

Another Spirit¹

few in the balcony. I'll bring the best wishes from the Pasadena East A.M.

congregation where we normally attend. Ours is not quite set off living, but the setting here is always beautiful all the life. I am of the opinion that families with children do find another setting more conducive to a relationship of the whole congregation. And then we might in this building which in a sense is designed for adults in terms of all the things that occur here. I inquired of two of the elders, whatever responsibility, they're all elders in that sense with ordination. We don't have to concern ourselves with other ranks, but I inquired what topic might be of interest and one of the men came up with a very, I would say, effective subject which was beautifully introduced today. He said, why do you not address the question of whether we are Protestant? What it means to be a Protestant? I said I certainly would be willing to consider that. We haven't really looked at the broader perspectives. I say also I might pose the question, are we Protestant? Are we Jewish? Are we Catholic? Are we Orthodox? And if not, in what sense are we not? In what sense do others share perspectives that we do, or do not share such perspective? Or why is it that with all our Buddhist friends we are not Buddhists even though Abhatsapam, that was his former title, said, how is it that you're not Buddhists and you do so many Buddhist things? Or why is it possible to discuss with a Muslim, as I did many years ago, all the subjects from the Second Coming of the Christ to abortion, and I found nothing I disagreed with him on? Or he with me. In this sense, are we Muslim? Do we submit to God, which is the sense of the meaning of Islam? It would be good for us to take a look, both at the world in which we live today, and ask ourselves what makes the difference, what is the nature of the religions of the world around us, in a sense what is ultimately the distinguishing characteristic.

I should thank Mr. Berkey for posing this question. Now you know who thought of it.

I don't think he planned, however, that the first beautiful hymn was a Lutheran hymn today. So I ask you also, are we Lutheran? Well, we'll take a look at this, because the Bible does have quite a bit to say on subjects such as this, no matter what our comparisons may be. I thought it appropriate to bring two volumes of the Catholic Encyclopedia in order that I could quote certain things. In one particular subject area, there is a lengthy quote from the Protestant world, in fact by a Lutheran scholar. The subject was Protestantism. This will give, in a certain sense, the highlights of Protestants' perspectives of themselves, as well as the Catholic perspective. We do, as you may know, have some of our students in the summer go abroad. We had three young men this year that participated in the excavation in Syria, the site of Tel-Mozan, the probable capital, almost certainly so, of Urkish of the ancient Hurrian kingdom, that ruled in the area where Abraham's family came from in the northern regions of Syria, the upper Habur River basin. After Abraham left the Caldees, he went to this area before proceeding after his father's death to the land of Canaan. And we had an interesting opportunity on this occasion, a Catholic, a practicing Catholic, asked if he might address our group. In addition to our study, Professor Buccellati, the University of California at Los Angeles, gave a very remarkable presentation. He introduced himself and his wife, who was not there, as practicing Catholics. And the subject would have been enlightening, I am sure, to all of you. But there are also those who are not practicing Catholics. There are Protestants, and those who say they are Protestants, and certainly are not practicing Protestants. There are Jews who are not practicing Jews. They may be culturally so. They may be agnostics or atheists, the same as there are some who are bordering on agnosticism or even bordering on atheism in the broader Protestant world. So how do we, in a sense, look at ourselves and think of ourselves and think of others? There was a time, some,

well, time goes by. I think this was somewhere around 1975. I had, it could have been a little later, but I doubt it. I had lunch with a minister who shortly thereafter left the fellowship of the Worldwide Church of God, and he pointed up that the church, well, at least he pointed up what he thought the church taught, that we have a narrow view, and he simply could not accept that narrow view, that we, in a sense, are intolerant of others.

We cut ourselves off. We do not have friends who are peoples of other religious convictions.

I said, where did you get that idea? Well, he said the church teaches it.

Well, I said, you know, I've been here a lot longer, as it turned out, of course, than he was.

I've been here since 1947 in Southern California, and I have never heard a sermon requiring such a relationship. I have heard sermons saying that you may have to leave friends who curse, who drink, who commit adultery, who live in sin. If that kind of behavior is going to pull you down into sin again, you simply have to come out of the world. But there's nothing said that in coming out of the world, that we cease to live in the world, or that we are not to reach the world, or that we may not, in fact, discover friends in the world whom God has not yet called.

I said, I have people whom I would call friends. One man said to me long, long ago that if I have to give up shrimp, I simply can't join your church.

And, of course, he's been a lifelong friend ever since I've known him in 1949.

As both a personal friend, something developed in the sense that it was unusual. You meet some people, you bid them adieu, and you never see them again in life. We first learned of each other by correspondence. He was, for some time, the chief distributor of the Journal of Biblical Literature on behalf of the Society of Biblical Literature. In fact, I don't know what his religious background is. He is Christian. He has a name that implies that there was another ethnic and religious background historically. I don't think he ever attends church, but when it came to a crisis in 1979, people referred to Ambassador College as your college when talking to him.

I thought that was remarkable. I personally know as a friend a man who risked his life hundreds of times to rescue Jews and others from the Nazi regime across the Vichy-French border to Switzerland and the Vichy-French border to Spain.

We have, certainly, Buddhist friends, my wife and I correspond, I usually do the corresponding, in this case, to a Muslim friend and his family who live in Fiji, who I came to know in 1971, and we visited his home in 1973 outside Nandi on the West Coast, who had a very fine personal friend when he could not be of service to us, who turned out to be a Hindu.

I regularly send a message to him every year. In a crisis in 1982, you may remember, of course, when the South Pacific Islands of Tonga and Fiji were very heavily damaged and food had to be sent by the church in New Zealand to the brethren in Tonga. I also visited Fiji and called for my Hindu friend, and he was planning to build a home, and he had, in fact, everything necessary.

The storm blew everything he had into which he had put his savings out to sea, and he, in fact, had no way, since tourists were not coming through in that devastated period, to care for their youngest daughter. So this Hindu said, in a very thoughtful personal letter, would my wife and I accept their youngest daughter as our child to rear her? You don't call that person an enemy, do you? But he was a Hindu.

We found a finer way in our judgment, and that is to help them without having to separate the family.

I said to this young minister, when Mr. Armstrong, at that time, mentioned Leopold of Belgium, and had become acquainted with King Bumi Pong of Thailand, do you assume that when he calls them his friends and they, in turn, as Leopold did, spoke of Mr. Armstrong in an assembly as his friend, that, in fact, they are not? Well, he really had no answer, but he said of me, he said, all you do, of course, is simply pull rank.

I don't pull rank when it comes to this. I don't happen to be a Muslim. I don't happen to be a Hindu.

I was not reared as a Catholic, and I was converted from Protestantism.

We discover, in other words, that it is still possible in this world to discover that you have friends as well as enemies.

When Herbert W. Armstrong died in January, there were people who were Catholic and Protestant Buddhists, I don't know of other groups who were there.

In his illness, young Federico Buchelotti prayed for Mr. Armstrong.

As a Catholic child would pray, he learned to pray, essentially, when he was in Syria.

So when he would pray, he would bow down with his forehead to the floor as he saw the Muslims pray. I presume that he takes a different stance today as he has spent more and more time in this country, in his environment. His father told me that.

Our Buddhist friends every year have remembered Herbert W. Armstrong.

It is the flowers of the Buddhist community that are at the graveside of Mr. Armstrong at all times. The Supreme Patriarch of Theravada Buddhism was prayed for by Mr. Armstrong, who sent a message wishing him speedy recovery, which he did have at the time of an earlier illness. He died in his early 90s later.

So we have, as an illustration in the Church, leaders in times past who had friends and who prayed for leaders of other religious communities. We are told to pray for the leaders of the countries in which we live. We are not told to pray for them only if they are converted and members of the Church of God. That should be obvious from Paul's statement in the New Testament when the emperors were most certainly pagan. So it does behoove us to take a broader perspective and to analyze the story a little better than we commonly do.

If we were to go back to the time of the New Testament Church, we would clearly discover that some people thought that the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church of God that Jesus Christ founded, was in some way simply a sect of the Jews.

And in fact, Paul addresses the Christian world as simply viewed as a sect.

On the other hand, the Jews came to think of Christians as Nazarenes in the general sense of the term that they were followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

And later Gentiles thought of this group of people as Christians because they talked about a Messiah which the Greeks knew by the name of Christ or Christos because the Hebrew word that we translate Messiah was equivalent to the Greek word that we translate Christ. That is someone who was anointed for a particular task and we were named after the office that Jesus of Nazareth had and

ultimately the whole of the religious world that gives credence to Jesus Christ at one level or another came to be known as the followers of the one who was anointed for a particular job, that is the Christ or Christians. And so the religion is that of Christianity, although I doubt that most people in the world would really know the relationship of that name. We just think it is a name that Jesus had without really understanding its background.

So in the certain sense when Paul, writing to the Greek-speaking people who were being called of God, defined the nature of Christianity, he spoke in terms of being inwardly a Jew because there was something that the Jew possessed. In other words, the Jew had possession of the oracles of God. At that time there were not books of the New Testament completed as we now have them, though certainly gospel accounts came to be written early on, probably in the fourth decade of that century toward its close. That's around 38, 39 A.D. in that period of time and written, of course, sometimes decades later. But when Paul refers to the people of God, he spoke of them as being Jews inwardly, not merely outwardly in terms of circumcision or attending synagogue or claiming to be heirs of Abraham, but Jews inwardly, in whom the law of God was being perfected, who understood the intent and purpose of the law.

Before there were Jews who went about making quite clear that the Gentiles were sinners, whether or not they had the law, because they certainly violated the principles that the Jews understood from the law. But Paul addressed them in Romans 1, 2, and 3 in that area. He addressed them in terms of the fact that the Jews who broke the law were no different than the Gentiles who committed all sorts of atrocities in their societies, one to another and people to people.

The one didn't have the law, the other had it, understood it, and didn't practice it, so that in fact they were both guilty. Those who sinned without the law perished without that law.

They were simply being punished as a result of going contrary to the perspectives and views of men, and whatever their consciences may have guided them to do. Then there were those who perished according to the law, the Jew who knew and did not. There were those Jews who sought to live by the law, one of whom Jesus said, you are not far from the kingdom of God.

That was before the day of Pentecost. Paul, writing sometimes afterward, spoke of Gentiles who do the things written in the law, their conscience in a sense, being witness to those things, even though they did not know the law, because as you know, many human laws are based on the principles of the Ten Commandments, though not all. And so it is possible for Paul to write about people who had not received an understanding of the law in addressing the Romans, as if, in fact, in many cases there were those who did what was right in accordance with how they sought to be obedient to what the society or the laws of that society construed to be right. For basically, in society, adultery, murder, lying, which certainly is what the men in prison did who claimed they were all innocent, most of them are guilty. The fact remains that these are fundamental laws, stealing, coveting, which lead to lying and stealing. The last commandment, in a sense, is one of the broadest and most oriented toward intent and purpose.

But all societies in one way or another have had, even the Communist Society and the former USSR, required its people, not necessarily party members, but required the people to tell the truth to one another as comrades. Now, that's very honorable. The problem with communism, of course, is those who ran the system didn't tell the truth to the people.

But nevertheless, societies do have certain basic principles. Buddhism has five, essentially the last five, of the teachings of the Ten Commandments as the relationship of human being to human being.

Islam is based on submission to the revelation, the instruction that comes from the Qur'an, which is based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, much of which come from the Old Testament and New Testament as well as spirits who revealed in a cave to Muhammad things that he understood to be the message of God. And so it's possible to have a remarkable communication with numerous people. And to find that there are people who respect us, as well as people who would argue, we have had the respect of kings who were Catholic, we have had the respect and still do, Leopold, of course, is deceased, that's why I use the past tense.

Otto von Habsburg, who most certainly is a practicing Catholic and a politician, has admired the kind of work we have been able to do, respects what we have accomplished, and appreciates our recognition of his concern for the future welfare of Europe, and he has concern for that. What it may come to is a separate and a distinct issue.

Franz Josef Strauss, now deceased, was a guest of Herbert Armstrong in his home, the Varian Catholic, a man who said as a Catholic he had never spent such a happy day in his life than a day in Mr. Armstrong's home being able to talk with him.

Certainly we would find it difficult not to say the same thing of many of our Jewish and Muslim friends, the relationship we have with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's royal family, those who were secular Jews as distinct from the religious Jews at Hebrew University, some of our Muslim friends whom I know in Syria. Let's take the case of Ismail Hijara, who was in Iraq, since Iraqis don't have a very good reputation in this country today, which is unfortunate because there are varied people in the country. Ismail Hijara is a teacher in Saudi Arabia. He has worked on the excavation from time to time, and when Mr. Carl McNair, a minister, was with the students at the excavation in Syria that the Ambassador Foundation supports.

The earlier one was at Terco in the Euphrates and Tel-Mozan is near the Turkish border today.

Mr. Carl McNair was in the northern one. Ismail Hijara was trying to understand what made our students different, and he analyzed all the things about zeal for learning, cooperation, understanding, everything that you would associate with scholarly mindedness, academic pursuits, ability to get along with others, and he concluded that all the others, and I would have had to say the same thing, all the others who were also there, whether from the University of Paris or Rome, the University of Arizona, whether from UCLA, Cal State, LA, or others, whether they were Catholic, whether they were Protestant, whether they were Jews, or Muslim.

They all shared these things, but he said, if that's the case, how do you explain why Ambassador students are still different? And he simply left, not knowing how to account for the fact that there was a difference as a Muslim perceives it. And he came back shortly thereafter and said to Carl McNair, he said, now I know. The difference is in the spirit.

There is something that has taken place in the spirit that makes the difference.

I cite to you that it was a Muslim who identified that which is so fundamental.

It may have been somebody else who did it for you, but in terms of this story, it was a Muslim who perceived that the ultimate difference between members of the Church of God and any other group he was with has to do with something that transforms the spirit in man, which is, as you should know, Holy Spirit from God.

That's what makes the difference. Either that is why you are different now from what you were, from what you were five or ten, or even two or three years ago, as you look back in your life, or something

has happened to you that you have not grown spiritually to be different, to be able to think different, to act different.

It isn't just a change of personality. Ismail Hijara was correct. It wasn't personality.

It wasn't intellect because there are other good personalities.

We have remarkable personalities on television and some not so remarkable, but that was not it. Now, your personalities undoubtedly have been helped.

Your health undoubtedly should be helped, but the center of it was correctly defined as that which transforms the spirit in man. It is in the spirit that this change is wrought that distinguishes the Gentile who is a Jew within, the Israelite who ceases to want to be a Gentile but becomes a Jew within, the Jew who becomes a Jew within as distinct from merely without through circumcision.

That was a remarkable insight because in the end Paul says those who have the spirit of God are those who are going to participate in the first resurrection without the spirit of God having joined with the spirit in man. It will be impossible to participate in the first resurrection.

It will be impossible to participate in the first resurrection.

That spirit will enable all people ultimately to be resurrected to judgment.

There are two fundamental kinds of resurrection occurring, broadly speaking, at three times.

One, the resurrection to life over which the second death has no power.

Then the resurrection to judgment of the overwhelming majority of human beings who have never truly adequately understood the spiritual truth of Jesus Christ. Then, of course, the resurrection to judgment after the resurrection to judgment of the vast majority for those who have known better, who chose not to go along with the government of God through Jesus Christ, whether in the Church of the New Testament or whether in the Church or Congregation of Israel in the old. These are the people who have made shipwreck, as Paul said. These are not people of whom John spoke when he said they went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would have remained with us. There are some who make shipwreck whom Paul very greatly regretted had chosen another route to go and had spurned the Spirit of God and all the truth and the fruits that come from contact with God. So, in a sense, in the New Testament times, there was a large group of people who were known as Nazarenes and they later had other terms and came to be known as the work spread among Greek-speaking Gentiles as well as Greek-speaking Jews as Christians. They were as different from the Jews of New Testament times as David, for example, was among people in his day, as Joshua, Aaron, Miriam, Moses were in their day from the rest of the nation in the family. See, Joshua tells us, he said, as Moses did earlier, Moses said, now you remember, I have told you that when you get in the land, you're going to do all these things that will bring catastrophe on you because you do not have the Spirit that will enable you to obey God, to do his will, to think his thoughts, to live the kind of life he intends you to be.

That is, you don't have, as he said, any promise of the Holy Spirit that would make you like your Creator. The children of Israel couldn't imagine that would be true. They didn't understand.

In the days of Joshua, after his work was over, it's worth reading both the story at the close of Deuteronomy, Moses' speech, and Joshua's speech, where you will discover that he said, that you do not have the Spirit to keep, to be obedient to the law. The Spirit of God was not promised to the nation as a whole. It doesn't abide in them. So in that sense, judges, priests, kings, prophets, people

whom we commonly refer to as lay people, there were some that God called all during the period that we define as the Old Testament. In other words, from the founding, from before the founding of the nation, to the time that the Messiah appeared in the first century of the present era. God called individuals from among those people.

They were part of the congregation of Israel or the family of Israel before, but they differed by means of the Spirit of God that was made available.

Jesus spoke of it clearly in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, David identified the same thing when he said, when he made a very serious blunder, a blunder of public proportion that needed to be written in the Bible. He said, Take not your Holy Spirit from me. Create in me a clean heart. How God does that, of course, is by means of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.

So David understood that if the Spirit of God were to leave, because he would continue to be in an unrepentant attitude, he would ultimately perish.

The Spirit of God is ultimately what distinguishes God's people, even among those who may have the general revelation of God. Now no one disputes the fact that the Jews have the Old Testament revelation. The Christians have the Old and the New, though they pay attention to the one far more than to the information in the other, that's speaking broadly.

Nevertheless, within the vast Judeo-Christian culture, the spread that has affected also Islam, in this vast culture, God's people differ because having the Spirit of God something occurs that would not occur otherwise. Paul addresses this when he writes the Corinthians and says that it is the result of the Spirit of God that enables us to perceive the things of God.

That is, if we didn't have the Spirit of God, we would look at the Bible in general as the Jews looked at it if they came from the Jewish culture. They looked at it in the letter of the law.

They were looking in general for loopholes, or since there were so many loopholes that God purposely left, then they tried to solve the problem by building fences and then walls around to keep people from sinning in some way, with many other traditions that they added.

Jesus addressed this question in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 in particular.

If you were to look there, Jesus said that in times past, God's law had been given in such a simple expression as, you shall not kill. Anyone who sought to understand the intent of that law would immediately have grasped that that's where you start from. Then you look at other examples in the Scripture and you see how you were to treat your neighbor, and you learn from the Old Testament the Scripture says, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Now, Jesus said that you should not look at the commandment as simply prohibiting killing or murder. You should see it as also addressing the question of hate.

You should see it as addressing the question of animosity and jealousy, because all these things ultimately lead to the spirit of murder.

That is, it's what precipitates murder. So Jesus said, he who hates his brother has in fact committed murder in his heart, just as it says you shall not commit adultery, that he who lusts after someone who is not his wife has committed adultery in his heart.

That is, we are to examine the attitude what motivates. Now, we are able to do that because God has given his spirit to his church. We are able to look at the Bible in a unique way.

There was a young lady, a Chinese background, a Thai citizen named Phuong, who is married to our one Thai graduate from Ambassador College. Phuong was an educated person of the Buddhist world Chinese community in Chiang Mai in the North, and she first became acquainted with our student because there was one thing he didn't do, and that is he wasn't involved with women, as most young men are at university age, all around the world for that matter.

And he wanted to know something about his religion, and he was very careful not to push it, and she ultimately became acquainted with the book that was his religious book called The Bible in English. And she did what most people who don't know about the Bible would do, is she looked at the beginning. And being Chinese, the Chinese are prone to think in terms of history. She discovered that the early parts of the Bible certainly could not be called history because they were so incomplete. That is, the record was by no means adequate to be properly defined as history.

But she said what she found, and she could speak good English, what she found were stories.

Now, I'm not using this in the theological sense like the Joseph story, the this or that story. It was, in fact, however, an account or a story. And she saw immediately that each one of these stories in those early parts of the Bible were there because there was a specific purpose in them. It was either instructive in the intellectual sense, the spiritual sense, or it was moral in the sense of conduct. And if you read it and did not understand why it was there, she knew right away you didn't understand what was meant by that story.

Rather a remarkable insight for someone who did not come from the Christian world.

She came to be converted, was baptized, married, and is now a responsible member.

That is an interesting point. Her mind came to see that what was written in the Bible has a purpose for us to understand, that we should grasp what it says. Now, what is unique about the Bible is what Paul himself said, and that is that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The Jews could read the law. They could offer the Passover sacrifice every year.

But when it came to Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth was in fact slain on the day of the Passover.

The nation did not recognize him as the Lamb of God, as the fulfillment, and in fact fulfilled their part in it, both the Jews and the Romans.

Having read all about the slaying of the Lamb, the shedding of the blood, they did not grasp that someone would have to die, and they did not recognize him when he, in a sense, made clear that he was the one who would.

Quite a remarkable thing.

The days of Unleavened Bread were to picture a nation that should be free from the practice of sin.

And yet, when Paul looks at the people, when Jesus looked at the people, what did Jesus say? What did Paul say? Jesus said, you generation of adults.