

# Preliminary Remarks

Personal Testimony, Theology, Concepts, Definitions,  
Generalities, Presuppositions and so.

## I. Personal Testimony

I believe God has been preparing me for this work for most of my life. My parents were members of the Church of Christ. I grew up with four-part harmony congregational singing because the Church didn't believe in instrumental music. The worship quality was far better than today. I loved the singing. It was very uplifting and worshipful.

My christian life started with asking Jesus to be my savior, and being baptized when I was twelve years old at a church camp. I was an ordinary kid and didn't get into much trouble. My first interest in the Bible came in the third year of high school. Our pastor was selling family type Bibles, big ones, and I bought one. I didn't read it all that much but I filled out the family information section. I have kept it all these years. I am now sixty-seven years old.

I went to church through the time I was in the Army but stopped going when I got out and started going to college. It wasn't until 1975 that God started tugging again at my heart strings. I started missing God. And, one Sunday, I realized I had left God, and I became afraid I would die and go to Hell before I rededicated my life. So I ran to the nearest Church of Christ and rededicated. But I was still not born-again. I went to church for a while but my unbelieving wife would not go with me so I went alone.

In September, 1976, when my oldest daughter was four years old, and youngest daughter six months, Her mother decided she wanted a divorce from me. I was devastated. I didn't know what to do. I was going to church but God was not

very real to me. Some months before, a youth pastor was going around our neighborhood calling on people to talk about God. He talked to me but I was not buying it.

After my wife had divorce papers served, I wondered what to do. I thought I would leave her and the kids, just run to Alaska, where my brothers lived, and start over with a new life. But I knew I really shouldn't abandon my children, so after two weeks of pondering, I finally decided I needed to stay around and try to make it right with her and the kids.

But when I made that decision to stay, I also was forced to acknowledge that I was a failure. This was my second failed marriage. I felt terrible. It was a Sunday, so I decided to go to the youth pastors church near our house. I talked to the pastor and he agreed to come over that evening.

He came to the house and I told him about what I have told you. He said that before I could make it right with my wife and kids, I needed to make it right with God. I said to him, "What has God got to do with any of this?" He said to me that if I would ask God to forgive my sins, He would forgive me and would manage my life. **God managing my life!** The pastor said *my* responsibility was to do what God said in the Bible, and God would make my life successful by His standards.

This is exactly what I needed; I was a failure, and I needed the God of the universe to manage my life. I asked God to forgive me and to take responsibility for success of my life. That night I was rebaptized, and a tremendous burden was lifted off my back.

I didn't have to worry about managing my life anymore. I didn't have to worry about being a failure anymore. I didn't have to worry about making a living, owning a house, being retired, none of it. It was now God's job to take care of me. It was my job to **be** a man of God. I have sought to be a man of God ever since. I started to be a man of God by **studying**. I was living alone, after the divorce, and I *studied* three hours a day, every day for a year. The youth pastor disciplined me, one on one, for that year. At 35 years old, I went to the high school bible study that he taught. I learned right along with the kids. My appetite for the Word of God was voracious. My bible has been rebound twice (the one my mentor gave me). Its nearly worn out a third time. I was a failure and I wanted to be different. God had a plan for my life all along. I didn't know it then but I just trusted God to make my life successful by His standards. I began to want to study future prophecy because it interested me. I have discovered some things of value for the future. They can be viewed on my website, "www.soul-survival.info". God has given me talents and the desire to do for Him. As the years went by I saw His hand greatly on my life. My life has not been easy but both my daughters have grown up with God in their lives, and both have married christian men who walk with God, and both are raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They, serving God, are my greatest joy in life.

When I was done with the book on my website, God revealed the need for the book which you are now reading; "The Spiritual Survival of Christianity." With the inception of this book, I began to see what His plan was for me more completely. More so, where I am going.

Moses, the son of Pharaoh's daughter, spent the first forty years of his life learning that he was a "somebody." He spent the second forty years on the backside of the desert, learning he was a "nobody," and the third forty years learning that God could take a "nobody" and make him a "somebody." I feel like he might have

felt towards the end of his life. This job is daunting. But God and I are a majority; because He has prepared me for this my whole life. That is why I can write this book. God is with me, and I with Him.

## II. Theology

### Defined

I follow Ryrie's definition, page 13:

“. . . Theology, then, is the discovery, systematizing, and presentation of the truths about God.”

### General Theology

Dr. Charles C. Ryrie's book on "Basic Theology" (B.T. will be a reference to Ryrie's book throughout) is a standard work of some importance among lay people who are not professional theologians. What he says is both foundational and written in a non-technical way. I would like to quote him as follows, page 10:

“The phrase ‘sound doctrine’ that Paul (the Apostle) uses means healthy doctrine (e.g., 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9). Healthy doctrine or healthy theology is always expected to result in holy living. When Paul prayed for churches, he prayed of an increase in knowledge, for he realized that this would produce holy living (e.g., Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-10). Healthy theology is expressed not only in creed but in fruitful living, and holy living must be based on healthy theology.”

“How theology affects my life or your life is our personal and individual responsibility. But to conform our lives to the image of Christ is the ultimate goal in studying theology. Yet in the final analysis no book can do that. Only God and you can.”

Healthy theology is my own goal as well as Dr. Ryrie's.

## **The Varieties of Theology**

Ryrie suggests various ways to catalogue theologies; page 13.

(1) By era; i.e., patristic theology, medieval theology, reformation theology, modern theology.

(2) By viewpoint; i.e., Arminian theology, Calvinistic theology, Catholic theology, Barthian theology, liberation theology, etc.

(3) By focus; i.e., historical theology, biblical theology, systematic theology.

## **A Problem Theology**

It seems to me that all writers and contributors throughout history offer opinions as to the nature of God and christianity with the idea in mind that they are doing a service to God and mankind.

Unfortunately, with all the diverse and opposite opinions many are wrong; some are right, some are of minor consequence, and some don't matter much at all. In our world today, in North America, I believe healthy theology is a big issue.

I see the 21st century church, at large, as unhealthy. We have little to no effect on the secular society. We have only a little more effect on church parishioners.

In my opinion, the church is unhealthy because the church has embraced an unhealthy theology.

The unhealthy theology has fostered unhealthy spiritual attitudes toward holy living and evangelism. The unhealthy attitudes have produced spiritually weak christians and inconsequential impact on secular society.

My message in this book is why, how and what we should do different. I, in faith, am praying for revival.

## **My Theology in General**

Since I want my opinion to be heard in the christian forum, and since I am unknown, as to what I believe, it seemed prudent to give you some idea what kind of christianity I believe.

I can say that I tend to have a Arminian point of view. The points on which I differ with Arminianism is significant but generally compatible. The only exceptions to that might be the issues which I address. That would be the part which I personally contribute.

I will endeavor, as I write, to note any significant differences. Other than this, you can depend on my being orthodox, in the sense of balanced, like Dr. Ryrie. I hope you will agree.

I will do my best, with the Holy Spirit's leading, to *honor* God, and uphold His reputation, in this effort to convince christianity to be different and produce a healthy church which honors God. I believe in Managed Cooperation Theology.

## **Managed Cooperation Theology**

Managed Cooperation Theology would qualify as a by-viewpoint classification. It has some connection with Arminianism although it is distinctly different. I will explain the differences later.

Managed Cooperation Theology is systematic in the sense that one can correlate the data of biblical revelation; as a whole, in order to explain systematically the total picture of God's self-revelation.

Managed Cooperation Theology could be considered modern theology in the sense that it was conceived in the modern era.

## **III. Definitions**

### **Managed Cooperation Theology Defined**

Managed Cooperation Theology is the name I have chosen to call this message which I have to offer.

Quite simply, God manages; man cooperates.

It is God that manages my life, and should manage all Christians' lives. As I cooperate with Him in my life; in the same way, all Christians should cooperate with His management of their lives.

But that is not what is happening. Christians, for the most part, don't cooperate with God in God managing their lives. They don't even know God wants to manage their lives. So why would they cooperate in doing so? God and I hope to start a movement to change that.

### **Glorify**

I know the meaning of the word "glorify," used in conjunction with glorifying God, means to reflect the glory which God possesses to others.

I have an uneasiness that "giving God glory" may not be proper terminology. We can give Him honor, worship, credibility, praise, and other accolades but I'm not sure we can give Him glory.

Glory is given to a person of lower rank and status *by* a person of higher rank and status. It doesn't seem to be applicable the other way around. I may be wrong, or making a distinction unnecessarily; however, I don't feel comfortable glorifying God. I use the word honor above because I think that more appropriate.

### **The Creation**

Since I will be talking a lot about "the creation" in this work, I want you to know what I mean. I use that word not to mean the process of creation but as the name of the universe in its entirety. This includes the outer universe with stars and so, our solar system, the Earth, all on the Earth that is animal, vegetable, or mineral. This especially includes mankind.

### **Natural Man**

The natural man is the man who has not been regenerated. He has not believed that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

### **Orthodox**

I use this word to refer to generally accepted

beliefs in the Protestant evangelical church.

### **Pretemporal Predestination**

This is the doctrine that says God, before the foundation of the world, decided who would go to Heaven and who would go to Hell. Although, now days, some would not agree that God destines people to Hell.

### **Type**

Two stories or points of theology which refer to each other. One may be figurative or an event in history. A common type suggests Jesus is the "Lamb" slain for the sins of the world. This refers to the Passover lamb slain so the death angel would pass over the first born of Israel at the time of Moses. Just as the blood of the lamb saved the first born, so Jesus saves the sinner from death. Thus the Passover lamb is a "type" of Jesus.

## **IV. Some Presuppositions**

The Bible is the watershed presupposition as Ryrie said. It is the final authority on matters pertaining to God. I embrace that.

Speaking of systematizing presuppositions, Ryrie suggests caution in one area of correlating scriptural ideas (Basic Theology, page 18):

“. . . when logic is used to create truth, as it were, then the theologian will be guilty of pushing his system beyond the limitations of biblical truth. Sometimes this is motivated by the desire to answer questions which the scripture does not answer. In such cases (and there are a number of crucial ones in the Bible) the best answer is silence, not clever logic, or almost invisible implications, or wishful sentimentality. Examples of particularly tempting areas include sovereignty and responsibility, the extent of the Atonement, the salvation of infants who die.”

In defence of my message, I will show how this has happened with respect to the doctrine of

Pretemporal Predestination (theory of predestination prior to creation).

## **V. Writing Style**

I will write in two different styles in some chapters. The first style is just a narrative which acquaints you with the concepts in an easy to read format, no proofs. After that a review of the same material, in greater detail, and with reason why I believe the concept.

This style allows readers to study at various depths without losing any content. Some may just want to read the narrative and skip the authenticating reasons. Some may want to peruse the evidence on some particular point. Scholars or pastors may want to read everything. It will all be there in succeeding degrees of detail. A person just stops reading at whatever detail level happens to interest him, and goes on to the next chapter without missing any content. This style allows a great range of audience applicability for the book without boring somebody or curtailing evidence.

## **VI. Bible Usage and Quotes**

All quotes and usage will be from the New American Standard Version, The Lockman Foundation, 1975.

