



# The Wonder Springs Chronicle

31 December 2008 ; Volume 10, Number 52

## The Wonder Springs Chronicle

### Contact Information:

Jerry Bannon

Publisher

Wonder Springs

36 Merkel Road

Kettle Falls, Washington 99141

phone: 509.496.5855

blog: [www.wondersprings.org](http://www.wondersprings.org) email:

[jerryb@wondersprings.org](mailto:jerryb@wondersprings.org)

[chronicle@wondersprings.org](mailto:chronicle@wondersprings.org)

©2008; non-commercial education  
& forwarding encouraged, please  
give a citation credit all other rights  
reserved. This work is licensed under  
a Creative Commons Attribution-  
Noncommercial-No Derivative  
Works 3.0 United States License.

For past Chronicle archives or to  
subscribe to this weekly email please  
visit our web site at:  
[www.wondersprings.org](http://www.wondersprings.org)

## Transcendent Leadership Principles

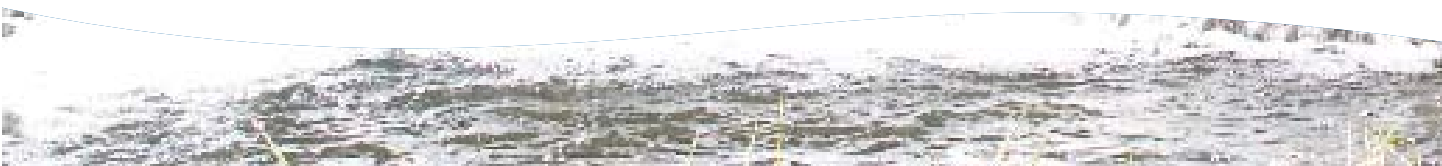
*This week's column continues the reflections on two books we reviewed earlier this month. The first book was "Quitting Church, Why the Faithful Are Fleeing and What to Do About It," by Julia Duin, the Religious Editor for the Washington Times. The second book is "Christless Christianity, The Alternative Gospel of the American Church" written by Michael Horton, Professor at Westminster Seminary California and host of the "White Horse Inn" radio broadcast.*

As another year rushes to a close, perhaps it would be appropriate to summarize the essence of what we have been trying to focus upon, as it relates to the true orthodox traditional historical, Protestant stemming from the Reformation, Christian, gospel Good News. From our research capacity, it is our belief that readers, especially those on the Internet, have or do not hear regularly enough, a comprehensive proclamation of human redemption before

the Almighty and Holy God. A distilled substance of that gospel proclamation follows.

Before time began, not all that long ago, God, the Triune Unity in Diversity, created the universe and planet earth out of nothing ex nihilo. Before time began, God's understanding of this triune universe time, space, and matter would require a specific Godly intervention into that continuum in which to redeem not only creation, but fallen humanity, created in His Image, whom He would soon create out of the dust of the ground.

That redemption would follow a covenant of grace from the introduction of human sin, in the God created good garden in Eden, throughout unfolding history, climaxing with an eternal judgment of humanity at the end of this present age. This present age is a now fallen, but visual and spiritual foretaste of that eternal state of recreated perfection.



Approximately two thousand years ago, a baby born in Bethlehem, named Jesus, became God incarnate through the Immaculate Conception in a Jewish virgin by the name of Mary in the lineage of King David, maintaining the prophetic Biblical Messianic lineage. This birth is celebrated in the world as Christmas, but there is no Biblical reason to celebrate that birth, hence it is an extra biblical holiday similar to the Jewish Chanukah, a miraculous festival of light, coming and being maintained in a spiritually dark world.

Jesus lived approximately thirty three years as the totally human totally God, sinless man. In the fullness of time, He offered himself as the propitiatory sacrificial Passover lamb, for the sins of all humanity, being crucified on a cross. He was buried for three days, under Roman guard. On the morning of the third day He was resurrected from death, as the First Fruit of that coming eternal restored kingdom. In due time showing himself to many, He visibly ascended to a place known as heaven to rule and reign at the right hand of His eternal Father. From there he will return at the end of this age to complete that redemption of those who through faith alone, have accepted His invitation to be come the legally adopted children of God. By that atoning sacrifice alone, not by any works of righteousness on their part, are people saved from the holy eternal wrath of God's judgment to come.

Since His ascension, the covenantal lineage has rested within the auspices of what is historically known as the catholic meaning universal church, but it does include those from times prior to the crucifixion of Christ according to that same faith alone covenant of grace. Those people looked forward by faith alone to that coming Messianic event, the church looks backward in time.

The church was and is extended by the preaching proclamation of the Gospel by the Word of God the Bible of this faithful Good News and by the sacraments of Baptism and Communion. Communion is also known as the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist in various divisions of the Christian world and unites all Christians, That communion brings the first

fruits of unity and diversity into a timeless Church Triumphant.

By what is generally known as word and sacrament, the power associated with saving faith is preserved by this mysterious and miraculous wonder of God descending to redeem human personalities for His own, from outside of time, into all creation and all time. That salvation comes about by the will of God alone and not by human measures or wishful thinking.

We proclaim these words on a regular basis because as fallen, but redeemed creatures we cannot otherwise comprehend the true wonder of God's grace. Those who think that this gospel presentation and use of communion are powerless memorials to a past reality fully do not understand either the gravity of human total depravity, or the condescendence of God's true grace. They ignore this true reality at their present and eternal peril.

This above gospel presentation is meant to give a context to what we have been discussing these last few weeks. The gospel is truly the wonder of all human civilization. We now live in a culture, which by its own creed says that this reality is not only wrong or irrelevant, but does not even exist. We, as Christians, continue passively in this materialist worldview at our own peril, and through that continuance, we therefore have become an anathema to the historic Christian faith we say we proclaim.

As I was researching this yearend article I began to realize that the reason the faithful are "quitting church" is only tangentially associated with requirements to become "self feeders" or "revolutionaries." The power behind the "quitting church movement" is really associated with the church quitters leaving as they have become aware of Christ's sufferings being manifest in their lives personally.

To put that in a more easily understood way. Through persecution, trials, temptations, and just the problems of life in this world, people mature in Christ through affliction, not happiness, not pleasure, not stuff. Therefore if you go to a church that continually promotes, ease, happiness, pleasure, affluence, and other time sensitive events as it relates to me alone, there quickly becomes a set of irreconcilable religious and real differences.

In other words, these afflictions get down in your gut and there are recognized by the reality that any overcoming power does not lie in the human self, but in the transcendence of God's grace to me a sinner. If we continually look externally, to use an old metaphor, not only to we miss the forest, and also the trees, we also miss the re creation power of Christ.

Now putting that in the context of Matthew 16:18, we see that it is Christ that creates the church quitters, not so much because their deeper needs are not being met in church, it is that the current church, is preaching a gospel where any afflictions, and especially afflictions for Christ's sake are undefined, just as they are in our Post Christian world.

Jesus states: "*On this rock* of Peter's confession of Jesus as our suffering Messiah *I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.*"

This brings up the question, "Just what type of church is Jesus building?"

In the original Greek the word "church" is defined as the "called out ones." Could it be that just as the first century church was called out from the Jewish and Roman religions, today's church is being called out from religious Christianity and worldly materialism?

The organizational model for that first century church, as well as all churches that have faced severe persecution, trials, and tribulations throughout time are house churches. We will come back to this shortly, and focus in much greater depth next week.

We can trace our current church model of a professional clergy to the time of Constantine. Not only did these church leaders give us the Nicene Creed, they also gave us a hierarchical management structure that essentially place men between the individual and God. The Protestant Reformation established the "Priesthood of all Believers," but maintained with few exceptions, the professional clergy of the Roman Catholic Church. In that light in order to become a member of the clergy, you had to go through a professional training seminary, or as some would call it a cemetery, and be ordained by the denomination.

The rise of charismatic evangelicalism changed that premise considerably. In order to be a pastor in that construct, all you needed was a Bible, a Bible Dictionary, some good teaching tapes, virtually zippo formal training, and the guts to go out by faith into the worldly wilderness to plant a church. In essence this church planter is the Methodist circuit rider 200 years before.

What this means is that you begin with a Bible study, and then a house church, and then eventually a self sufficient congregation, with Pastor John as the professional pastor. All of these progressively complicated growing steps take place by the seat of your pants and the grace of God alone. In the non denominational denomination, the hierarchical structure of the established church is absent. That can eliminate the cemetery in the seminary, but does not allow for the correction of theological error or excesses, nor does it provide any real people management skills within the church.

Now let us return to Francis Schaeffer and the LAbri model. Schaeffer was basically a church quitter in today's context. In actuality he was asked to move beyond the more theologically liberal Presbyterian denomination by those who ran that cemetery organization. In our construct he became the church planter of the LAbri community. Contrary to Pastor John, Schaeffer was trained in the good, the bad, the ugly, and the just plain mediocrity of that denomination, and was free to create LAbri as he deemed God was leading, just like Pastor John.

LAbri however never really proceeded beyond a house church with a number of campuses. LAbri was able to create a diverse population of mature Christian believers, with really no place to go within the established church, and really no mechanism for replicating the LAbri community without the direct supervision of Schaeffer himself.

What has been missing from the church and western civilization, maybe in direct cause and effect, is an understanding of human communities that are the means for true survival of indigenous people groups and tribes as the recipients of God's common grace. These common grace realities of leadership are also the basis for all the world's militaries as well as all sports teams. Furthermore, the Bible also points out this similar numerology as

Moses led the people through the desert to the Promised Land, Samuel organized Israel before Saul and David became kings, and as Jesus taught and fed the five thousand.

One of the main forms of organization of modern churches is the small group. These are small Bible studies and similar meetings outside the main Sunday service, with the stated purpose to get people to know one another, and to theoretically grow in their Christian walk. Training to lead these groups is generally nil, as is oversight, or direction from the church congregational leadership. Generally these groups are kept to about the size of about ten people, so that all people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, so that they can meet in a house of some member in a defined location, and their can develop a time of getting to know other people in the bigger impersonal congregation.

Established denominations are not as into small groups as are evangelicals, because they believe there truly can be no true qualifications for being a small group leader, nor persons opening your home for group meetings. Hence in these congregations, there is little small group opportunity for theological error, nor any opportunity to become a fool in your own eyes, to meet other such similarly sinful people with equally mundane problems, and thereby develop lasting friendships. Any advanced teaching beyond a Sunday sermon, is led by the pastor in another service, thereby making sure that the stupid sheep continue without human community.

Now if any pastor is going to create a new serious sermon in any fashion, that work is going to take at least eight hours of focused toil. You might be able to whip something together, bloviating on a familiar topic in four hours, but something new and complex, may take a couple of days, sometimes over extended periods of time. This means to continue on a sustainable basis and maintain a well balanced lifestyle, you have four or five days left to do all the related church work and to handle family and life matters. It just isn't going to happen unless you get organized and learn to delegate, with both paid and volunteer staff.

Since we mentioned that Moses was a leader to be emulated, and some churches use a Moses model for leadership development, let us look at delegation within the Biblical Moses model. It is taught in these church circles that Moses is a type of Christ, but that is not theologically true. Jesus fills the scriptural offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. However, scripturally Moses was never called by God to be a Priest, Aaron was God and Moses' priest on the road to the Promised Land. In that light, in the Moses model the pastor should provide leadership to the congregation and theological vision, but he should not be the pastor teacher. If you are called to be the pastor teacher, your prime role is not to hire other pastor teachers, or run the total kingdom, but to hire administrators who are concerned with vision and the well being of the congregants.

The administrator Moses, from the consult of his father in law, Jethro, saw wisdom in organizing a couple of million people in groups of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands. If Moses can do it with a couple of million how much easier it should be with up to a few thousand.

Now if you look seriously at common grace community attributes you will find that one person can lead or oversee from say two other people to perhaps seven for the very mature, gifted and well trained. On an average say five people. Therefore tens are three groups of three, or two groups of five. These groups are not self sustainable however, for the diversity of leadership, people, and resources is not great enough to really make lasting effect. That group self sustaining strength begins to take place at about twenty five and begins to diminish after about fifty.

In sports, now is the time for college football bowl games, and the professional playoffs. Football, both college and professional, is really a community of fifties, organized around specialists of fives, merged into tens, with about another fifty in diverse supporting roles making a hundred. The total professional NFL is a professional community of a little over three thousand all pretty much divided into tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands.

Similarly, basketball is a game of five, essentially a point guard, maybe two other guards, or a shooting guard, a couple of forwards, and a center. At the college and professional level we have about a total

of fifteen players, with coaches and trainers. The created community is a total of about twenty five.

I know of no formal church anywhere in the world that is organized along these team community principles. I know of no military unit anywhere in the world that is not organized along these team community principles. What does that mean?

The Christian church, as organized, is an anathema to common grace organizations in any context. The closest example in the church world to a sound organization is the Roman Catholic Church; one of the most effectively managed large organizations in the world for at least the last one thousand years.

The Biblical creation story focuses upon taking chaos and creating order. The whole of the Bible focuses upon changing the chaotic tragedy of the effects of human sin, and reordering it through the gospel outlined at the beginning of this article. This is the one supreme absolute truth of temporal and eternal history. It is the only reality that will eventually replace chaos with true unity in diversity.

Now, around the world, like no other time in human history, has the lunacy of totally human centered folly becomes so apparent to so many. To solve these immense problems we don't need a program or a series of programs to exacerbate this craziness. What the world and the church needs to do is to focus on what Jesus did, in and to time, space, and matter. What would Jesus do, is human centered law, not God centered grace. Just how difficult is that to understand.

Next week we will start the New Year afresh with a structure that could be used to facilitate organizing church quitters and house churches, into communities to change the world. Just like God's church did in the first century after Christ.

In that gospel light and reality, we wish you all, A Happy and Fulfilling New Year!