

— The AGC —

JOURNAL

Published Semi-Annually

VOLUME 1 – NUMBER 1

Fall 2021



Rooted in the Great Commandment (*Matthew 22:36-40*) and the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:18-20*), and recognized by the federal government as an official ecclesiastical endorsing agency, the Associated Gospel Churches (AGC) exists to represent Biblically Christ-centered churches, for the purpose of recruiting, endorsing, educating and supporting ordained men to serve as chaplains—pastors in uniform—in publicly-restricted access institutions.

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THE AGC JOURNAL

Published by

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FOR CHRIST AND COUNTRY

υποφέρουν από δυσκολίες μαζί μου, ως καλός στρατιώτης
του Ιησού Χριστού – II Tim 2:3

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————— *The AGC* —————
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings in the Lord and welcome to the AGC Journal! This is a momentous occasion for the Associated Gospel Churches (AGC) because it begins another chapter in our history in the service of our nation and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. From the early days of WWII, the AGC has headed the call to provide Bible preaching military and civilian chaplains to evangelize and disciple those who serve those in the military. For over 75 years, the mission of the AGC has remained faithful and has not changed as we provide spirit-filled servants of Christ to a lost world in need of truth through the Gospel of Christ.

This Journal is the next step in equipping the saints of God for the work of the Gospel ministry. As a result, this toolbox for evangelism covers many areas of ministry. From historical articles about Christian America written by leading conservative scholars to Biblical sermon helps to Chaplain Mission accomplishments, this is the place to find edifying resources to charge one's batteries in order to do spiritual battle.

In response to the false messages which destroy and distort the truth about America and the Providence of God in such insidious works as "The 1619 project," "BLM," "Critical Race Theory" and other wrong and sinful ideologies currently spoken in our culture, this journal offers the truth of how this nation was indeed, a specially created nation forged by a God who is interested in the affairs of humanity.

The featured article by Dr. Ken Lawson, (COL, USA-ret chaplain), explains how America became a nation due to the efforts of the preaching of God's Word through George Whitefield. It's a story that Ken and others will expound on in later editions. Whitefield's work was well known throughout the history of our nation, but lately one that has been lost due to other false narratives being promoted by the general media and our educational institutions. Interestingly, this story has a direct relationship with why we have military Chaplains in our armed forces. Truthfully, this article reveals the true, but little-known secret behind the founding of what eventually became America and bears reading. It will be presented in many segments over the course of several years.

The best way to handle deceit is to expose it by telling truth (Eph. 5:9-13) and that truth is defined through and by the Word of God. Edmund Burke was a politician in King George III's parliament who opposed England's oppression of the American colonists. It is he whose credited words are etched in the edifice of one of our government's buildings: "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Hence the need for the truth of how America came to be America. Its time for this generation to know its own history and what better place to re-learn this is in a place which is a resource for Chaplains serving in the military.

The next featured article comes from a former Navy officer (CAPT, JAG, USN-ret) Kurt Johnson. Kurt served on numerous high profile Command staffs and once he retired from the Navy, pursued his divine calling of becoming a chaplain. His insightful and enlightening article on the spiritual and legal misnomer "Ministry of Presence" is especially practical and encouraging. Kurt will receive his D.Min. in practical theology next spring and plans on using his experience as a senior legal analyst and as an institutional Chaplain to help Chaplains become more effective evangelists wherever they ministry in the secular field.

Lastly, I have included a pertinent article written by the founder of the AGC, W.O.H Garman. It is a reprint of an old, published pamphlet he wrote on the evils and deception of Socialism. Funny how Solomon wrote: "There is nothing new under the sun," (Eccl. 1:9) and this reinforces this Bible truth.

If there is anything you want to use, feel free to download or copy it. Just make sure you give credit to those who have written the portion you want to use. There is no charge. Also, if you have something you think is worthy to share with others about something you have done and is worth using in the service of our Lord, send it to: AGCjournal@agcchaplains.com. I will get back to you and discuss it with you.

We hope you will read, enjoy and be blessed by the efforts and work found within the Journal. If you have comments either positive or negative to improve or ask questions, feel free to send an email to the email address above.

May the Lord bless you as you serve Him and this great nation of ours! God bless.

In Christ,

Bob Freiberg

CDR, CHC, USN-ret, M.Div, Th.M, D.D., D. Min.

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**GEORGE WHITEFIELD, THE
REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN AMERICA, AND
THE AMERICAN MILITARY CHAPLAINCY
[PART 1]**

Kenneth Lawson

After 34-plus years of enlisted and officer military service, Dr. Ken Lawson is a retired army chaplain with the rank of colonel. He is now an adjunct college professor and serves as the historian for the Associated Gospel Churches.

Rev. George Whitefield (1714-1770) was an ordained Church of England priest with an exceptional speaking voice, who in his lifetime swayed millions towards historic Christianity. In a time of the liberalization of historic Protestant Christianity, Whitefield preached the simple biblical message of the Protestant Reformation, that people could not reach God or merit God's favor by their own efforts. Religious sincerity, ecclesiastical rituals, and pious self-sacrifice, Whitefield believed, could never earn heaven. Instead, he advocated for the new birth in Christ as the only way of salvation. His message was not popular within his own Church of England, but colonists in America, most who dissented from the Church of England, flocked to hear him preach by the tens of thousands.¹ In the American colonies, stirrings of revival and awakenings were already present

¹ There are numerous biographies of George Whitefield, of various quality. There are three biographies of Whitefield that extend to two volumes and are very thorough. They are Luke Tyerman, *The Life of George Whitefield*, (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, 1877); E.A. Johnston, *George Whitefield: A Definitive Biography*, (Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom: Tentmaker Publications, 2008); and Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979).

when he arrived in America in 1739. Whitefield was the unifying theme of a colonies-wide awakening. Through his relentless itinerant ministry throughout the thirteen colonies, Whitefield was a unifying factor in helping the separate colonies come together as one nation. By the time of the American Revolution in 1776, hundreds of American clergymen who supported Whitefield served as military chaplains in the colonial army. The purpose of this article is to trace Whitefield's influence on the Revolutionary War in America, and to recognize the influence of Whitefield's preaching and theology on the colonial chaplains in the American Revolution.²

WHITEFIELD'S INFLUENCE ON THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN AMERICA

In the eighteenth century, English kings downplayed religious liberty in favor of a government-sponsored church to support a unified administration, with the king as sovereign. Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, and all other separatist or independent groups were often considered disloyal to England and in rebellion to God. The Church of England was dependent upon secular, political support to survive. Most colonists in New England were from independent or dissenting ecclesiastical backgrounds. These autonomous colonial churches, whether Quaker, Congregational, Baptist, or Presbyterian in polity, were under the general authority of the King of England, yet not supportive of the Church of England. There was no unity between the distinct independent denominations in America, until George Whitefield united them through his incessant travels in support of the Great Awakening.³ One could not have anticipated that this colonial unity would lead to a war of independence from the mother country.

Historians have summarized numerous reasons for the war of independence in the American colonies. Most summaries include the

² Jack D. Crowder, *Chaplains of the Revolutionary War: Black Robed American Warriors*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2017). Joel T. Headley, *The Chaplains and Clergy of the American Revolution*, (1861: reprinted by Solid Ground Christian Books, Birmingham, AL: 2005).

³ Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield*, (1842: reprinted by Arcadia Press, Mt. Pleasant, SC, 2019). For regional studies of the Great Awakening, see Edwin S. Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith Publishers, 1965); Charles H. Maxson, *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1920); Wesley M. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1930). To review select original sources, see Richard L. Bushman, *The Great Awakening: Documents on the Revival of Religion, 1740-1745*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

influence of the Enlightenment, which asserted the equality of all people and denounced the divine right of kings. Another factor was the semi-autonomous nature of the American colonies, in that they could elect their own local officials which gave them a sense of independence from the British crown. There was also the tension from taxation upon American colonists without a voice in the British parliament. In March 1770, blood was shed in Boston, as aggressive civilian protesters accosted British troops in the city, causing the troops to fire upon the crowd. Five Bostonians died. This event distinctly turned colonial sentiment against King George III and the British government. A colonial congress was formed. Various acts of violence and destruction of property led to the 1775 Olive Branch Petition from twelve of the thirteen colonies to the British government. This petition sought reconciliation to Great Britain but was ignored by the king. In August 1775, the American colonies were formally considered in rebellion by the King of England.⁴

Another factor contributing to the religious motivation for American independence from Great Britain was the ongoing controversy of an Anglican bishop over the American colonies. Most American colonists were dissenters from the Church of England, and were not interested in having the Church of England hierarchy established in America. These dissenters were Congregational, Quaker, Presbyterian, Baptist and had their own internal disagreements.⁵ Even Roman Catholics that settled in Maryland did not support an Anglican episcopate in the colonies. But one thing they all agreed on was their disdain of an Anglican bishop over America. Yet George Whitefield, who was an ordained Church of England clergyman, an episcopal priest who never denounced his ordination vows, was welcomed by colonial dissenters of every Protestant denomination. For Whitefield, revival based on fundamental biblical doctrines was the unifying theme of his life, not denominational peculiarities. There is no evidence in Whitefield's journals or vast correspondence that he ever endorsed the idea of a Church of England bishop in the New World. Had he done so, his credibility with dissenting clergy would have fragmented, and his influence on colonists towards

⁴ Maurice Matloff, *American Military History*, (Washington, DC Office of the Chief of Military History, 1973), 41. Allan R. Millett & Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 53-54. Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen, *A Patriot's History of the United States*, (New York: Sentinel Press, 2004), 58-67.

⁵ Jerome D. Mahaffey, *Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 200-201.

revolution and independence would have been negated.⁶ In addition, virtually all Church of England ministers in the American colonies denounced Whitefield's evangelical methods and message. Inadvertently, Whitefield became a religious symbol against what dissenting clergy saw as the corrupt, government-sponsored British church.⁷

Whitefield preached within the walls of church buildings and in the outdoors. From 1740 to his death in 1770, he may have been the most well-known person in the English speaking world. During his 1739-1741 and his 1744-1745 preaching tours in the American colonies, Whitefield was the human instrument in a huge inter-colonial revival. Contrary to most, he taught that a person became a Christian through the new birth, not through physical birth, family genealogy, or religious rituals. There developed in the colonies an "us verses them" mentality between revivalists (New Lights) and anti-revivalists (Old Lights). The evangelical New Lights developed an inter-colonial identity through newspapers, oral histories, itinerant preachers, and the incessant travels of Whitefield. Likewise, there developed a colonies-wide dislike of Whitefield, of which the Church of England ministers in America were the most vocal.⁸

Whitefield's influence on the thoughts and ideas of the American colonists was significant. He taught them the value of independent thought apart from ecclesiastical control, and instructed his followers on the primary importance of an individual's relationship to God. The effect of this new thinking on religious liberty in Christ loosened the colonists from dependence on Great Britain in ecclesiastical matters. In a period when there were not sharp distinctions between the sacred and the secular, ecclesiastical independence laid a foundation for economic and political independence.⁹ Colonists who had no confidence in the Church of England naturally had no confidence in the head of the Church of England, King George III. The independence from the mother country in religious affairs quickly transferred

⁶ "The Transatlantic Controversy Over Creating an American Bishop," *The American Revolution*, www.ouramericanrevolution.org/index/cfm/page/view/p0207. Peter W. Walker, "The Bishop Controversy, the Imperial Crisis, and Religious Radicalism in New England, 1763-1764," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (September 2017), 306-343.

⁷ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre, Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics*, (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁸ Lee Gatiss, "George Whitefield – The Anglican Evangelist," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 2014), 71-81. Peter Y. Choi, *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishers, 2018), 103-109.

⁹ Peter Y. Choi, *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire*, 234.

to ideas of political independence, as tensions between the colonies and Britain soon intensified into the American Revolution.¹⁰

Recent Whitefield biographers have not overlooked the influence of Whitefield in changing the mindset of colonists from dependent to independent of England. For example, Jerome Mahaffey wrote, “His ministry played an instrumental role in shaping American thought by introducing and promoting central elements of the Awakening conceptual that provided a central force contributing to a fundamental change.”¹¹ Whitefield was part of the coalescing community in America that unified for independence through the Revolutionary War. As Stephen Mansfield stated, “When the great war of independence arose between Britain and her colonies, Whitefield had been dead for half a decade. Still, the patriots who pressed their case and fought to free a nation’s destiny understood who had set them on their course. It was Whitefield who turned them to their fathers, Whitefield who taught them who they were, and Whitefield who showed them what they might be.”¹²

Whitefield is credited with making, in part, the American Revolution a religious movement. Or at least the colonial quest for political independence was fed by the desire for religious freedom. Jerome Mahaffey calls Whitefield an “accidental revolutionary.”¹³ His assertion is that Whitefield, not Washington, could be called the founding father of the nation. Mahaffey credits Whitefield with creating the first American experience for the fledgling nation, developing a unique American personality.¹⁴ Whitefield’s emphasis on the new birth and direct access to God without human mediation or approval unified disparate religious denominations. A newborn Christian in New Hampshire could rejoice and support Whitefield’s new birth preaching in Georgia as his preaching was reported in newspapers in all the colonies. Even those ministers who did not support the preaching of

¹⁰ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967). Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1928). Peter N. Carroll, editor, *Religion and the Coming of the American Revolution*, (Waltham, MA: Ginn & Company, 1970). Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962).

¹¹ Jerome D. Mahaffey, *Preaching Politics*, 251.

¹² Stephen Mansfield, *Forgotten Founding Father: The Heroic Legacy of George Whitefield*, (Nashville, TN: Highland Books, 2001), 241.

¹³ Jerome D. Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary: George Whitefield & the Creation of America*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ Jerome D. Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary*, 58.

Whitefield could adopt the new, independent ways of thinking by the masses.¹⁵

Mahaffey made the noteworthy statement, “Without Whitefield... American independence would have come much later, if at all.”¹⁶ This is because the American colonists developed an independence mindset based in Jesus Christ. Religious freedom unshackled the masses from servitude to a foreign King and his state church. This new religious identity also divided colonial churches into New Light and Old Light congregations. In the end, no colonial American leader had the influence to unify the thirteen colonies in a quest for independence more than George Whitefield. Most Old Light ministers did eventually embrace the case for independence from Great Britain. As Whitefield defied his detractors in the Church of England who rejected his teachings, so his followers in America would likewise defy British authority. All colonial leaders were regional in influence, but Whitefield transcended regionalism and, perhaps unwittingly, developed a unified colonial experience. No other colonial leader had the message, popularity, and influence to make a mostly religiously unified people declare political independence.¹⁷

Stephen Mansfield calls George Whitefield a “Forgotten Founding Father.” This is a paradox, in that Whitefield never had a permanent residence in the American Colonies.¹⁸ Whitefield never signed a document supporting the independence of the colonies. His signature is not on the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States. Yet Mansfield and others consider Whitefield a founding father of the United States. This is for two reasons. First, many of the founding fathers who served in political leadership roles for the fledgling United States were supporters of Whitefield. Mansfield mentions George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams,

¹⁵ Rev. Charles Chauncy (1705-1787) of Boston is an example of a minister who did not support the message or methods of Whitefield, but was an outspoken patriot in the American Revolution. See Edward M. Griffin, *Old Brick: Charles Chauncy of Boston, 1705-1787*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

¹⁶ Jerome D. Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary*, xi.

¹⁷ “Our Namesake: George Whitefield,” *The Whitefield Center*, <https://www.whitefieldcenter.org/george-whitefield>. Jerome D. Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary*, 173-175.

¹⁸ Whitefield had built the Bethesda Orphanage in Savannah, Georgia. He resided there for a few weeks or months every few years. Sometimes his absences from Bethesda were longer. This could not be considered his home in the colonies. See Edward J. Cashin, *Beloved Bethesda: A History of George Whitefield's Home for Boys*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001).

and Patrick Henry as men who admired Whitefield.¹⁹ Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania, and Henry Laurens of South Carolina, and many others could be added to this list.²⁰

The second reason Mansfield calls Whitefield a founding father of the United States is that the itinerant evangelist supported the American colonies in civil disputes with the British. For example, in 1764 the British parliament passed the Sugar Act and the Currency Act. These were wildly unpopular in the American Colonies. Whitefield was in New England in 1764 when he wrote, "I can't in conscience leave the town without acquainting you with a secret. My heart bleeds for America. O poor New England! There is a deep laid plot against both your civil and religious liberties, and they will be lost. Your golden days are at an end. You have nothing but trouble before you."²¹ This statement by Whitefield is insightful. Over ten years before war was declared, he wrote, "There is a deep laid plot against both your civil and religious liberties." Whitefield saw the friction between England and America as both political and religious. When Whitefield wrote, "Your golden days are at an end," he was referring to the puritan roots of New England and other colonies, and the revived puritanism he saw because of the Great Awakening. He believed that civil and spiritual freedoms were about to be lost in the American colonies.

Whitefield's intuition about declining rights for the colonists was correct. In the later 1760s there were The Quartering Act (1765); The Stamp Act (1765); The Declaratory Act (1766); The Townshend Revenue Act (1767); and the Boston Non-Importation Act (1768). All these political maneuvers deepened the division between the American Colonies and the mother

¹⁹ Stephen Mansfield, *Forgotten Founding Father*, 255.

²⁰ No definitive research has been done correlating Whitefield's influence on the fifty-six men who signed the Declaration of Independence, or his influence on the thirty-nine men who signed the Constitution of the United States. Religious biographies of these men are found in Tim LaHaye, *Faith of our Founding Fathers*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005); Marilyn Boyer, *For You They Signed: The Spiritual Heritage of Those who Shaped our Nation*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2013); John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1987). For another view see Alf J. Mapp, Jr., *The Faiths of our Fathers: What America's Founders Really Believed*, (New York: Fall River Press, 2006).

²¹ Stephen Mansfield, *Forgotten Founding Father*, 256.

country.²² The most friction came from the March 5, 1770, so-called Boston Massacre. Whitefield was in South Carolina when the blood of colonists was shed in Boston by British troops. Six months later, Whitefield was in Boston and heard the many complaints against the British from his longtime friends in the city. The citizens believed they were misrepresented, disrespected, and unfairly taxed by the British parliament. Since the 1765 Quartering Act, British troops were allowed to be housed in the businesses, barns, and homes of colonists, a humiliating and expensive proposition for the colonists. But now blood had been shed, and an undeclared, covert war began by colonists against England. Several days after visiting Boston in September 1770, Whitefield wrote from nearby Portsmouth, New Hampshire, “Poor New England is much to be pitied. Boston people most of all. How falsely misrepresented! What a mercy, that our Christian charter cannot be dissolved. Blessed be God for an unchangeable Jesus!”²³ This remark by Whitefield shows his position on the political situation developing before his eyes. He saw New England as the object of England’s dislike, and Boston as the specific location of injustice and brutality by the British. He considered the colonists to be “falsely represented” by the British King and parliament. As a gospel preacher, Whitefield’s message of spiritual freedom and religious liberty in Christ had applications to the political world. His ministry was “a social and political event, not just a religious one.”²⁴

George Whitefield did not preach or publish anything political that would directly influence the brewing colonial crisis and pending war.²⁵ Nevertheless, hindsight reveals that his revival worldview in the colonies quickly transformed into a political worldview in America. Whitefield preached that all people were sinful and needed redemption. Redemption and

²² In the early-mid-1760s while in England, Whitefield was judicially advocating for colonial liberties and addressed their grievances to British authorities. When the 1765 Stamp Act was imposed on the American colonies, Whitefield publicly advocated for its termination. He was able to do so from his interactions with political and civil leaders, many of whom supported his revivalist ministry. Whitefield saw the Stamp Act as an arbitrary assault against the liberties of the colonists. While in England he corresponded favorably with colonial leaders such as Samuel Adams of Boston, and he accompanied the colonial representative Benjamin Franklin in London on a diplomatic mission. See Jerome D. Mahaffey, *Preaching Politics*, 183, 189, 191, 194-195, 199. When the Stamp Act was repealed in 1766, Whitefield wrote in his letter book, “March 16, 1766, stamp act repealed! – gloria Deo.” John Gillies, *Memoirs of George Whitefield*, (1772: reprinted by Pietan Publications, New Ipswich, NH, 1993), 184.

²³ George Whitefield, *George Whitefield Works*, (Shropshire, England: Quinta Press, 2000), Vol. III, 426.

²⁴ Peter Y. Choi, *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire*, 4.

²⁵ Jerome D. Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary*, 170.

rebirth were the foundations of his over three decades of preaching. This redemptive message ignored cultural distinctions, financial status, vocations, or genealogies. If all people were therefore equally redeemable, then earthly status or title meant nothing to God. So those newly awakened believers, who sought to place God first in their lives, thought less and less of human privilege. As the American colonies were shaken by the Great Awakening, so societal privilege was quickly called into question. Elite bureaucrats in Great Britain became the object of scorn by people who developed religious and social independence. Political autonomy was next. As David Barshinger wrote,

The colonists were suffering under leaders who ruled by heredity and exercised arbitrary power in a way that threatened their civil and religious liberty, which made them unfit for their positions. Such reasoning made the American colonists feel justified in abandoning Britain and reorganizing themselves through self-rule... while the new birth was the center of Whitefield's message and ministry, the concept of the new birth was larger than religious conversion, for it symbolized transformation from "sinner to saint" and from "European to American."²⁶

Whitefield sounded a spiritual alarm with social and later political implications that spread throughout the American colonies. Stephen Mansfield equated George Whitefield's religious message with Paul Revere's political and military message, that danger was close, and action was needed. Mansfield saw both men as founders of the nation who sounded the alarm and call to action. And he saw both Whitefield and Revere as leaders who rallied the masses to a unified voice against corruption and oppression.²⁷ Peter Choi succinctly stated, "The evangelical message stressed personal human failings while also sanctioning military conquest and commercial expansion and prosperity."²⁸ Speaking of Whitefield, Mansfield stated,

A sleeping people had to be awakened and roused to their defense. So now the forerunner of the revival that made them one became the forerunner of the war that set them free. It is why men marched into

²⁶ David P. Barshinger, "The Accidental Revolutionary: George Whitefield and the Creation of America," *Themelios*, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/review/the-accidental-revolutionary-george-whitefield-and-the-creation-of-america/>. Jerome D. Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary*, 191.

²⁷ Stephen Mansfield, *Forgotten Founding Father*, 256.

²⁸ Peter Y. Choi, *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire*, 81.

battle chanting, No King but Jesus! No King but Jesus.” It is why they pledged to God their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. It is also why George Whitefield must be remembered as a founding father of the American cause.²⁹

Part II of this article will appear in the next edition of The AGC Journal.

²⁹ Stephen Mansfield, *Forgotten Founding Father*, 256.

CHAPLAIN “MINISTRY OF PRESENCE” AND DISASTER RELIEF

Kurt Johnson

Attorney Kurt Johnson is a retired Navy Judge Advocate General with the rank of captain. He is now a chaplain with the American Red Cross.

This paper is written in pursuit of answers to the author’s overarching dissertation research question: “How do Christian chaplains stay biblically faithful to the Great Commission while working under the auspices of American non-governmental organization (NGO) disaster relief organizations that restrict Christian evangelism?” As the author conducted an extensive literature review and completed field research interviews of ten experienced disaster relief chaplains, a recurring and growing trend emerged. Modern disaster relief chaplains appear to increasingly focus on the physical and emotional needs of disaster victims at the expense of their spiritual needs. The trend is described in various ways in the literature and interviews with phrases such as “silent evangelism,” “relational evangelism,” “mere presence,” and “being the hands and feet of Jesus.”

One interviewee perhaps best summarized this trending approach to disaster relief chaplaincy with his perspective that “there’s a lot of Jesus in a bottle of cold water.” There are two common threads running through this approach. The first is the idea that, by their mere presence at the disaster site and their efforts to meet the physical and emotional needs of disaster victims, disaster relief chaplains are fulfilling their Great Commission responsibilities without verbally sharing the gospel. The second is a general affirmation

(whether or not witting) of Abraham Maslow’s famous “hierarchy of needs” theory. The idea is that one must first address a disaster victim’s “lower” physical and emotional needs before “higher” needs, including “self-actualization” and spiritual needs, can effectively be addressed. This paper explores “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs” from a biblical perspective to evaluate the growing practice of disaster relief chaplains to emphasize tending to disaster victims’ physical and emotional needs as a substitute for, or postponement of, addressing their spiritual needs.

PHYSICAL VS. SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Just how much “Jesus” is there in a bottle of cold water? From a biblical perspective, the answer is: “None.” Offering a bottle of cold water to a hot and thirsty person to alleviate their suffering certainly reflects a Christ-like attitude. Moreover, it is an act of serving Jesus himself, who said: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40). Yet, ingesting the bottle of cold water does not impart to the thirsty the life-saving gospel of Jesus Christ. With the Great Commission, Jesus commanded his followers to preach the gospel to a lost and dying world. As laudable and consistent with the Christian lifestyle it is to offer someone a bottle of cold water, it is no substitute for proclaiming the word of God to them.

Jesus drew a very clear distinction between physical and spiritual needs in his encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, as recorded in the Book of John. When the woman approached the well, Jesus asked her for a drink. The woman was surprised because Jews normally had no connections or transactions with Samaritans at this time in history. Not yet knowing that Jesus was God incarnate, the woman naturally and quite understandably thought that Jesus was referring to the physical water contained in the well. Again, Jesus surprised her with this response: “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). Jesus also revealed himself to the woman as the Messiah (John 4:26). Jesus clearly distinguished between physical water that would only temporarily satisfy physical needs and the eternal “living water” that he was willing to give the woman. Later in the Book of John, Jesus explained that the “living water” he would give was the Holy Spirit:

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But *this He spoke concerning the Spirit*, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 4:37–39) (emphasis added).

A bottle of physical water contains no living water. Therefore, there is no “Jesus in a bottle of cold water.” The bottle of water is capable only of temporarily meeting a physical need, not of providing spiritual living water through belief in Jesus Christ and the gift of eternal life.

Daniel Akin, Benjamin Merkle, and George Robinson highlight the danger in substituting physical care for spiritual care. They note that, “Some churches and missions organizations have inadvertently espoused such a man-centered approach to the Great Commission by focusing on physical needs to the exclusion of the spiritual, or by altering the message in order to make it more palpable [sic].”¹ Their use of the word “inadvertently” suggests that this misguided approach to the Great Commission is taken with the best of intentions. That is, many in the church sincerely, but mistakenly, believe physical needs take precedence over, or in some way substitute for, spiritual needs.

This view is likely rooted, to a large degree, in a loose and pervasive cultural understanding of “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,” a theory proposed in 1943 by psychologist Abraham Maslow. Susan Mettes succinctly outlines the theory: “Human beings have layers of needs: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, *in that order*”² (emphasis added). By Maslowian theory, physiological needs, including food, water, medical care, and shelter, are the first and primary human needs. Meeting those needs is a prerequisite to addressing other “higher” needs, including spiritual needs. Cultural proverbs in support of this view abound such as, “No man can be wise on an empty stomach” and, “It is hard to preach to an empty stomach.” Meeting a human being’s “lower” physical needs is seen to take precedence over, and as a necessary prerequisite to, meeting their “higher” spiritual needs.

¹ Daniel Akin, Benjamin Merkle, and George Robinson, eds., *40 Questions About the Great Commission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2020), 290.

² Susan Mettes, “Ministry After Maslow: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Has Leavened the Teaching in American Churches. That’s a Problem,” *Christianity Today* 62, no. 5 (June 2018): 40, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.

MARK 8:36: GAINING THE WORLD; LOSING THE SOUL

Jesus posed this apparently rhetorical question to his followers: “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). This question followed his warning about the price his disciples would have to pay to truly follow him. Each would have to “take up his cross” (Mark 8:34) and be willing to lose his life for Jesus’ sake (Mark 8:35). Those who are overly focused on the needs of their temporal physical bodies risk eternal separation of their spirit from God. Those willing to make God their top priority and deny, even to the point of physical death, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16), stand to reap eternal rewards from God. Jesus’ rhetorical question to his followers underscored the fact that it is short-sighted and ultimately unprofitable for man to gain every earthly treasure and pleasure at the expense of his eternal well-being. Similarly, Jesus cautioned his followers to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6:20). Jesus knew that everything in this world is temporary and perishable, and not remotely worth an eternity separated from Creator God.

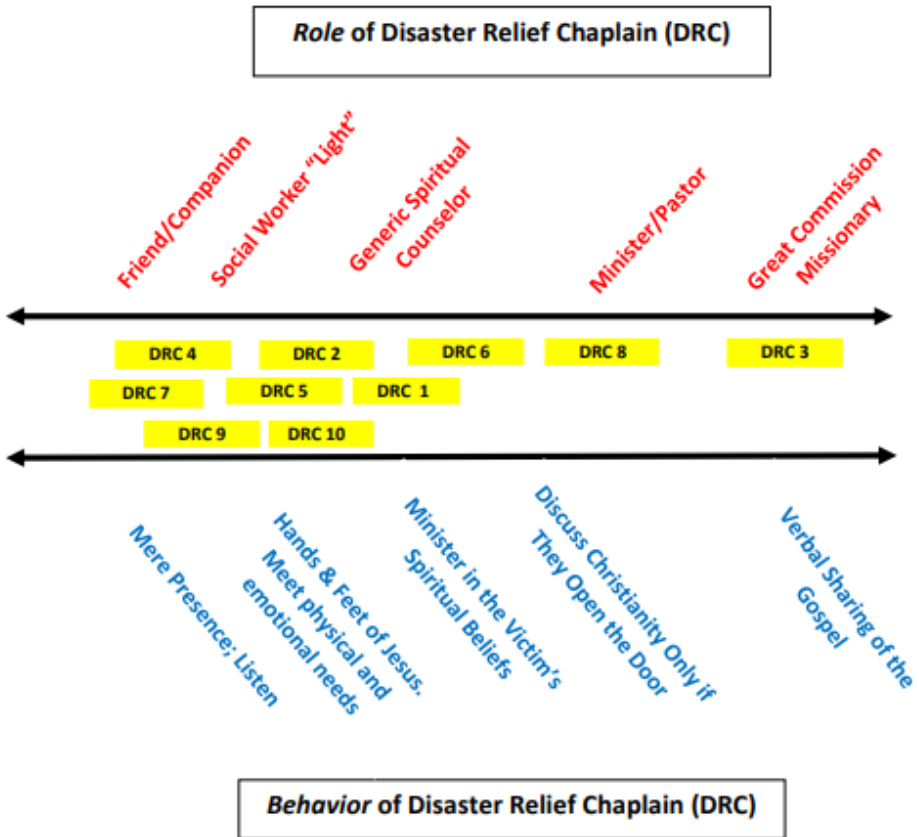
In the context of disaster relief chaplaincy, one might paraphrase Jesus’ rhetorical question this way: “For what will it profit a man if he gains food, water, shelter, and medical care, and is not introduced to the truth of the gospel (or is affirmed in his unbiblical spiritual beliefs)?” The result would be the same as Jesus warned: short-term temporary gain at the expense of eternal loss. If indeed there is no “Jesus in a bottle of cold water,” then disaster relief chaplains must employ other means to tell of and teach about God’s truth. Jesus is found, not in the bottle of water, but in the proclamation of the gospel by disaster relief chaplains in obedience to the Great Commission.

Mettes found through her study that approximately one in six senior Christian pastors “referred either specifically to Maslow’s hierarchy or to its main idea, that physical needs must be met before people experience spiritual needs.”³ The numbers are considerably higher for the Christian disaster relief chaplains interviewed by the author for his dissertation research. With few exceptions, those disaster relief chaplains generally view their role as meeting the immediate physical and emotional needs of victims. Some of those chaplains specifically referred to Maslow’s theory while others used phrases such as “being the hands and feet of Jesus” to describe their role intending to the physical and emotional, but not spiritual, needs of disaster victims. As

³ Mettes, 40.

Table 1 depicts, verbally sharing the gospel in the traditional Christian evangelical manner is clearly the exception, not the rule, for this group of disaster relief chaplains:

Table 1: Disaster Relief Chaplains: Perceived Roles, and Behavior



JAMES 2:14–16: AT ODDS WITH JESUS?

A superficial reading of James might suggest that it is at odds with Jesus’ rhetorical question. Writing about the concept of faith that is not expressed in works, James poses his own apparently rhetorical question: “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?” (James 2:14–16). That is, tending solely to the spiritual needs of

others without addressing their pressing physical needs is as unprofitable as the reverse scenario highlighted by Jesus. As a physically hungry Jesus responded to Satan’s temptation in the wilderness, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). Human beings *simultaneously* have physical needs (“bread”) and spiritual needs (“every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”). Jesus’ rhetorical question does *not* suggest that physical and emotional needs are unimportant or to be ignored. To the contrary, Jesus frequently met the physical and emotional needs of people he encountered, *but never as a prerequisite to or substitute for teaching them spiritual truth.*

James concludes his rhetorical question with this observation: “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17). That is, true faith in God will always express or manifest itself in good works. Good works are not salvific, but natural expressions of gratitude to and love of God for the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Akin, Merkle, and Robinson assert that the inverse is also true: “Tragic is the thought that those of us who have repented and placed our faith in Jesus, being reconciled to God, would do good works for hurting and broken people that leave them in their sin and separated from God. Those kinds of works, without faith, are dead.”⁴ That is, attending to the temporal physical and emotional needs of others is a kind of “dead” work unless it is accompanied by an effort to meet their eternal spiritual needs.

Without sharing the life-saving message of the gospel with hurting and broken people, simply meeting physical and emotional needs constitutes but a temporary, Pyrrhic victory. Greek King Pyrrhus had a couple of military “victories” over the Roman Army, but they were achieved at an excessive cost. King Pyrrhus reportedly quipped, “Another such victory and we are undone.” Similarly, those Christians who, with the best of intentions, meet the physical and emotional needs of others, but refrain from addressing their spiritual needs, are achieving a hollow and temporal victory. Akin, Merkle, and Robinson write that, “Christians can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, set free the captives, and transform their communities, *but unless the gospel of the cross is foundational and explicit*, they are not truly motivated by the love of God”⁵ (emphasis added). The author suggests that many if not most disaster relief chaplains indeed *are* truly motivated by the love of God. It is conceivable, however, that as well-intentioned as they are, they may simply

⁴ Akin, Merkle, and Robinson, 290.

⁵ Akin, Merkle, and Robinson, 290.

misunderstand or misapply the Great Commission mandate to verbally proclaim the gospel. It is also likely that modern disaster relief chaplains are feeling the pressure of increasing restrictions on traditional Christian evangelism and are seeking other more subtle ways to accomplish the Great Commission through such behaviors as “mere presence,” “silent evangelism,” and “being the hands and feet of Jesus.”

MASLOWIAN THEORY FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

In Maslowian lexicon, meeting physiological needs takes precedence over and is a prerequisite for meeting “higher” needs such as “self-actualization.” From a biblical perspective, however, this approach is wrong. As Mettes writes, “We can confidently expect people in all kinds of need to *simultaneously* need the God who heals; the God who forgives; the God who says, ‘Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer’; and the God who does not allow hunger or danger to separate us from himself”⁶ (emphasis added). Contrary to Maslow’s theory, man’s spiritual needs exist and must always be addressed, whether or not other needs, such as food and water, have been met. The latter is neither a prerequisite nor a substitute for the former.

A biblical approach to Maslow’s theory might better characterize it as a hierarchy of *desires*, not needs. The Bible takes a distinctly non-Maslowian view of need. Man’s *greatest need* is to be in a right relationship with God, and that comes only through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus clearly articulated the way to that right relationship: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). This human need for the forgiveness of sin and a restored relationship with Creator God is missing from Maslow’s theory, the highest need of which is “self-actualization.” King Solomon knew this well, having achieved unprecedented earthly riches, wisdom, pleasure, popularity, and power, and yet concluded, “All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 12:8). He ended “the whole matter” of the Book of Ecclesiastes with this admonition: “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Solomon ultimately concluded that his highest and greatest need, and his only need of eternal value, was a right relationship with God.

Jesus echoed Solomon’s conclusion about man’s greatest need with this direction to his followers: “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these

⁶ Mettes, 43.

things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:31–33). Jesus promised to provide those who made God their highest priority with everything they need to exist on earth as human beings. Christians are to be content with God’s provision of everything they *need*, not everything they *desire*. From a biblical perspective, Maslow’s hierarchy or pyramid of needs should be inverted and Jesus Christ should become the primary “need” of mankind. Narjes Rahnama and Hamid Lotfi write that, “by situating Jesus Christ at the base of the hierarchy of needs, the hierarchy turns upside down, and we bring our needs to balance in connection with him and not by ourselves.”⁷ And by seeking God first, human beings will have “all these things”—all their physical and other needs—added to them.

Jim McCleskey and Larry Ruddell note the “stark contrast between hoping others meet your ‘needs’ (as defined by Maslow) versus the living God.”⁸ Mankind’s greatest need is to have a relationship with God through acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice for his sin. As Paul wrote to Timothy, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content” (1 Timothy 6:6–8). Paul also wrote that, thanks to his relationship with Christ, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:11–12). Paul’s writings expose perhaps the greatest weakness in Maslow’s theory: looking to human beings instead of God to meet human needs. Janet Dean writes that, “Maslow wanted to make people gods; Christian teaching instructs us we are to become like the one and only God. The focus cannot be on the individual and his/her highest potential; the focus must be on God’s working in the lives

⁷ Narjes Rahnama, and Hamid Lotfi, “Renovating of Maslow’s Pyramid of Needs and Self-actualization,” *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (Jan 2016): 1664, Renovating of Maslow’s pyramid of Needs and self-actualization | Rahnama | International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies (IJHCS) ISSN 2356-5926.

⁸ Jim McCleskey and Larry Ruddell “Taking a Step Back—Maslow’s Theory of Motivation: A Christian Critical Perspective,” *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* 23, no. 1 (Fall 2020): 12, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.

of people in order to fulfill His purpose in their lives.”⁹ As Jesus, King Solomon, Paul, and other biblical figures attest, it is a fool’s errand to seek Maslow’s “self-actualization” through human effort. True and lasting contentment, happiness, and joy can be found only in relationship with God, and in fulfillment of the purposes for which God created man.

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

The Great Commission lies at the core of the author’s dissertation research. With it, Jesus instructed his followers: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18–20). The Great Commandment is a two-part commandment given by Jesus in answer to a Pharisee’s question about which is the greatest commandment in Mosaic law. Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matt 22:37–40).

Several dissertations authored by disaster relief and hospital chaplains suggest that the Great Commandment in some fashion either trumps or takes precedence over the Great Commission in their work. That is, some chaplains appear to hold the view that the Great Commandment to “love God and others” by providing for physical and emotional needs is more important than the Great Commission mandate to share the gospel and make disciples. This view of the relationship between the Great Commandment and the Great Commission provides at least a partial underpinning for the growing “silent evangelism” movement in modern American chaplaincy. One of the dissertations, focused primarily on hospital chaplaincy, even reported that most hospital chaplains do not think the Great Commission is especially relevant or important in their work. Such chaplains look to the Great Commandment to “love God and others” as justification for reducing the significance of the Great Commission in their work.

⁹ Janet Dean, “The Relationship of Maslow’s Theory of Self-Actualization to Biblical Theology and Christian Counseling” (M.Div. Thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1996), 86, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Another underpinning for the growing “silent evangelism” movement is the view that “loving others” in obedience to the Great Commandment does not include sharing the gospel with disaster victims. To the contrary, a common view in the literature and among those disaster relief chaplains interviewed by the author is that sharing the gospel with disaster victims may constitute “spiritual abuse” and taking unfair advantage of vulnerable people. This view is increasingly expressed in “disaster spiritual care guidelines” governing disaster relief organizations. Understanding the worldviews of such organizations is critical to the author’s research. James Sire defines the term “worldview” as follows:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.¹⁰

It is unclear what is driving the growing worldview of disaster relief organizations and individual disaster relief chaplains to view the Great Commission as potentially harmful to disaster victims. It may simply express a well-intentioned but misguided desire to protect disaster victims from being taken advantage of and “harmed” by traditional Christian evangelism. It is also possible that such a view masks more sinister motives, such as the desire to drive God and the good news of Jesus Christ out of disaster relief work altogether. Moreover, postmodern thought has penetrated deep enough into disaster relief culture that the exclusive claims of Christianity are no longer tolerated, much less accepted.

Akin, Merkle, and Robinson emphasize, however, that the Great Commandment “fuels” the Great Commission and the gospel must always be preached. As they note, “One would be hard pressed to think of something more unloving than withholding the gospel from our neighbor, and denying them the opportunity to ‘glorify God and to enjoy him forever.’”¹¹ Their essential point is that Christians best honor the Great Commandment requirement to love God and others by sharing with them the good news of Jesus Christ in obedience to the Great Commission. Fulfilling the Great

¹⁰ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (6th ed. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 6.

¹¹ Akin, Merkle, and Robinson. 41.

Commission is the primary means by which one obeys the Great Commandment. Anne Graham Lotz bluntly states, “We can feed the hungry, and house the homeless, and clothe the naked, and heal the sick, and comfort the dying, but unless we give them Jesus, they will all go straight to hell!”¹² Indeed, for what will it profit a man eternally if he gains food, water, shelter, and medical care, and is not introduced to the truth of the gospel?

Lotz muses that the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand is an example of spiritual needs taking precedence over physical needs. Jesus invited the apostles to a quiet place to rest during a hectic time in their ministry when they found little opportunity to sleep or eat. Nevertheless, the crowds soon discovered them and Jesus “was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He *began to teach them many things*” (Mark 6:34) (emphasis added). It was only *after* teaching them that Jesus instructed the apostles to feed them, and the rest of the miraculous story unfolds. Perhaps the crowd simply was not yet physically hungry when Jesus decided to teach them spiritual truths. Or, perhaps despite their physical hunger, Jesus chose to first address their greater need to find eternal salvation for their souls. In either case, Jesus addressed their spiritual needs.

As Kent Seibert observes, “the Bible acknowledges that people have a variety of needs. Jesus regularly responded to people’s physical needs for food and healing in addition to their spiritual needs.”¹³ Jesus knew that the one was not a substitute for the other. Although there is no “Jesus in a bottle of cold water,” the water is important nonetheless for physical healing and health. Yet it does not address the highest need of mankind: knowledge and acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That highest need will be met only through its proclamation by Christians in obedience to the Great Commission, and the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of unbelievers. Meeting only the physical and emotional needs of people provides nothing of eternal value to them. The greatest love a Christian can express for God and his neighbors is through proclamation of the gospel. The Great Commandment is the *engine* that drives Christian obedience to the Great Commission.

¹² Anne Graham Lotz, *Just Give Me Jesus* (Nashville: Word Pub, 2000), 115.

¹³ Kent Seibert, “Taking a Step Forward: Maslow and Christian Management” *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* 23, no. 1 (Fall 2020): 18, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.

TIME CONSTRAINTS AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

One of the real-world constraints that disaster relief chaplains face in their work is the short timeframe in which they get to know and build relationships with individual disaster victims. In stark contrast to a church pastor who regularly sees his congregation and has an ongoing opportunity to develop relationships with them, disaster relief chaplains typically spend only a few hours over the course of a few days with their “congregations” of disaster victims. This section briefly explores whether such a time constraint provides an “exception” to the general Great Commission mandate.

The Pharisee Nicodemus came to Jesus surreptitiously at night. Although there was apparently no prior relationship between the two, Jesus did not hesitate to speak spiritual truth to him (John 3:1–12). Similarly, Jesus and a Samaritan woman met each other for the first time at a well in Samaria, yet Jesus shared the essential gospel with her: ““Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13–14). Paul behaved similarly, baptizing the stranger Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:11–15) and preaching the gospel to a group of Athenians after seeing an altar dedicated TO THE UNKNOWN GOD (Acts 17:22–34). Although it may be helpful to have a prior relationship with someone before sharing spiritual truth with them, Jesus and Paul clearly demonstrate that it is not a prerequisite. They serve as models for disaster relief chaplains who normally do not enjoy the “luxury of time” to build trusting relationships with those they encounter. Disaster victims facing unexpected, unplanned, and often horrific circumstances are no less in need of the gospel than those who are not faced with crisis. Moreover, it may be “such a time as this” (Esth. 4:14)—the stunning and traumatic events of a disaster—that God uses to touch a disaster victim’s heart in the most profound way it has ever been touched. Led by the Holy Spirit, willing disaster relief chaplains are one of the tools that God may choose to use in drawing the spiritually lost to the truth of Jesus Christ and eternal life with him.

CONCLUSION

Biblically, it is wrong for disaster relief chaplains to approach disaster victims with a “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs” perspective. The modern trend to increasingly focus on the physical and emotional needs of disaster victims at the expense of their spiritual needs, does not fulfill the Great Commission

mandate. Because there is no “Jesus in a bottle of cold water,” disaster relief practices such as “silent evangelism,” “relational evangelism,” “mere presence,” and “being the hands and feet of Jesus” fail to share the life-saving message of the Christian gospel.

John MacArthur looks to the example of Paul on the importance of declaring the gospel. As MacArthur notes, “His primary concern was always for the purity of the message. To adulterate or alter the simple, straightforward truth about reconciliation in the cross would be to empty the entire Gospel of its power. So Paul was committed to the proclamation of the gospel message—unstintingly, unhesitatingly, and unreservedly (Rom 1:15–16; 1 Cor 2:1–2).”¹⁴ For Christian chaplains, “silent evangelism,” “mere presence,” and “being the hands and feet of Jesus” do not constitute “proclamation” of the gospel message. It is well and good to address Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in a disaster with food, water, shelter, medical care, and counseling. Yet that simply is not an appropriate substitute for or alternative to proclamation of the gospel message. It may very well be a *preparatory step* to proclamation of the message (e.g., Jesus and the Woman at the Well), but it does not convey the essential gospel message of sin, forgiveness, and redemption.

If Christian disaster relief chaplains are to be effective instruments of God in countering Jesus’ warning about “gaining the world but losing the soul,” they must find ways to preach the gospel. In today’s culture, that will require increased boldness coupled with humility. As D. A. Carson states, “If the truth of the gospel is alone the power of God unto salvation, the most loving thing we can do is to live it out and preach it out.”¹⁵ That, despite the powerful cultural forces arrayed against Christians. Carson encourages boldness coupled with the right kind of humility: “Boldness, coupled with an unassuming humility that conveys the impression that Christians are only poor beggars telling others where there is bread, will always elicit better attention than the half-embarrassed, semi-apologetic bearing of the person who is more frightened of people than of the living God.”¹⁶ For disaster relief chaplains, that approach might mean going into a personal story-telling mode. That is, rather than leading with “The Bible says...” the chaplain

¹⁴ John MacArthur, Richard Mayhue, John A Hughes, and Master's College, *Think Biblically!: Recovering a Christian Worldview* (Wheaton, Ill., Crossway Books, 2003), 102.

¹⁵ D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 358.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 512–513.

might find it more effective (and less offensive to institutional restrictions on evangelism) to use a “May I share with you how this has worked out in my life?” approach. That approach may open the door for a non-threatening introduction to the gospel via personal testimony. In Carson’s words, the chaplain is a fellow poor beggar who is simply sharing with disaster victims where he has found bread.

SOCIALISM IS NOT CHRISTIAN

Dr. W.O.H. Garman

Dr. W.O.H. Garman has written this excellent article which is an effective argument against the "social gospelers", or religious groups that falsely contend that socialism is "pure Christianity". Dr. Garman is a former educator, denominational leader, youth leader, and has been featured in many Christian Crusade Seminars. He was President of the Associated Gospel Churches from 1942 to 1981. This article dates to around 1960.

For many years the American people have been unsuspectingly fed socialist propaganda and led to espouse socialist ideas by trusted leaders in government, in religion, in education, and in labor. As a result many thousands of our citizens are today consenting to various socialistic schemes without being conscious that they are socialistic. What's more, they are not aware that the same things would happen to the American economy and their liberties as has happened to the people of Great Britain, Russia and other countries where the socialist experiment has been tried to the hurt and detriment of the people, if socialism or communism took over in America. The sad thing is that many well-intentioned church members have been led to believe, by certain church leaders in the National Council of Churches, that socialism represents the Christian ideal, the Kingdom of God, and if adopted would heal the ills of society. The teachings of these leaders, the Sunday School and other publications put out by the denominations involved, have at times simply reeked with socialist ideas and attacks on capitalism and our free economy. We haven't the time at this moment to give

the documentation, but ample documentation is available, and much of it has been released by greatly disturbed members of the churches involved. By so doing these leaders and denominations have contributed very largely to the current social unrest and chaos in labor circles and are responsible for their church groups getting off on the dangerous tangent of socialist world revolution and, as such, have greatly aided the communist cause. The same charge could be made against many of our colleges and seminaries, The New Deal, Fair Deal and New Frontier brand of politics, and the “metooism” of various left-wing Republicans.

We are all aware I am sure that there is a great struggle going on in the world between communism and the freedom Christianity and the Bible have inspired and fostered. What many are not aware of is that this struggle is really one between socialist concept and Christian truth, between Christ and anti-Christ. Communism is the child of socialism. It is not generally understood that there is very little difference between the goal of communism and the goal of socialism. They are quite identical. The difference is largely one of method as to how the goal is to be reached. The communist is a realist who recognizes that the goal can't be arrived at without using violent means and, believing that the end justifies any means, is willing to lie, cheat, steal, kill, or commit any crime to gain that goal. The goal is a supposed classless, godless society, completely dominated, controlled, suppressed by the all-powerful State. The socialist is more of a visionary and wants to arrive at the goal by the more peaceful and what appears to be more respectable means of education and legislation. But we must not forget that since the goal of both is quite identical, both systems are equally dangerous and present a real menace to our economy, our freedoms and our Christian faith. If anything, the Socialist is more dangerous because he is more subtle and often does not as openly declare his intentions as does the communist. But both are determined to bury us. Both are enemies of the Church of Christ and the American Republic, with its constitutional liberties and safeguards. Both are working to bring about a one-world absolutely dictatorial government, wherein we would lose our sovereignty, our freedom, our wealth, our faith, and be at the mercy of the world's most backward nations who predominate in the United Nations and the World Court.

Socialism as we see it in operation and judging by the result where it has been tried is founded on the following false and dangerous premises:

(a) That property rights are wrong and sinful.

- (b) That the rich are necessarily the oppressors of their fellows and became rich through the exploitation of the worker.**
- (c) That all men should share equally in the rewards for service.**
- (d) That the collectivist state is supreme.**
- (e) That the individual is of little consequence.**
- (f) That the material advantages of this present moment, the things dollars and cents will buy, are more to be desired than heavenly rewards.**
- (g) That socialism is more Christian than private enterprise with its profit motive.**
- (h) That the first Christians were socialists.**

I shall attempt to refute much of this teaching in the message that follows, and by demonstrating that the teachings of socialism are at variance with the teachings of the Bible.

Suppose we dispose of the seventh point first, namely, the fallacious claim that the Christians of the first century were socialists.

1. THE CHRISTIANS OF THE FIRST CENTURY WERE NOT SOCIALISTS.

A. Those who think that the first Christians were socialists base their contention primarily on an erroneous interpretation of Acts 4:32-37.

The King James Version of this text reads:

“³²And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. ³³And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, ³⁵and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. ³⁶And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

B. I am indebted to Dr. A. T. Robertson, who was perhaps America's most outstanding Greek authority, for a correct understanding of this text, and I pass the same on to you.

One weakness of the King James Version is the fact that it does not always accurately translate the tense of the original Greek. If this had been done in the instance of Acts 4:32-37, people would hardly have been inclined to seize upon this text as a reason for declaring that the first Christians were socialists. A correct translation of this text, as Dr. Robertson points out, does not support this idea at all.

C. The correct interpretation of the text, Dr. Robertson tells us, is as follows:

In verse 32, where it declared that "they had all things common", means that they had all things common in its use but not in its possession.

In verses 33, 34, 35, the tense is the Imperfect Active, recording a series of acts, which were repealed as often as the need arose. Two words should be supplied in the English translation to make the thought complete. Those two words are "kept on".

Verse 33 should read "the Apostles kept on witnessing of the resurrection."

In verse 34 we have literally, "Neither was there any among them that lacked for as many as were possessors of lands or houses kept on selling them (namely, as often as there was need) and brought from time to time the prices of the things that were sold." (It was distinctly not a confiscation or once for all time mutual sharing of property, such as exists under socialism. This is borne out by the next verse.)

In verse 35 a literal rendering is "And kept on laying them down at the Apostle's feet and kept on distributing unto every man according as he had need."

In verses 36-37 we are told of a "once for all time" transaction, in the instance of Joses, and the tense is the Aorist. What he did was a single definite act. It was not the repeated selling of property as often as there was need as happened in the instance of all the others mentioned above. Joses was the only one mentioned who disposed of all his property at one time and turned the entire proceeds over to the Apostles to help the poor.

In view of what we have learned in our observations concerning the correct translation of the text we can declare:

- (1) The first Christians were not socialists.**
- (2) The first Christians were not commanded by the Apostles to sell all their possessions and put the proceeds in a common treasury and share equally in the distribution of the same.**
- (3) They did what they did voluntarily and out of a spirit of Christian love in order to meet the critical needs of the times when so many Christians were well-nigh destitute.**
- (4) There is no indication that we have the account here of a socialist experiment which was tried in the church and failed.**

May we pass on now and deal with other errors of socialism.

2. OTHER SERIOUS FAULTS OF SOCIALISM WHICH ARE SO SERIOUS I BELIEVE AS TO MAKE IT ANTI-CHRISTIAN.

A. Socialism is at variance with the Bible, concerning that which is most wrong with man and most responsible for his troubles.

Socialism teaches that what is most wrong with the common man is his environment. Improve that environment by equally distributing the wealth of the world and according to the socialists we will eliminate the evils which affect society, such as war, crime, poverty and vice.

It is the old argument of putting a pig in the parlor in order to change the nature of the pig. The fallacy in such an argument is seen in the fact that the parlor doesn't change the nature of the pig. The pig very soon changes the parlor.

Our Lord taught that the evils which affect society come out of the human heart. Mark 7:21-23, reads:

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thought, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man.”

He and the Apostles taught that the way to deal with this problem is by being born again, regenerated within through the power of the Holy Spirit. In John 3:3 we read, “Except a man be born again (i.e. from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

B. Socialism is at variance with Christianity in teaching that all men should be rewarded alike for their labors. The doctrine of socialism is

given in the statement, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” According to the socialist ideal all men should be willing to work to the very best that is in them, which would mean that some would do much more work than others who are limited in their faculties and ability and yet all are to be content with sharing equally in the rewards for service.

It is a principle which simply doesn't work as is proven in places where it has been tried. The more talented, the more energetic person would soon grow tired of exerting himself to the fullest when the indolent and less able are rewarded equally with him. Socialism kills initiative, encourages the parasite, and results in less and inferior production. It demoralizes a nation. This has been particularly true of the New Deal, Fair Deal, and the New Frontier handouts, which are demoralizing and corrupting America.

The Bible, in the Parable of the Talents and in the passages describing the rewards of believers, contradicts the teaching of socialism by declaring that a man's reward for his service is to be according to his works. All men are not to be rewarded alike. See Matthew 25:14-30.

C. Socialism is at variance with Christianity in refusing to recognize property rights, and in recommending the confiscation of property that belongs to others.

We saw such confiscation of American investments take place in Cuba when communist Castro, whom our own State Department and men like Herbert L. Matthews of the *New York Times* put in power, took over. Many millions of dollars worth of property was taken by force from its American owners. It was stolen. The shameful thing is that our Government did not protect American investments in Cuba.

Christianity recognizes the right of the individual to private property and protects a man's possessions by declaring to those who would confiscate the same, “thou shalt not steal.”

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) their right to private property and the disposition of the same is seen in Acts 5:4. This is one of the most important verses in the Bible concerning property rights, and reads:

“Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?” (namely, to dispose of as they saw fit.)

Ananias and Sapphira had not been commanded to dispose of all their property and give the money to the church. Joses had done so of his own accord and perhaps gained considerable praise for having done so and they

wished to imitate him. They were condemned, not because they retained property, but because they lied. Peter reminded them in the verse just mentioned that it was their own property and that the disposition of the same rested wholly in them. This is still true today. According to the Bible no one has the right to steal our property, including the Government which is doing so by confiscatory taxation. According to reports the Government owns over 40% of the land area of America.

D. Socialism is at variance with Christianity in putting the emphasis upon material things and ignoring heavenly rewards.

Socialism is primarily concerned with meeting animal comforts, filling a man's stomach, putting a roof over his head, attempting to guarantee him temporal security, and causing him to settle down in the earth and be content. Christianity to the contrary teaches that we are sojourners, pilgrims like Abraham, mere transients, and like Abraham, we should not settle down in the earth but seek a city whose builder and maker is God, eternal in the heavens.

Christianity teaches that we are to set our affections on things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father.

Christianity teaches that instead of living for the present moment we should live in anticipation of the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ, and so live that we would not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Christianity while guaranteeing that God will supply our every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, reminds us that our inheritance and true abiding riches are in Christ and the glorious things that follow His coming for us.

E. Socialism in its extreme form is at variance with Christianity in attempting to bring its collectivist state to pass through force.

Repeatedly in the Bible, woes are pronounced upon those who build a city or an empire by blood and through oppression.

Christ Himself declared that they that take up the sword in conquest shall perish by the sword.

The fate and downfall of the communist aggressor is therefore assured. Communist tyranny will most certainly be brought to a violent end, when in the judgment of an Almighty, Righteous and Just God, its cup of iniquity is full. It will go the way of all other forms of tyranny and oppression.

F. Socialism's greatest failure is seen in the child which it has produced and the unprecedented suffering it has caused. Communism is the child of socialism. Communism has cursed the earth, surpassing all other scourges which have preceded it.

This child of socialism has produced the worst form of tyranny and oppression the world has ever seen, and threatens to destroy all our liberties, our economy, our civilization, and would if it could, destroy the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, being Christianity's most bitter and relentless foe.

Christ said, "By their fruits ye shall know them". Judging by the fruits of socialism and its child, communism, I do not hesitate to say that it is one of the most diabolical systems which has ever come upon the earth, and our free institutions will not be safe until they are overthrown and proven to be false. Anti-Christian communism and its hordes of savages is Satan's tool in these perilous times, which he is using together with apostasy in the church, treason in the state, in an effort to not only destroy freedom but the true Christian witness, and to set the world stage for the manifestation of the Beast, the Anti-Christ, the world's last dictator whom Christ, the Scriptures tell us, will destroy at His second coming.

CONCLUSION

My concluding word has to do the Christian attitude in regard to the advance of socialist concept.

The Christian cannot participate in, nor sanction the confiscation of industry. According to the teachings of the Bible, the industries belong to the ones who erected them, or to the stockholders who financed the same. To confiscate such industries would be stealing, an act clearly forbidden and one in which Christians can have no part. And incidentally, if socialists do confiscate our industries, utilities, railroads, natural resources, etc., they can expect no good result to follow such a theft, for God will not hold them guiltless. No lasting permanent good can come from them.

I also question whether Christians can participate in questionable government handouts, without involving themselves in a dishonest act. I refer to receiving payments for not raising crops, payments for raising crops for which there is no need, payments for promising not to raise crops on land that could not raise crops, payments for draining swamps and wet land and putting it into cultivation when it is not needed, etc. In order to make such

payments the government must rob other taxpayers. The whole thing is dishonest, discriminatory, and demoralizing.

The same thing can be said of relief payments to women who continue to bear one illegitimate child after another. By making these payments the Government is encouraging such immoral conditions.

We know why all these things are being done by a paternalistic, socialistic-minded government, which wants to usurp the place of God and take care of us from the cradle to the grave, and that is because those responsible wish to keep themselves in power, by our votes, and control our economy, and way of life. They want to make us their slaves.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has a special word for His people in all this, and it is, "seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you," for every need shall be supplied according to His riches in glory and not by the dishonest, covetous, confiscatory methods of socialism, or the more violent methods of its child, communism.

Since many social Gospel preachers have either repudiated the true Gospel of the vicarious atoning work of Christ, or, are unaware of what constitutes the true Gospel, we cite a few passages below which define the true Gospel:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-4)

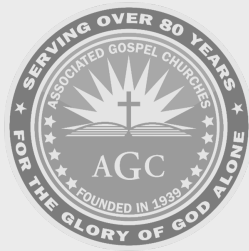
"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

THIS IS THE GOSPEL! WALK YE IN IT!

— *The AGC* —

JOURNAL

Vol. 1 / No. 1 / Fall 2021



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