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THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WEST – 5

The momentum of hostile secularism seems at this point in time to be irresistible. Christians must prepare for a time of overt opposition and perhaps even persecution by strengthening their institutions, says Rod Dreher in his book, *The Benedict Option*. So far we've discussed strengthening the church, the family, and the role of men in marriage. Christians must be pro-fatherhood. What else?

Pro-homemaker

The Christian community must also reaffirm the nobility of the role of mother and homemaker. Second-wave feminism viciously ridiculed the “stay-at-home mom” and the stigma remains. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* advocated laws which would prohibit women from staying home to rear their children. Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* portrayed women as bored out of their minds at home, which she likened to a concentration camp. Midge Decter in *The New Chastity* denigrated the messy, ordinary care of babies. Yet as Anthony Esolen points out, our grandmothers “in a single day did fifty skillful things for people she loved, rather than spending eight hours fielding phone calls in an office or scraping plaque off the teeth of strangers, while wearing goggles and a face mask to guard against dreadful infections from their blood and spittle.”¹ It is a good thing, a positive development that women have more economic and professional opportunities than they did in the past. Yet these “opportunities” are mainly about money and prestige, not the health and prosperity of the family. Esolen continues:

Even the phrase “stay-at-home mom” is patronizing and faintly derogatory, like “stick-in-the-mud mom” or “sit-in-the-corner mom.” Do we talk about a “chained-to-a-desk mom” or a “stuck-in-traffic mom” or a “languishing-in-meetings mom”? To do fifty things in one day for which you alone are responsible, for the immediate good of the people you love, is deemed

easy, trivial, beneath the dignity of a rational person, but to push memoranda written in legal patois from one bureaucratic office to another, at great public expense and for no clear benefit to the common good, now *that* is the life.²

Unquestionably, he describes the outlook of our society today. We celebrate diversity except the choice to stay home and rear children. Polls indicate that two-thirds of women who have children at home would prefer not to work full-time. Progressives don't like to hear that statistic, yet it really is not unusual for mothers to prefer children, home, family, and community relationships over work outside of the home. “Women have been emancipated from the freedom of the home and chained to salaried work and lives of relative loneliness,” Esolen laments.³

The role of homemaker has much to commend it even by modern criteria. A homemaker quietly may develop any number of skills and interests. Rather than splitting her time and focus between work and home—eight hours at the office and another hour perhaps on the road, the other half of her waking hours at home—she is able to spend all of her time focused on the home. This is a great privilege and a great advantage. She is able to work at her own pace. She takes breaks when she wants. She tackles whatever task she wants. She determines her own timetable. Her calendar is not dictated to by her bosses or the marketplace. She establishes her own schedule and her own priorities. If she tires of one activity, she may move on to another.

A homemaker may focus her talents on setting a beautiful table and preparing delicious and nutritious meals. She may use her aesthetic sense in decorating and organizing a household. She may use her financial sense in maintaining a family budget. She may spend time cultivating a garden

and landscaping her yard. She may knit or sew or crochet beautiful things. She has time to read deeply, thereby developing her mind. She has time to pray and nourish her soul. She may use her gifts to promote the ministry of the church. Most importantly, she has unhurried time to spend with her children. She may watch them grow, teach them, and care for their bumps and bruises.

Some of her skills might have been rewarded by the market. She might have opened a restaurant rather than cooking for her family. She might have run a daycare business instead of caring only for her children. She might sell her handwork. She could work at a plant nursery or go into landscaping. One might pay dearly for her range of services if one were to hire outsiders. Yet why should she prefer commercial activity to domestic? Do we really believe that the marketplace is more important than the home? Do we really believe that it is better for a mother to expend her energies for strangers rather than her loved ones in her home? These are all questions worth asking.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday our son Sam devised a game modeled on the March Madness college basketball brackets. He identified 32 of his and his siblings' favorite home-cooked dishes according to four categories of eight each: entrées, desserts, soups and sides, and breakfast. They then voted, argued, and sometimes vehemently debated which was *the* favorite. In the end it was Key West shrimp vs. apple crisp. Apple crisp won. Think of it. Thirty-two dishes. They even had to limit the number to 32 with some tough omissions. Why were there so many? Why were the debates so sharp? Because Emily gave her full attention to the quality of their home life throughout their childhood and youth. She made our mealtimes special. She set beautiful tables and cooked delicious meals. Often it is the little things that determine the quality of life, things overlooked when both parents are, by choice or necessity, pursuing commercial gain.

As we elevate the status of homemaker, more women will feel the liberty to devote their time and energies to their families. As the home receives the attention it deserves, the health of our families will improve. Our homes will become warm, loving, attractive places. When the brave new world of the secular left collapses, Esolen hopes our homes will be seen as

havens of sanity and health, of reverence and wisdom, of good work and cheerful play, of marriages according to nature and nature's God, rich with children, and *knowing things*, the (wonders of) ordinary things.⁴

—TLJ

¹ Esolen, *Out of the Ashes*, 10.

² *Ibid.*, 124–125.

³ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

IPC 2020 MISSIONS CONFERENCE

“...UNLESS SOMEONE GUIDES ME”

“And the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over and join this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.”

— Acts 8:29-31

In this amazing story, the Gospel of Christ is beginning to spread from Jerusalem, largely due to the persecution of the church there by Saul. Stephen has been martyred and Saul is actively committing Christians to prison. Philip has been in Samaria proclaiming Christ. This passage, containing our theme for the 2020 World Missions Conference, presents to us some simple examples of our responsibilities towards evangelizing the world. In years of coaching athletics to young people, I've often said, regarding fundamentals, “These things are simple—they are not easy, but they are simple.” The same holds true as we look at what God is teaching us about world evangelism in this story. Let's consider just two ideas here, obedience and means. The story develops around two simple acts of obedience by Philip. Philip is told by an angel to leave Samaria and go south to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip, without question or objection, rises and goes. Simple obedience. On that road, the Spirit tells Philip to join the chariot of a passing Ethiopian court official. Philip, in simple obedience, runs to join the Ethiopian and discovers what God is already doing. Let us be encouraged to obedience by these examples. We may not be commanded by angels, but does the Spirit still speak to us? Absolutely—every day in the Word of God—the Bible. The church is certainly commanded to take the Gospel to the world, making disciples and baptizing. What about the means? Consider what takes place to bring this Ethiopian eunuch to faith in Christ. It is the ordinary means of explaining the scriptures to him. Philip is equipped and ready to explain the meaning of Isaiah 53:7,8—the atoning work of Jesus Christ. We must see the necessity of sending missionaries trained and equipped to teach the scriptures. Let's not neglect the centrality of the Church as well. The man is baptized—the rite of admission into the Lord's family.

The 2020 World Missions Conference will help us see how we might be more obedient, both personally and as a congregation. It is our prayer that the Lord will use this time to speak to us through our special guests. It is a great pleasure every year to host our speakers and the missionaries actively engaged in the work. This year, I'm very pleased to introduce a wonderful group of guests to you. Our keynote speaker, the Reverend Sandy Willson, is Pastor Emeritus of Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee and is interim senior pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Sandy has emphasized church planting and increased emphasis on missions throughout his ministry. Our missionary guests include Dan Naulty, church planter in Jenison, Michigan. Dan is in his first year of establishing Faith Presbyterian Church PCA. Dan played major league baseball from

Continued on page 4

YEAR 1-10

Psalm 72:1-12

Based on the *Book of Psalms*, 1871

- 1 O God, Thy judgments give the king,
His reigning son Thy righteousness;
- 2 He to Thy people right shall bring,
With justice shall Thy poor redress.
- 3 The heights shall bring prosperity,
The hills bring peace by righteousness;
- 4 He'll judge the poor, the wronged set free,
And crush the men who them oppress.
- 5 Till sun and moon no more are known
They shall Thee fear in ages all;
- 6 He'll come as rain on meadows mown
And show'rs upon the earth that fall.
- 7 The just shall flourish in his day;
While lasts the moon shall peace extend;
- 8 From sea to sea shall be his sway,
And from the River to earth's end.
- 9 The nomads bow to him as king,
And to the dust his foes descend;
- 10 The isles and Tarshish tribute bring,
And Sheba, Seba gifts shall send.
- 11 All kings shall down before him fall,
All nations his commands obey.
- 12 He'll save the needy when they call,
The poor, and those that have no stay.

TUNE: PUER NOBIS
Adapted by Praetorius, 1609

Psalm 72

Among the most clearly Messianic of Psalms, identified as a prayer of David (v 20), but then perhaps fashioned into a Psalm by Solomon (as in the superscription). Though written by a king and dedicated to a king, it describes blessings and power “so far beyond the humanly attainable,” as Kidner puts it, “as to suggest for its fulfillment no less a person than the Messiah.” It has inspired two excellent hymns: James Montgomery’s “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed” (1821), and Isaac Watts’ “Jesus Shall Reign” (1719). Psalm 72 was the favorite of the great Athanasius (c.296-373).

Psalm 80

The psalmist addresses God as Shepherd (vv 1-6) and Vinedresser (vv 7-19) and the people of God as flock and vine at a time of divine rejection and national devastation. It contrasts a time of God’s tender care, when He planted Israel in the land, when “it took deep root and filled the land” (vv 8-11), with the current devastation, the vineyard walls broken down and its fruit plucked by strangers and a wild boar (the Gentiles) ravaging it (vv 12, 13). The heart of his prayer may be found in the refrain thrice repeated: “O God, restore us, and cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved” (see also vv 7, 19). The psalm, along with Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21, and Ezekiel 19:10ff, is behind Jesus’ “Parable of the Wicked Tenants” (Mt 21:33-41; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19).

YEAR 11-15

Psalm 80

- 1 Hear, O hear us, Is-rael's Shepherd,
Who drives forth Joseph like a flock!
From the cherubim, O shine forth!
Rise in valor that we be saved!
- 2 So arise in sight of Ephr'im,
And Manasseh and Benjamin!
- 3 God, we pray, O turn us! Bring us back!
Make Your face shine, and we are saved!
- 4 O how long, LORD God of Armies,
Burns Your wrath at your people's prayer!
5 With the bread of tears You feed them,
And full measure of tears they drink!
- 6 Strife you make us to our neighbors,
And our foes laugh at us in scorn!
- 7 God of Armies, turn us! Bring us back!
Make Your face shine, and we are saved!
- 8 You brought forth a vine from Egypt,
And to plant it drove nations out.
- 9 You made room to root it deeply,
And it flourished and filled the land.
- 10 Then its shadow wrapped the mountains,
And its boughs hid the cedars tall!
- 11 To the sea it thrust great branches forth.
And young shoots to the mighty stream!
- 12 Why have You torn down its fences?
It is plucked by each passing hand!
- 13 Forest boards have gnawed upon it,
And wild creatures have pastured there!
- 14 Turn again, O God of Armies!
Look from heav'n! Visit this Your vine!
- 15 So uphold what Your right hand did plant,
And the son You raised up in strength!
- 16 It is burned and hewn in pieces
By Your frown will they be destroyed!
- 17 Lay Your hand on him You favored,
Son of man that You raised in strength!
- 18 Then from You we will not wander;
Make us live! We will call Your name!
- 19 O LORD God of Armies, turn us back!
Make Your face shine, and we are saved!

TUNE: BRYN CALFARIA 88.88.88.98. (80B)

Thank You

Dear IPC family,

We are grateful for all the prayers, love, cards, visits, and many meals you provided for us during Wilbur's illness. We will always remember how you made this extremely difficult time easier for us. We are blessed to be a part of the IPC family.

Sincerely,
The Wiggins family

The IPC Messenger

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Continued from page 2

1996 -2000, even earning a World Series ring with the Yankees, but most importantly, coming to faith in Christ. We look forward to his testimony and report on Faith PCA. Alonzo Ramirez is familiar to many in our congregation. He and his wife, Esther, have been with PeruMission since its founding. Alonzo's journey from a Roman Catholic childhood in Peru to becoming reformed Presbyterian, educated at the Free Church of Scotland Seminary in Edinburgh and returning to ministry in Peru is an amazing one. His dedication to planting Presbyterian churches in rural Peru is unmatched. David Holsten grew up in Savannah; his love of aviation and his love of Christ led him to Mission Aviation Fellowship where for many years he flew small planes into remote areas of Indonesia carrying missionaries and supplies. David is now president and CEO of MAF and is headquartered in Nampa, Idaho. We look forward to welcoming David back to Savannah and hearing more about his work.

IPC continues to be thoroughly committed to world missions. Our three missionary guests have all been and continue to be supported by our missions budget. Our goal each year is to give 25% of our operating budget to missions. This conference is perhaps the best opportunity for you to see what your tithes and offerings are used for. It is perhaps an opportunity to see to what God is calling you. Please be fully involved in the conference. The teaching will be for the good of your soul and our mealtimes together filled with sweet fellowship and good food from Silk Road and Miss Sophie's. All our events will take place on our downtown campus, with all our gatherings taking place in the fellowship hall, Telfair Hall, and our sanctuary. I look forward to seeing you, worshiping with you, and being challenged with you from God's Word.

Frankie Daniell on behalf of the Missions Committee

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1	Jerry Campbell	14	Emily Stevens
2	Emma Sharpless	15	Alyce Braun
3	Sarah Brodmann	15	Wyatt Nolen
3	James Stevens	15	Jim Woods
4	Ethan Crowe	16	Kelly Chester
4	Brian Finnegan	16	Kris Warren
4	James Gray	17	Jorden Up De Graff
4	James Scott	18	Mark Nyce
5	Pat Adams	19	Noah Butler
6	Frank Brannen	19	Josh Espinosa
7	Pam Dykema	19	Bryan Wade
7	Gordon Hassing	21	Bethany Duron
8	Jennifer Daniell	21	Jason Helton
8	Charles Jackson	22	Sandra Helton
8	Henry Nolan	22	Mearl McArthur
8	James Van Grouw	22	James Saleeby
10	Eric Reid	23	Greg Harris
12	Brad Fennell	24	Thomas Nyce
12	Caitlin Frasure	24	Mitchell Waters
12	Miranda Gibson	25	Judith Rushing
12	Forrest Williams	26	Tevis Garnett
13	Evan McKee	26	Elissa Sharpless
13	Samuel Taylor	27	Lauren Kenard
14	Dexter Brewer	28	Bubba Moore

Thank You

Dear Friends,

Many thanks to the young people who left a festive basket for me during the Christmas season—sorry I missed your visit.

Thanks also to Frankie Daniell and the college students who sang the beautiful Christmas carols (Jake, my dog, had a good time also.)

Be kind. Do good deeds. Pray for yourself and others.

J. Mitchell Waters