models take the same starting point, namely the historical

Jesus — that is, Jesus of Nazareth as he lived, taught, and acted in first-century Palestine. If Jesus is Teacher, this is where and when he did his teaching. If he is Leader-Lord, then this also is where and when his followers joined him, learned of their destination, and were set upon the pilgrimage. ("Pilgrimage" is the right word to use with *Nachfolge*. It is a Latin derivation that comes close to meaning "far afield" and that originally denoted foreign travel, from "abroad." We have only to keep in mind that it is a one-way, once-for-all journey rather than the brief and perhaps occasional "visits" we may identify as pilgrimages today. But with "pilgrimage," our thought has become obviously *eschatological*.)

But from this common starting point with the historical Jesus, things immediately diverge. If Jesus is simply Teacher (which is as much as the bare term "discipleship" requires), then he need be only *man*, a great human being, a good teacher. But if he is the Leader-Lord whose way ends in "the kingdom of God," then, in addition to being the man Jesus of Nazareth, he must also be the very Messiah of God. If his mission is to lead us and get us over the horizon, through history *and beyond*, he must himself *be* of history's "beyond."

Our tradition has not spent a great deal of time speaking or arguing about "the deity of Christ" — it hasn't had to. If a person affirmed that deity but was not following Jesus as Leader-Lord, then the affirmation in itself surely didn't count for much. But if, on the other hand, the person was *following*, had put him or herself into the hands of that Leader-Lord for weal or for woe, then that very action both had to assume a *resurrection* of Jesus that would make such following a present possibility (corpses are hard to "follow"; their moves aren't all that discernible) and was itself a much more powerful affirmation of Jesus' deity than any theological confession or argument could be. Many modern Christians, also, don't spend a lot of time speaking or arguing about "the deity of Christ" — they don't have to. If he is essentially Teacher, it doesn't make any real difference whether he is divine or not. Our Believers-Church ancestors as eschatologists and we moderns as secularists — but, oh, the difference! Although it does not provide much in the way of Christological *theory*, eschatological *Nachfolge* does resolve any doubt regarding the deity of Christ.

Nachfolge, by its very nature, required a something-or-other for which our progenitors didn't have a name but which they obviously had learned how to do. We call it "contemporaneity," an act of the imagination (or perhaps "the Spirit") by which the believer goes back in time to meet and know Jesus on the same terms his first followers did. It was this practice of contemporaneity that kept the noses of those ancestors in their Gospels and themselves acting as if they thought they were part of the New Testament church — this while their churchly colleagues were having to do with the Christ of the Altar, of the Liturgy, of the Creeds and Confessions. Of course, *Nachfolge* contemporaneity does not deny the presence of the Living Lord who is leading here

SCUPE CONGRESS ON URBAN MINISTRY

The Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) will hold its third Congress on Urban Ministry April 22-24, 1982 in Chicago, Illinois. SCUPE, an educational organization cooperating with nine seminaries in the Chicago area, offers students training in urban ministry. The national Congress has as its theme: "Anticipating the Future of Urban Centers." The Congress will explore three topics in light of the theme— Food, Work, and Shelter/Land. Planned for both clergy and lay participation, the Congress will include each day two plenary sessions, a number of workshops highlighting specific ministry models related to the day's topic, and creative strategy sessions.

Call for Workshops. Anyone interested in presenting a model of ministry related to one or more of these topics for consideration as a workshop at the Congress should contact SCUPE in writing for further information and guidelines.

Address all inquiries about SCUPE or the Congress to Dr. David J. Frenchak, SCUPE, 30 West Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.

and now; yet it insists that there is no chance of your recognizing him unless you first have come to know him as Jesus of Nazareth. (And, as many of our forerunners discovered, if what you have in mind to do is contemporaneousness, a home, a barn, or a plain meetinghouse is a much more appropriate setting than is a cathedral.)

But *discipleship* (in its bare definition) doesn't need contemporaneousness. If Jesus is essentially Teacher, all we really need are his *teachings* — and those are *in the book*. Both *Nachfolge* and *Discipleship* center upon the biblical witness to Christ — but, oh, the difference! For a "disciple," the New Testament need be no more than a history of the Teacher and a collection of his teachings. But, for a "follower," it is the very vehicle for getting to the Leader-Lord, becoming contemporaneous so that one *can* follow him.

Nachfolge and *Discipleship* also imply quite different concepts of "authority." No good teacher would even *want* to be taken as an absolute authority. His or her ideas are to be respected, of course; and they are presented with all possible support and persuasion. Still the hope is that the disciple will exercise critical discrimination and accept only as much of the teaching as commends itself. And thus the disciple's personal acumen is actually the final authority. But the Leader-Lord, his authority is absolute — and *has* to be. After all, only he knows where lies the destination of our pilgrimage and only his way-making gives us any chance of getting there. Yet, if I may say so, many modern Christians come on as "disciples," showing considerable critical discrimination — picking and choosing, reinterpreting the teachings of Jesus to fit the wisdom of the age.

Also, the implied *relationship* between Disciple and Teacher is much different from that between Follower and Leader-Lord. A "disciple" certainly owes the Teacher admiration, respect, and "discriminating obedience," but not necessarily anything more close and personal than that. However, the "follower's" relationship to the Leader-Lord is that of *total dependency* — and such is bound to produce the same order of love and intimacy as is produced by a child's dependency on a loving parent. Jesus *does* say, "*Learn from me*" (Mat. 11:29); but much more fundamentally he says, "Simon, son of John, do you *love* me more than these? . . . *Follow me!*" (John 21:15,22). *Nachfolge*, in its basic concept, is as essentially the passion and piety of *loving* Jesus as it is the resultant actions of *following* him — and any true Christology must include such matters.

Think about it, then, and realize that the Teacher/Disciple model is essentially a *static* one. That is, the mental image presents the teacher at the same blackboard and the student at the same desk, all in the same classroom, day after day after day. Granted, education does involve a "head trip"; but that, if we may

say so, happens within a rather confined space. However, the Leader-Lord/Follower model, it is *dynamic*. We have a pilgrimage that drives from here to eternity (actually, *from* eternity to eternity, although, necessarily, "here" is where each of us joins the party).

The flatlander "disciple's" goal is to become equipped to make the best of the world in which he finds himself. The "follower" is intent to move *through* the world and into the kingdom (and because the train in which she moves is that of the Lord Jesus, you can be sure that a lot more than just the individual follower will be swept along). Believe it: universal history will turn out to be the story of Trucker Jesus, Lord of History, and his Big Swoosh. (You mean you had never understood that bit about Pentecost and the Spirit's "rush of a mighty wind"? "There goes Jesus; and — oops — here we go with him!")

Now the technical (and somewhat more polite) term for this dynamic, history-and-beyond, end-state driving idea is what we have been calling "lived eschatology." Perhaps the best biblical expression of it comes from the Epistle to the Hebrews:

[All the biblical personages who represent "faith" have acknowledged] that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city (Heb. 11:13-16).

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter [i.e., one who brings to the goal] of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:1-2).

Why should those "seeking a homeland" "look to" *Jesus* as Leader-Lord (all right, "Pioneer and Perfecter")? Obviously, because he already has gone the route — endured the cross and made it to the right hand of God, from where, at the proper time, he is ready to come again, that where he is we may be also. (And in thinking these thoughts, we are doing "Christology" for a fare-thee-well.)

The point is that *Nachfolge* is nothing if not an eschatological concept — and that of this very particular eschatology: "lived, or action, eschatology." And it asks the questions: Are you truly following Jesus *on the course* he has taken and is taking? Is your destination-vision his, a seeking first of the kingdom of God? Are your movements those of kingdom *anticipation* (a seizing of that not-yet-fully-present although certainly not-still-totally absent future)? Are you, today, living out the reality of God's tomorrow? Do you know that *going with* the Lord Jesus is the only true posture from which to pray, "*Come, Lord Jesus*"? And although not recognized as such within church tradition, these questions are as truly "Christological" as are those couched in the terminology of the creeds.

There is, then, another root distinction between *Discipleship* and *Nachfolge* — this closely related to the one above. Teaching/learning is necessarily a highly *individualized* activity. No matter how many students there may be in a class, they each must individually do their own learning, take their own tests (supposedly), and receive their own grades. *Discipleship* (theoretically) *has* to be understood individualistically; *Nachfolge* (theoretically) *could* be — individual followers individually pursuing individual courses behind the Lord Jesus. But if biblical-eschatological *Nachfolge* is what is in view, it cannot be individualistically understood. (This is no attempt to deny that *Nachfolge* proceeds only through the decisions and actions of *individuals*; yet that action always must transpire within its true context of *community*.)

Part of this community emphasis must be attributed to Jesus' Big Swoosh Effect: there is no telling who all or what all ultimately will get pulled into his "turbulence" (a very good word, by the way,

THE LONDON INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, a new non-residential Christian community in central London, will hold its Inaugural School April 19–June 25, 1982. Directed by John Stott and Andrew Kirk, the Institute is being created in response to questions concerning the lordship of Jesus and the mission of the church. What does it mean in a largely non-Christian society to confess that "Jesus is Lord," and to bring every part of our being under his rule? As secularism corrodes the formerly Christian culture of the West, how can new forms of mission be developed to encourage lay Christians to penetrate non-Christian society more deeply and creatively as its salt and light? The Institute will offer courses in Christian faith, life, and mission to people in the professions, in business, and in industry. Students will meet together five days and one evening per week for worship, lectures, tutorials, and seminars, and will be encouraged to participate in a mission project. For more information, write: The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, 12 Weymouth St., London W1N 3FB, England.

for what *Nachfolge* is all about). But it is that backdraft which creates *the church* — or better put, the caravan-community constituted of those caught in this backdraft is what the New Testament means by “the church” (the gathered). And this “church,” our progenitors well knew, is the primary context for *Nachfolge*.

The caravan of those who, through baptism (believers baptism), have with all deliberation committed themselves to the pilgrimage — this is the church's *primary* community. But precisely because we cannot know who all and what all, our eschatological vision must keep open to the possibility of “total caravan” and always be missionary-minded in prospect of that eventuality. Both *Discipleship* and *Nachfolge* display strong social concern. The difference is that *Discipleship* says, “We will use the *teachings* of Jesus in improving *our* world order” — while *Nachfolge* says, “We are *following* the Lord of History toward *his* new heaven and new earth.”

In addition, there is the consideration that, in the turbulence of Trucker Jesus, unless we hang on to each other, none of us can keep his or her feet. We either follow him together or we don't manage it at all. *Gemeinschaft*, then — that profound sense of communion between God and his people and of commonality among the people themselves — is seen to be part and parcel of *Nachfolge*, and “the church” the natural focus of where and how “followers” exist.

Finally, in a point that probably has already been made obvious, *Discipleship* could imply a purely cognitive transaction: Do you know what you should? Can you give the correct answers on a test? Granted, when the Teacher is Jesus it will be a bit difficult to keep things on this level, so much of his teaching consists of instruction in what we are to *do*. Yet, theoretically, one could claim to be a “disciple” of Jesus on the basis of *knowing* what he taught rather than *doing* it. But be that as it may, it is plain that *Nachfolge* speaks directly of *behavior* rather than cognition. And our tradition, consequently, has held a theology that is very much one of *doing* rather than of *knowing*. Yes, there are a great many things one must *know* about Jesus (and related subjects) in order to do a proper job of following him; and the Believers Church has shown no lack of concern regarding a solid, biblical belief-structure. Yet the word always has been, “So you believe all the right things; what are you *doing* about them?” Belief, cognition, theology, and “discipleship” (in our constricted, etymological sense) can never amount to an acceptable substitute for *Nachfolge*. So our “Christology” regularly has been a *Nachfolge*-Christology — and that, as we have seen, spells nothing other than “lived eschatology.”

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

(Probing questions, suggestions and encouragement in areas of personal and spiritual growth)

KEEPING A JOURNAL: PRACTICAL NOTES FOR THE BEGINNER

By Mark Lau Branson, General Secretary, Theological Students Fellowship.

During any given year of theological studies, one is offered innumerable opportunities for growth and change. As Christians who value learning, students can work with the subject matter of classes and search for its value and relevance for one's own life. The experiences of internships and jobs also provide new perspectives on one's own history, values, and plans. Add to those ingredients the ongoing relationships with families and friends,

and the student no doubt often feels overwhelmed by the ever-spinning world. In the midst of all this, how is one supposed to approach thoughtfully personal growth and new responsibilities in ministry? It is all too easy for the student to walk in and out of this array of events and people with little or no intentional sorting and evaluation.

I was meandering through such a year at Claremont School of Theology when I first began writing in a journal. I finally discovered a central point, a hub, a sanctuary for integrating the constantly changing ingredients of my life. I often refer to my journal as “home” or as my “garden in the desert.” The dialogue with God that takes place there as I view the rest of my environment is often rich and insightful. A path taken as I write is sometimes nudged or even reversed by the Holy Spirit's guidance. Relationships with others can be viewed from needed fresh perspectives. The integration of studies with the world can, at times, make sense. Personal growth—intellectual, emotional, spiritual—can be better understood and encouraged.

Rather than offering an extensive biblical or psychological apologetic for “journaling,” I will simply suggest some “how-to's.” My hope is that some will be encouraged to begin a journal. Perhaps those who have already started such a journey will discover new possibilities.¹

Each of the following topics offers a different perspective on one's world. There is overlap between them, as there are probably omissions. Work from different “windows” to discern the most profitable route for your own pilgrimage. These windows can include both your “Chronicle” of your world and your “Dialogue” with that world. The dialogue, much like the Psalmist's conversation with his own soul, offers the chance for understanding, evaluation, and growth.

Chronicle . . .

Events: Record happenings with people, studies, job, projects, and your own body. What happened? Who was involved? Am I healthy?

Interior dimensions: Notice what is happening inside your mind and soul: insights, emotions, spiritual perceptions, intuitions. What do I feel? Is God's voice there? What do I think about that?²

Meditation: Roll these different external and internal items around in your thoughts in order to discover the meanings and significance of them. Notice your values, decisions, changes, growth, relapses. Why did I respond that way? How important is that thought? What does that event mean?

Dialogue with . . .

People: Write out imagined conversations concerning your love, anger, respect, jealousy, confusion, excitement. Notice changes in relationships as well as stability. Why is it difficult to work with that person? What caused my distrust? Why am I motivated to build that relationship? What is the root of my anger?³

Activities: Carry on a conversation with goals, steps, and accomplishments. Seek the meaning of these events. Explore school, vocation, tasks. Ask them to reveal your values, fears, strengths, weaknesses, motivations, and skills. Why do I want to do that? Why am I procrastinating? Why did I fail? What is my goal?⁴

Dreams, daydreams, twilight imaging: Seek the messages in your inner life by reflecting on the people, activities, and feelings in your dream world. You may wish to keep your journal near your bed (desk?) so you can record dreams when you awaken. What current events are reflected in that dream? Why were those emotions so strong? Why did that event or person enter in?⁵

Body: Your health, sensory awareness, addictions, exercising, and diseases may provide an abundance of insights. Are there patterns to my illnesses? What causes pleasure for me?