
RENEWAL



The Journal of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship in New England

Walter Ciesluk, Editor

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Evangelical Renewal Fellowship is the New England Association of The Confessing Movement within the United Methodist Church

ASSESSING THE AMENDMENTS

Rev. Dr. Thomas Bentum

As we near the time for New Englanders to cast their votes for the General Conference amendments I want to offer a short summary of how the leadership of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship suggests we act. There is already a tremendous amount of material out there produced by others in the national evangelical movements so there is little I could add except to say to make use of Good News and the Confessing Movement as resources. There are even a few videos on YouTube that are very helpful. The amendments are international in scope so we stand with our brothers and sisters all over the world as we make decisions that impact us all.

Our primary concern is with Amendment I. On the surface it would seem positive making sure all persons are welcome to members of the United Methodist Church. But because of its wording it actually is stating that no one can be denied membership in the United Methodist Church. Do we really want the pastor and church leadership's hand to be tied when it comes to deciding who should become a member? Some are trying to make this an issue about sexual orientation, but it goes far deeper than that. It separates membership from vital discipleship allowing anyone who requests membership the right to receive it. This is counter to our Wesleyan heritage and the example of growing churches in the world today. It clearly needs to be voted down.

The second concern is with the amendments dealing with the restructuring of our denomination world-wide. The attempt of these amendments is to divide the denomination into regional conferences so that issues particular to a region of the world is dealt with without undue impact on the other regions. The problem with these amendments is in the details. Nowhere is it spelled out as to what are regional issues and what are denominational issues. We suggest a vote of "no" so that more clarity can be worked out before we make such a major change in our church structure. We are in danger of amending away our global church when we so badly need one another. On the positive side let's vote "yes" for amendment IX and give Local Pastors and provisional member more power to vote. The Evangelical Renewal Fellowship is much in favor of giving Local Pastors more authority and freeing them for more ministry. As New Englanders we are benefiting greatly from the ministry of Local Pastors in our conference. We believe it is their training and disbursement for ministry that will be significant in reversing the membership decline in our conference in particular.

Finally, one has to wonder why the church leadership has been so quiet about these major changes for our church. It has been suggested that there is a conspiracy of silence in hopes that everything will quietly pass. I doubt that. I think instead that the institutional silence is just a sign that our leaders have no real ownership of these changes and know that very little will happen if the amendments fail to pass. Even passing these amendments carries no promise that we will be propelled into some wonderful new day for our church. However, we need to be aware that passing Amendment I and all the world-wide amendments could easily derail a future of a vital, global church making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Dr. Thomas W. Bentum is the Executive Coordinator of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship (ERF). He is an Elder in the New England Annual Conference, and pastor of Christ UMC, Lancaster, NH and St. John's UMC, Jefferson, NH.

THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS – VOTER’S GUIDE

Dear Fellow Annual Conference Member,

This year at Annual Conference we will be voting on a number of proposed amendments to The United Methodist Church’s Constitution. We, the leadership of the **Evangelical Renewal Fellowship**, respectfully offer the following guide for your consideration. Your role in this process is very important, and we look forward to your full participation in the debate. Thank you.

- I. This proposed amendment sounds benign, but is in fact an attempt by homosexual advocacy groups to circumvent the church’s teachings on the practice of homosexuality. Its passage would lead to more church trials and continued rancor over the practice of homosexuality. (Vote No)
- II. This proposed amendment calls all organizations in the UMC to adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies. (Vote Yes)
- III. This is the first of 23 proposed amendments regarding the Worldwide Nature of the UMC. All of these amendments would lead to another costly layer of church bureaucracy, separate the US church from the vital and growing Central Conferences, and lead to the weakening of our Connectional system. We encourage you to vote “no” on all of these amendments and we have noted that below with the acronym “WWN-UMC (Vote No)” throughout the remainder of this guide.
- IV. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- V. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- VI. This proposed amendment would allow General Conference to provide for a “transitional” period for newly created annual, missionary, or provisional annual conferences, not to exceed two quadrennia, during which such conferences would be represented at General and regional conferences on other than a proportional basis. This could codify the unfortunate way that the Cote d’Ivoire was brought into the Church, delaying their proper representation levels for a maximum of two quadrennia. (Vote No)
- VII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- VIII. This proposed amendment would ensure that church membership is open to all without regard to race, gender or status. (adds gender) (Vote Yes)
- IX. This amendment would ensure a minimum basis of support for the election of bishops at jurisdictional conferences. (Vote yes)
- X. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XI. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XIII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XIV. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XV. This proposed amendment to Par. 32 BOD would reduce the minimum period that a person must be an active member of the UMC before he/she can be elected as a delegate to Annual Conference. (Vote Yes)
- XVI. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XVII. This proposed amendment to Par. 33 BOD would add the laity on the Committee on Investigation to those who can vote on ordination and character of clergy at Annual Conferences. (Vote Yes)
- XVIII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XIX. This proposed amendment to Par. 35 BOD would allow all clergy members, including provisional members and local pastors who meet educational requirements to vote for delegates to General, Jurisdictional, or Central Conferences. (Vote Yes)
- XX. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXI. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXII. This proposed amendment to Par. 37 BOD would add the Church in Bermuda to the Baltimore-Washington Conference. (Vote Yes)
- XXIII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXIV. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXV. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXVI. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXVII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXVIII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXIX. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXX. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXXI. WWN-UMC (Vote No)
- XXXII. WWN-UMC (Vote No)

AN EVANGELISM 101

Walter J. Ciesluk

Over the recent years, I have been striving to read just about anything I can find on how churches and pastors, known for outreach to the unchurched, approach evangelism. One such book entitled, *"Fearless Faith, Living Beyond the Walls of 'Safe' Christianity"* by John Fisher, challenges Christians to: come to understand the true meaning of "being in the world, but not of the world"; find the courage to bring God's light to life's darkest corners; learn to recognize the many ways that God is already at work in the world; and strive to change the world by becoming constructively involved in it. This book includes a chapter 15 entitled, Evangelism 101, which presents a philosophy of evangelism with which, I personally resonated. As a consequence, I decided to try to highlight and share with you some of the author's thoughts on this vital Christian ministry.

- Many of us feel that to be an effective witness for Christ, one needs to have a polished personal testimony, be an expert in Christian theology and doctrine, and be able to quote numerous scriptures and prayers. Jesus had something quite different to say. "On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them...do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given to you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:9-11).
- Most of us don't seem to trust God enough in our approach to evangelism. It would save a lot of trouble and embarrassment if we could learn one simple thing about witnessing: Salvation is God's thing and is out of our control. Saving people is God's part, ours is being a witness. We tell our story from whatever page we are living it on at the time-and God does the rest.
- People's response to the gospel and our sharing of the gospel are not necessarily related. God is the key to the equation. People can't believe without hearing, but they can't hear unless God opens their ears. Preaching only guarantees He has a chance to do that; it doesn't guarantee He will. That's why coercion, manipulation, threats, emotional badgering are not befitting the gospel.
- The word "witness" in the New Testament is almost always used as a noun. "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8) said Jesus. A witness is someone who has seen something and tells what he or she saw when called upon. No one is more informed on what you have experienced with Christ than you are. When we stick with an honest telling of our story, we are guaranteed a connection with others on a human level. As long as our story is relating the current ways in which we are experiencing God's grace, forgiveness, and power--our witness will be as effective as it needs to be.
- A witness is not always witnessing, at least verbally. Many Christian witnesses in key places of influence are careful to use their positions wisely. They wait until they know their story will mean something or will get the proper hearing. In the meantime, they continue to be witnesses by the way they live their lives so that when they are called up to speak, their lives stand behind what they say. This is why being a witness is so much more effective than going out and witnessing. Witnessing tends to be hit and run. It is sometimes even rude.
- Sharing our faith should involve an invitation-- not our invitation to non-Christians, but theirs to us. Such an invitation to share our life can come only reciprocally, after we have given someone our attention and respect. Peter puts it this way: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). Peter is talking about the unbeliever's invitation to answer a question. An invitation to explain a hope. An invitation to give reasons for what we believe. These invitations are cultivated by friendships with our non-Christian neighbors, but this rarely happens unless someone feels safe around us, regardless of what they believe.

- Peter used those two words, "gentleness" and "respect." "Gentleness" says, "I will not walk over you. I will not just wait for you to finish so that I can talk. I will not pass you by since you are not interested in what I have to say. I will not lose patience over your continual rejection of Christians or the gospel. I am not responsible for your salvation, only for telling you, when you ask me, what I have experienced, so far, of Jesus Christ in my life."
- Likewise, "respect" says, "You can be safe around me. I respect your right to believe whatever you want. It is not my goal to get you to agree with me. I respect your right to disagree. I respect your right to your own spiritual journey."
- Many Christians operate under the belief that before we can get a person to believe in Christ, we have to get them to disbelieve everything else. But, there is some truth to be found in whatever a non-Christian is currently believing. When Paul spoke to the pagan worshipers and Greek philosophers in Athens, he started by commending them for being very religious people (Acts 17: 16-34). We Christians should feel confident to profess that "Jesus is the only way, but that there's more than one way to Jesus." Could someone get to Jesus by way of prostitution? by way of Buddha? by way of drugs? by way of murder? by way of Islam? I am sure we all have heard of people who have traveled all these roads, and roads even more bizarre than these, to get to Christ. God wasn't absent from their lives before their conversion, was he?
- We need to stop being threatened by other people's paths to Jesus. Some paths may be more direct, but almost any path will do if someone is earnestly seeking God. The Scriptures are very clear that if someone is seeking God with his whole heart, he will find him. The Scriptures also tell us that the only way to God is by way of Jesus, who is the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6). That means, then, that if people are earnestly seeking God, no matter where they begin, they will ultimately end up with Jesus. We don't have to invalidate an unbeliever's path and start them off all over again in another direction. We point them toward the next step.
- The real tragedy is that there are many Christians who do not even relate to unbelievers unless they absolutely have to. We don't need to witness more, we need to relate more with non-Christians so that our witness will mean more. If our witness truly is more who we are than what we do, then we need to be in places where who we are makes a difference. Spending most of our time with believers may be desirable for us, perhaps, for our safety and comfort, but not for the gospel.
- At the end of Christ's ministry on earth, he sent his disciples out as witnesses in the world. "You will be my witnesses" is not a command. It is a statement of fact. If there is any command implied in this statement it is a command to spread out where their lives would have an effect. "Stay here in Jerusalem until you receive my Spirit," he was saying, "then disperse yourselves all over the world where your lives, your faith, and your witness will make a difference."

So, what does all this mean to us? We Christians are called to be Christ's witnesses wherever we are. That's why He wants us out of our churches and all over the community and the world. This is why He prayed for us to be protected, because He knew we would be in danger. After all, what good is it being a witness where everyone already knows?

Walter J. Ciesluk is the coordinator of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship (ERF) communications ministry. He is a member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Chelmsford, MA.

FAITH, HOPE, AND FINANCIAL MELTDOWN

Adam Hamilton

Fear. Panic. Anxiety. These words capture well the state of mind of many in America today. Recently, the American Psychological Association released the findings of a survey they conducted of 7,000 American households. The study noted that eighty percent of Americans were stressed about the economy and their personal finances. Half were worried about their ability to provide for their family's basic needs. Fifty-six percent were concerned about their own job stability. Sixty percent of respondents reported feeling angry and irritable, and more than half reported laying awake at night worried about this. The report concluded that, "The declining state of the nation's economy is taking a physical and emotional toll on people nationwide."

Paul Krugman, professor of economics at Princeton University and winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in economics, offered a prescient assessment of the nation's financial condition earlier this year. He noted that the U.S. economy is suffering from a "crisis of faith." He meant by this a growing lack of trust in our economic institutions and the securities that have backed much of our debt.

At the center of this crisis is the use of, and problems surrounding, the extension of credit. It is worth noting that "credit" is a word that is a part of the language of faith. It comes from the Latin *credere*-to believe or to trust. The present active form of this word opens the Apostle's Creed, *credo*-"I believe." In the case of credit, belief or trust is placed in the borrower and her or his willingness and ability to repay. Our current economic crisis is in part about misplaced trust or faith between debtors and lenders.

Neither a \$700 billion bailout package, nor a Federal Reserve interest rate cut, nor presidential calls for calm seem to adequately speak to the underlying issues that precipitated this crisis of faith. This is a moment when the Bible and people of faith have both the timely word that can calm fears and the most accurate assessment of the underlying issues that led to the current economic debacle.

The word of hope is found in the words spoken to people in adversity and even exile throughout the Bible. There are the words of the prophets spoken to the Israelites living in exile after losing everything. To them God spoke profound words of promise: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). The psalmists, too, during periods of adversity wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." (Psalm 46:1-2).

Jesus seems to speak directly to our situation in the Sermon on the Mount when he said to first century peasants, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well" (Matthew 6:25, 33).

As we watch the Dow Jones Industrial Average drop over 1,800 points in one week, and the waves of fear and the winds of panic sweep over our collective souls, it is easy to identify with the disciples straining at their oars, being battered by the wind and waves in the fourth watch of the night as they wondered where Jesus was when they really needed him. What comfort we find in his words of greeting as he came walking on water towards them, unshaken by the storm: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid!" (Matthew 14:27).

A few chapters ahead in the New Testament we come to Paul sitting in his prison cell writing his epistle to the Philippians. He's awaiting the outcome of a trial that could see him executed, and yet he has the faith to write, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

And how timeless are those words written to Timothy - instructions for what he was to preach to the people of Ephesus: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God" (I Timothy 6:17).

The credit crisis serves to point to the inadequacy of any ultimate *credo* whose object is anything but God. God is our refuge and strength. And God's sustaining power is not tied to the Dow.

It is crucial that we invite people to put their hope in God, and offer them the assurance that comes from faith in him. The Bible's Chronicler wrote Israel and Judah's history, both to offer hope for a future for the people whose nation had been destroyed, and to point out Judah's sins so that she might repent. In the same way the Christian must not only offer hope, but also an accurate assessment of the ultimate causes for this present crisis, issuing a call to repentance.

The underlying causes of the current economic crisis are not financial, but spiritual. At least five of the seven deadly sins came into play: gluttony, greed, sloth, envy, and ultimately pride all came before the fall. These led to absurd economic practices that bordered on the criminal. It was not simply the CEO's and Wall Street types who danced to this tune. It was every one of us whose 401k's prospered by their efforts. And ultimately none of this would be possible without all who abandoned wisdom and prudence and borrowed beyond their capacity to buy houses, cars, and whatever their hearts desired without the ability to repay.

As we face the consequences of the current economic downturn, and as we reflect upon the spiritual causes that contributed to the fall, we find comfort and truth in the words of Jesus, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15). Thank God for that! And may the truth of these words guide us to a different future.

The gospel message needed today is a call to hope in a God who will not abandon us, and a call to repentance before a God who forgives and heals us. And ultimately it is an invitation to choose credere in the midst of economic meltdown.

*Adam Hamilton is senior pastor of United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas and author of Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White. A version of this commentary appeared on journeywithjesus.net. His book and video-based group study, *Enough: Discovering Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity*, is available in February through Abingdon.*

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AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY

Dan Weaver

The following response should be seen as a polarity representing varying beliefs, rather than beliefs that all would accept who see themselves as conservative. It is based on suggestions by members of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship meeting in March, 2009 and later by email.

- We recognize diversity in the Body of Christ and celebrate the unity we have in the eternal presence of Christ Jesus, Our Lord. This unity is affirmed in Scripture and two thousand years of world Christianity. Through the centuries there have been vast differences in theology and practice with tragic results and brokenness. God's "never-the-less" continues to hold us together and gives healing where we see no possibilities of reconciliation and wholeness. We share with our brothers and sisters the hope of unity with or without agreement in the critical areas of human sexuality. With them we lift our eyes to the deep hurts in humanity and the coming harvest of souls and justice.
- We recognize many brothers and sisters are believers in Christ and look to the Bible for church doctrine, inspiration, and guidance for living, while challenging historic beliefs and positions of the church in many areas, including human sexuality. We note the following areas of general agreement with them:
- We affirm all persons are of sacred worth, equally loved of God, receiving God's grace,
- We affirm human sexuality is a gift of God to be lived as guided by the Biblical revelation.
- We affirm that all positions of the church are open for full inclusion in faith, fellowship, service, and leadership, regardless of sexual orientation
- We reject the witness of those who ridicule, denigrate, and abuse those who are perceived as homosexuals, lesbians, and gender transformed.
- We deplore the commercialization and exploitation of sex and urge compliance of laws that protect persons, especially children, and call for support and counseling for the victims
- We recognize the injustices of the past and present toward homosexuals and affirm our willingness to work toward justice in the areas of housing, employment, civil rights, and other related issues.
- We **remain unable** to heed those who call for affirmation of homosexual practices, **including the affirmation of such practices** in marriage, and ordination. World Methodism is overwhelmingly opposed to such changes. We have seen the turmoil and brokenness within the Anglican Communion as a result of American persistence to move in these directions. Besides the theological differences involved it has also been seen as American arrogance.
- We affirm science and its continuing progress to help us understand and respond to issues of our own humanity, including sexuality. However often cited, scientific evidence in the area of homosexuality is at best ambiguous and generally non-existent. Should such evidence **be found** we still face the question **of** whether to give unquestioned encouragement to our sexual human instincts. Many verified instincts, such as violence, are not seen as culturally positive. We believe there is grace and strength to change our conscious sexual orientation, and support those groups offering counseling for those who wish to change their orientation. The emergence of bisexuality as accepted in culture suggests there is considerable diversity in our sexuality, not just one or the other.

There has been a stream of critical exegesis and theological debate in the last fifty years regarding the views of the Bible in the areas of human sexuality. Improper use of texts is not limited to conservative believers. **Christians through the centuries have seen Genesis 2:18-24 as dealing with God's creation of marriage. We note there is no option for homosexual marriage.** Texts traditionally seen as authoritative such as Romans 1, especially verses 24-27;

Leviticus 18:22; and, 1 Corinthians 5:9-11, are relegated to creative interpretations that avoid application to modern homosexual relationships between two consenting adults. While willing to consider the relevant exegesis and to debate the application of these texts to our church today, **we are convinced that the traditional interpretation of these texts is upheld by careful exegetical interpretation and that the application to the present is consistent with standard hermeneutical principles** "we do not see the burden of proof usually expected to overturn centuries of interpretation.

What can we do? Foremost, take inventory of our attitudes as we strive to implement the **areas** we mentioned above. Homophobia, like racism, has been endemic to our culture. As with racism we must learn to reach beyond our prejudices in the love of Christ Jesus while praying for the day that such prejudice will be eliminated. We can take initiative in our families, daily life circles, and churches to confront homophobia in grace and truth. Only as we deal with these roots within can we truly help bring the unity we desire.

We believe the United Methodist Discipline is substantially valid in its interpretation and admonitions in keeping with the Biblical and Wesleyan traditions. God's call to holiness includes both personal and social holiness. We are open to review and change in keeping with our above beliefs. We stand willing to enter into continued ministry and witness with those who may disagree with us in the greater ministry of Christ's love to all.

Rev. Dan Weaver is a retired pastor in the New England Annual Conference

WHAT IS PRAYER—AND IS IT IMPORTANT? Robbin R. Grill

If we are going to talk about prayer, the first question we must ask ourselves is this: what is prayer? Simply stated, it is talking with God. When we pray we open our hearts to Almighty God. Yes, this does sound simple. But many people feel that prayer must be in Shakespearian English and very often spoken VERY loudly. Others feel that prayer must occur in a certain place and with a certain posture. But these are not requirements for true prayer. In fact, you can sound like the holiest person there is and, in reality, not be doing anything other than talking to yourself.

There is a story of a young man who met Christ after many years of life in the world. After his conversion, he went to his first prayer meeting. Everyone was getting up and saying very flowery prayers. Finally, the new convert got up and said "Lord, this is Me! I'm not sure whether you remember this or not...I met you last Tuesday night. I just wanted to say...we... Thank you for changing my life." And then he sat down. His prayer was honest, humble and personal.

It is a great privilege to pray to our Heavenly Father. Can you think of any greater honor than to have an audience with the one who rules all creation? We have been invited to sit down with the One who knows all things. The Puritan John Preston said:

"Prayer is a privilege purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ died for this end, it cost Him the shedding of His blood, so that we, through Him, might have entrance to the throne of grace. And will you let such a privilege as this lie still? If you do, so far as is in you, you cause His blood to be shed in vain. For if you neglect the privileges gotten by that blood, you neglect the blood that procured them." (The Puritans on Prayer, P. 17)

Doesn't this spell out the importance of prayer? Prayer makes a difference in our lives. We all know that circumstances change when people pray. Sometimes folks are healed, strength is imparted, guidance is given, hearts are softened and needs are met. I know that when I pray for others it helps them. But I also know that when I pray, I am changed.

So, I ask you, what could possibly be more important than prayer? Prayer on a daily basis, Paul instructs us to pray constantly. And how happy that makes God! Let's move forward resolved to pray!

Robbin Grill is the coordinator of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship (ERF) prayer ministry.

RECENT BOOKS ON CHRISTIANITY AND RENEWAL

The Reason for God, Belief in an Age of Skepticism, Timothy Keller, Dutton, Copyright 2008

This book received the 2009 Christianity Today's award for best book on apologetics/evangelism, "The Reason for God, Belief in an Age of Skepticism". The author, Timothy Keller, is the pastor of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. Redeemer has nearly six thousand regular attendees at five services, a host of daughter churches, and is establishing churches in large cities throughout the world. About the book, the Washington Post wrote, "In a flood of bestsellers by skeptics and atheists...Timothy Keller stands out as an effective counterpoint and a defender of the faith. The Reason for God makes a tight, accessible case for reasoned religious belief." In this book, the author addresses the frequent doubts that skeptics and non-believers bring to religion. Using literature, philosophy, anthropology, pop culture, and intellectual reasoning, Keller explains how the belief in a Christian God is, in fact, a sound and rational one. To true believers he offers a solid platform on which to stand against the backlash toward religion spawned by the Age of Skepticism. And to skeptics, atheists, and agnostics he provides a challenging argument for pursuing the reason for God.

Surprised by Hope, Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church, N. T. Wright, HarperOne, Copyright 2008

In this book, award-winning author N. T. Wright outlines the present confusion about a Christian's future hope and shows how it is deeply intertwined with how we live today. Wright, who is one of today's premier Bible scholars, asserts that Christianity's most distinctive idea is bodily resurrection. He provides a magisterial defense for a literal resurrection of Jesus and shows how this became the cornerstone for the Christian community's hope in the bodily resurrection of all people at the end of the age. Wright then explores our expectation of "new heavens and a new earth," revealing what happens to the dead until then and what will happen with the "second coming" of Jesus. For many, including many Christians, all this will come as a great surprise. Wright convincingly argues that what we believe about life after death directly affects what we believe about life before death. For if God intends to renew the whole creation—and if this has already begun in Jesus' resurrection—the church cannot stop at "saving souls" but must anticipate the eventual renewal by working for God's kingdom in the wider world, bringing healing and hope in the present life. Lively and accessible, this book will surprise and excite all who are interested in the meaning of life, not only after death but before it.

Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ, The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America, John G. Turner, University of North Carolina Press, Copyright 2008

Founded as a local college ministry in 1951, Campus Crusade for Christ has become one of the world's largest evangelical organizations, today boasting an annual budget of more than \$500 million. Nondenominational organizations like Campus Crusade account for much of modern evangelicalism's dynamism and adaptation to mainstream American culture. Despite the importance of these "parachurch" organizations, says John Turner, historians have largely ignored them. Turner offers an accessible and colorful history of Campus Crusade and its founder, Bill Bright, whose marketing and fund-raising acumen transformed the organization into an international evangelical empire. Drawing on archival materials and more than one hundred interviews, Turner challenges the dominant narrative of the secularization of higher education, demonstrating how Campus Crusade helped re-establish evangelical Christianity as a visible subculture on American campuses. Beyond the campus, Bright expanded evangelicalism's influence in the worlds of business and politics. As Turner demonstrates, the story of Campus Crusade reflects the halting movement of evangelicalism into mainstream American society: its awkward marriage with conservative politics, its hesitancy over gender roles and sexuality, and its growing affluence.

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Purpose Statement

Confessing Jesus Christ as Son, Savior, and Lord, the Confessing Movement exists to enable the United Methodist Church to retrieve its classical doctrinal identity, and to live it out as disciples of Jesus Christ

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