

What Needs to be Added to *Creation Regained*

[First Baekseok Lecture, to be delivered at Cheonan University, South Korea, on Oct. 11, 2004.]

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to stand before you on this occasion. I am deeply grateful for the invitation which you have extended to me to deliver the second of the annual Baekseok Lectures at Cheonan University, and am humbled by this extraordinary privilege.

But beyond these feelings of personal gratification I experience a sense of awe at the marvelous ways of God as I stand before you. I think back to the ancient promise which God made to Abraham almost three millennia ago, that all the peoples on earth would be blessed through him (Gen 12:3). And it was indeed through Abraham and his descendants, and supremely through Jesus Christ, that the blessing of God's saving covenant was extended to include not just the Jews, but all the Gentile nations of the earth as well. It is one of the stupendous facts of world history that God, in the course of many centuries, kept his promise to Abraham, so that Gentiles like you and I could be included in his new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ. And in spite of the fact that I was born in the Netherlands as a descendant of the pagan Germanic tribes of western Europe, far from the promised land of Abraham and Jesus, and that I grew up and came to faith in North America, while you are descended from pagan ancestors in a country even farther removed from Palestine, yet we are brothers and sisters in our common Lord who experience the deep fellowship and solidarity of being together engrafted into the olive tree of God's people. Surely it is a miracle of God's grace that you and I are gathered together in this place on this occasion!

As I stand here I am also reminded of the text in Scripture which has supplied the name of these annual lectures at your university. Jesus Christ himself, in the message which he gave to the church at Pergamum through the apostle John, speaks of a white stone with a new name written on it which Jesus will give to him who overcomes (Rev 2:17). This white stone and its inscription speak of our victory, our purity, and our new identity in Christ. I pray that this year's Baekseok lectures may in some small measure reflect that victory, that purity, and that new identity, and may contribute to their further realization.

I have entitled my first lecture *What Needs to be Added to Creation Regained*. What I propose to do is to tell you a little bit about the origin and contents of my little book *Creation Regained. Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (1985), and then to suggest a number of themes which I believe should be added to it in order to give a fuller account of the biblical worldview. It is my hope that my account will be of interest to all of you, both those who have read the book and those who have not.

In order to put *Creation Regained* in context, let me make a few autobiographical remarks. I was born in 1942 in the Netherlands, but at the age of 5 immigrated with my family to Canada, where

I grew up. At the age of nineteen I went to Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the denominational college of the Christian Reformed Church. Here I came under the influence of Dr. H. Evan Runner, an enthusiastic proponent of the Calvinistic or reformational philosophy of D. H. T. Vollenhoven and H. Dooyeweerd of the Netherlands. Under Runner's influence I decided to study this philosophy at the Free University in Amsterdam, which I did during the years 1964 to 1972. (It will be of interest to many of you that one of my fellow-students in philosophy at that time was the well-known Korean Christian philosopher Dr. Bong Ho Son.) After completing my doctoral studies in 1972 I returned to Canada, and for ten years (from 1974 to 1984) taught the history of philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

The reason why I am telling you these autobiographical details is that they help to situate the circumstances under which my book *Creation Regained* was born. During the years that I taught philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, I co-taught a course called *Philosophical Prolegomena*, which was essentially an introduction to the reformational philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd. However, many of the students coming to ICS came from a non-Reformed background, and thus did not share the understanding of the biblical worldview which undergirds this philosophy. Before introducing them to the details of the philosophy, it was necessary to spell out the fundamental worldview assumptions which this philosophy took for granted. As a result, the course began with an intensive two-week introduction (which the students called *Bootcamp*) which introduced the students to the reformational worldview as the necessary foundation for the year-long course in philosophy which followed. In many ways it was an introduction to the biblical worldview as understood and articulated by the Dutch Neocalvinist thinkers Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. It was the lectures I gave for this intensive two-week introduction that formed the substance of my book *Creation Regained*.

Since its publication in 1985 this little book has been far more successful than I had ever dared to hope. Its English version is still in print, and is widely used in colleges and seminaries in North America. It has been translated into seven different languages, including Korean. In fact, the Korean edition, which was published with a preface by my old friend Dr. Bong Ho Son, has been more successful than any of the other translations. I am told that it has gone through 24 printings. It is nothing short of amazing to me how widely the book has been used, not least in Korea. Clearly, it fills a need for a short and systematic explanation of a worldview (not just a theology) that is directly based on the Bible, and that helps us to relate the authority of the Scriptures to the complex realities and issues of modern life. For many, the book has become their first introduction to the idea of a biblical worldview.

However, the success of *Creation Regained* has also meant that it has often been misunderstood. Because it was read as an introduction to *the* biblical worldview, without further qualification, it proved to be deficient in a number of respects. Although the book clearly states that it was originally written as an introduction to a particular Christian philosophy, that qualification of its purpose has often been overlooked. It was read as though it were meant to be a full exposition of biblical teaching in general, with the result that people were puzzled by the absence of any

substantive treatment of topics like prayer or missions, eschatology or the Holy Spirit. Unless it was understood that *Creation Regained* was originally designed with a focus on Christian systematic *philosophy*, it was bound to be found wanting by those who looked for a full-orbed treatment of theological and confessional issues.

I am taking this lecture as an opportunity to set the record straight. Although in all essentials I still stand behind what I wrote some twenty years ago, I want to highlight a number of themes which I believe are important for a biblical understanding of the Christian life which go beyond what I wrote in *Creation Regained*. First, however, let me briefly recapitulate the main points of the book, adding a few comments from time to time which are the fruit of my further reflection in the intervening years. I will divide this part of my lecture into five parts, corresponding to the five chapters of my book.

1. *What is a worldview?* The English word *Aworldview* is a translation of the German word *Weltanschauung*, and refers to the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things. It includes in its scope anything at all, from angels to atoms, from suffering to beauty. A worldview is something which every human being has, even though they may not be able to articulate it very clearly. This means that each of you has a worldview, whether you acknowledge it or not. Furthermore, a worldview tends to function as a kind of roadmap for our lives, guiding the choices we make. It is like theology and philosophy in being comprehensive in scope, but unlike them in not requiring special training or a specific kind of intelligence. Whether or not you have attended university, whether or not you have a high IQ, you have a worldview that guides your actions. To a significant extent, the worldview which each of holds is a product of all kinds of cultural forces around us: our upbringing, our schooling, the news media, the advertising industry, and much more. For Christians, however, who believe in the supreme authority of Scripture over all of life, these factors cannot be the last and decisive word. For them their worldview, just like their theology and philosophy (if they engage in them) is subject to the authority of Scripture. It is therefore crucial that our worldview be shaped by Scripture.

Although there is a sense in which all orthodox Christians (defined in terms of adherence to the ecumenical creeds of the early church) have the same worldview, there is also a sense in which different traditions of Christian orthodoxy have understood the Christian worldview in significantly different ways. This has to do primarily with different views of the relationship between nature and grace, or between creation and redemption. In my opinion, it is part of the genius of the Augustinian-Calvinist tradition that it understands redemption as re-creation, as the restoration in Christ of creation as it was meant to be from the beginning. To put it in the formulation that was dear to the heart of Herman Bavinck, *A*grace restores nature. *A*nother way to express this is to use Bavinck's articulation of the *A*essence *A*f Christianity, which he put in the following words: *A*God the Father has reconciled His created but fallen world through the death of His Son, and renews it into a Kingdom of God by His Spirit. *A*This is a formulation which all orthodox Christians can subscribe to. What is distinctive about the Calvinistic or reformational understand of this ecumenical confession is that it takes all the key terms of this fundamental statement in a universal, all-encompassing sense. The terms *A*reconciled, *A*created, *A*

Afallen, @world, @renews, @and AKingdom of God@are held to be cosmic in scope. Everything but God himself is included in these foundational realities of biblical religion.

At this point it is useful to reflect on the legitimacy of the use of the term Aworldview@or a Christian understanding of reality. Since writing *Creation Regained* I have done some research into the origins and history of the term *Weltanschauung*, and its equivalents and derivatives in other languages. My own research has recently been supplemented by the excellent work done by David Naugle, which he details in his recent book *Worldview. The History of a Concept* (Eerdmans, 2002). One of the conclusions I have come to is that the term Aworldview@rose in a context (German idealism and romanticism around the turn of the nineteenth century, associated with such names as Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schleiermacher) which supplied it with a number of connotations which are not particularly congenial with biblical religion. Among these connotations are a suggestion of historical relativity and subjectivity, and an implication of personal and private application as opposed to public and broadly cultural relevance. In addition, it can be argued that the emphasis on *seeing*, implicit in the word Aview,@may not do full justice to the biblical emphasis on *hearing* the word of God, and may be too closely allied with the Greek philosophical idea of *theoria*, a kind of seeing or contemplating which was primarily intellectual.

I acknowledge that these are legitimate concerns that have been urged against the use of Aworldview@in a Christian context, but am at a loss as to what other term to use. The best alternative might be Atestimony,@but this has acquired its own cluster of associations which would be misleading. Instead, I believe it is best to attach ourselves to the tradition of Christian usage, now more than a hundred years old, which sought to redefine Aworldview@by embedding it in a biblical context, and thus deliberately reshaping the category so that it no longer suggests historical relativism, privatized belief, or theoretical cognition. As Naugle points out, this process of reshaping the notion of worldview for Christian purposes was begun especially by the Scottish theologian James Orr and the Dutch thinker and statesman Abraham Kuyper. It was especially Kuyper who Aconverted@the notion of worldview into a positive Christian category, and used it to make the point that the Bible teaches a worldview which stands as a competitor against such secular worldviews or ideologies as liberalism or Marxism. Thus the biblical worldview is not just a theology or a practice of piety, but a cultural force to be reckoned with, which seeks to engage and shape society and culture.

Creation. It is evident from the way I have described the distinctive character of the Calvinistic or reformational worldview that the idea of creation is foundational to everything it proposes. Unlike other understandings of orthodox Christianity, it does not see redemption as something pitted over against creation (as in dialectical theology), or as supplementing and fulfilling it (as in classical Thomism), or as standing alongside it without intrinsic connection (as in the two-realm theory of Lutheran orthodoxy), but rather as renewing and restoring it. Thus creation, embodying God's intention from the beginning, is the very goal of salvation in Christ. The whole point of redemption is to restore life and the world to the way they were meant to be from the beginning. Salvation means re-creation, grace restores nature. It is especially in the Christian tradition which

runs from Irenaeus and Augustine through Tyndale and Calvin to Kuyper and Bavinck, which has given this primary and elevated place to creation in God's plan of redemption.

However, in order for us to understand this properly, we need to have a view of creation which is much more comprehensive and variegated than is common in ordinary Christian usage. The first thing most people think of in connection with creation is the so-called natural world, that is, the physical and biological world. We think of stars and galaxies as well as molecules and atoms, of trees and flowers as well as birds and beasts. But that is a very limited view of creation. In the biblical view creation is everything which God has ordained to exist, what he has put in place as part of his creative workmanship. To be sure, this includes the great variety of physical entities and processes, and the enormous diversity of flora and fauna which God has created according to their kind, but it encompasses much more. It includes such human realities as families and other social institutions, the fact and appreciation of beauty in the world, the phenomena of tenderness and laughter, the ability to conceptualize and reason, the experience of joy and the sense of justice. A great variety of things, institutions, relationships and phenomena are part of the rich texture of God's creation.

It is a striking fact that biblical religion is not unique in this. Although there is a sense in which the idea of creation, understood as a contingent and ordered arrangement of reality put in place by a transcendent God, is unique to biblical thought—certainly the Greeks never conceived of such a thing—the general idea of a divinely sanctioned cosmic order which encompasses both the natural world and human life and society, is very widespread. It has been pointed out, for example, that the notion of creation in the other nations of the ancient Near East, that is, those in Mesopotamia and Egypt and surrounding areas, referred primarily to the way human society was arranged. The various creation myths, although they did not exclude the physical and biological world, were primarily designed to explain the human world with its culture and society, its institutions like kingship and the priesthood. The work of Richard Clifford on these ancient creation myths is particularly illuminating in this regard.

However, this notion of an all-encompassing divine world order is much more widespread than even the ancient Near East. Virtually all cultures have myths and religions which presuppose such an order, and which relate that order in the first place to the arrangements of human society. Comparative religion and cultural anthropology finds this idea of a universal order, into which humanity and all its cultural manifestations fit like a baby in the womb, in virtually all human societies. The great exception is the societies shaped by the philosophies and ideologies of the West since the European Renaissance. It is in these societies that a divorce has been created between the natural and the human worlds, so that the standards of human life and culture are no longer sought in a given and external order which has divine authority, but rather in the human subject itself, which produces its own order out of its own authority.

All of this is to say that the biblical idea of creation as encompassing much more than the natural world is not very peculiar at all, from a world-historical perspective. What is peculiar about it is rather the transcendent and sovereign Creator who makes it all come to pass, and the

circumstance that that Creator makes his handiwork without any pre-existing stuff to work with. Biblical creation is a *creatio ex nihilo*, creation out of nothing, which means of course a creation out of not-anything, without any raw materials. God simply spoke and it was.

Consequently, from a broadly cultural and historical point of view it is not at all surprising that the Bible should include things like the political order, or the institution of marriage, as things created by God, as parts of what he had ordained from the beginning to belong to the created order. Nor should we conclude from the biblical texts which mention the political order and marriage (I am thinking primarily of Rom 13:1, 1 Pet 2:13, and 1 Tim 4:3-4) that these are the only social institutions or cultural realities which belong to the God-ordained arrangement of things. They are simply incidental illustrations of the general truth which is assumed throughout Scripture, that literally nothing is possible without the ordaining creative power of God, which lays down the law to creatures and created relationships and phenomena in all their vast variety.

It is especially the idea of creational law which clarifies the biblical conception of creation. As a sovereign king, God enacts his laws (his decrees, his statutes, his ordinances, his words) for everything that is. Reality is constituted by his creative word of command. Accordingly, everything is creational in the sense that it is both constituted and normed by a divine fiat. This applies as much to a bird's nest-building instinct as the principles of jurisprudence or logical thinking.

Fall. In dealing with the biblical teaching of the fall into sin from a worldview perspective, the main point to make is that the reach of the fall is as broad as creation. Just as creation is much more comprehensive and variegated than we usually tend to think, so the effects of the fall are much more extensive and multiform than we are prone to assume. Sin does not only corrupt the heart of man, but also all the issues of life which are rooted in the human heart. It leads to alienation from God in our faith life, and infidelity and cruelty in our ethical relations with our fellow humans. But the pollution extends much more widely. It affects our thinking, our sense of fair play, our capacity for beauty, our ability to manage scarce resources. In fact every function which God has given for human life.

This is the point of the Reformation doctrine of total depravity. This doctrine does not mean as it is often misunderstood to mean that humans are totally depraved in the sense that they are as morally corrupt as it is possible to be, but rather that sin has its depraving effects on the totality of our being. Thus we are not absolutely depraved in the sense that a fallen human being is no longer a human being but has become an animal, or that an unjust state is no longer a state but has become a criminal organization, but rather in the sense that there is no dimension of who we are which is unaffected by the fall. There is nothing about the human person, neither their will nor their reason nor their sense of beauty, that is unaffected by the fall. Thus it is completely unbiblical to assume that human rationality, for example, occupies a kind of bomb-free shelter where sin and the fall cannot reach. Instead, we must insist on the noetic effects of sin, the various ways in which our thinking is darkened and confused as a result of our fallen condition. Thus every kind of Pelagianism and every optimistic view of the innate goodness of man

ruled out as naive and unbiblical. It is not too much to say that in the biblical view humankind is rotten to the core, and is comprehensively lost in its own perversity.

Nevertheless it also true that the distortion brought about by sin cannot eradicate the goodness of creation. Sin and evil remain parasitical upon the good creation of God. Even hatred cannot exist without feeding off the positive resources of created human emotionality and assertiveness. Satan himself is a fallen creature, and in his creatureliness cannot help but testify, in spite of himself, to the goodness of God's handiwork. Against all forms of Manichaeism and Gnosticism the biblical worldview confesses that creation continues to be fundamentally good, however obscured and distorted it may be. This emphasis may at first glance seem like another version of the naive humanistic belief in the intrinsic goodness of humanity, but it is fact quite different. The crucial difference lies in the source of the continuing goodness. The biblical view sees that goodness continuing because of God's faithfulness to his creational ordinances, so that something of their goodness continues to manifest itself in spite of the religious directionality of that which is subject to those ordinances, whereas the humanistic view sees a remnant of indestructible unperverted goodness on the subject side itself. The one attributes all goodness to God, the other seeks to claim some goodness for man himself.

Redemption. Just as the fall extends as far as creation, so redemption extends as far as the fall. The preceding emphasis on the comprehensive scope of both creation and fall has as its purpose the ultimate claim that redemption in Jesus Christ is in principle equally comprehensive, that it excludes nothing in all creation from its scope. The salvation which Jesus Christ wrought is as wide as creation itself. Although we still see creation groaning like a woman in childbirth, yet the promise is that it will all ultimately be freed and restored. With the eyes of faith we envisage the full restoration of all creation. That creational restoration manifests itself in the first instance in the restoration of relationships through the forgiveness of sins—the restoration of our relationship with God, and as a consequence the restoration of our relationship with fellow human beings. But what begins as a religious and ethical renewal has further consequences for all of human life. Ultimately it seeks to transform the way we do business, the way we govern a nation, the way we weigh evidence in constructing theories, the way we engage in sport, the way we pursue a calling in art. All of life is religion, because all of life is part of the creation which God reclaims in Christ.

When we speak of salvation as the restoration of creation in this way it is important to make the distinction between restoration and repristination. This has to do with the biblical idea that creation was from the beginning meant to unfold and open up through human cultural and societal development. Repristination would mean bringing creation back to its original undeveloped state, to the stage of culture and society represented by Adam and Eve. But restoration means taking into account the intended trajectory of creation's cultural development, so that restoration is not historically regressive, but historically progressive along the track of the normative unfolding of creation. In short, salvation in Christ in the twenty-first century does not oppose computer technology or urbanization as such, though it will reject the various ways in which these developments distort and twist God's creational design. In my judgement, it is one of

the signal strengths of the Dutch Neocalvinism of Kuyper and Bavinck to have recognized the dynamic character of creation, so that as a religious movement it was simultaneously confessionally conservative and historically progressive. It affirmed the restoration of creation, not its repristination. It is this same understanding of the restoration of creation that is reflected in Calvin's distinction between usury and interest in the sixteenth century. He recognized that there was something creationally normative about the taking of interest in economic life, even though the Bible warns against its unjust distortion in usury.

There is much more that could be said about the idea of salvation as the restoration of creation. In *Creation Regained* I show how this idea also has significant implications for our understanding of the kingdom of God, as it is depicted in the New Testament--and how it resists all kinds of dualism which divide the created realm into secular and profane provinces. As the British Christian thinker C. S. Lewis once said, all of creation is at every moment claimed by Christ and counterclaimed by Satan. However, for the purposes of a brief review of the salient points of the creation-fall-redemption worldview the foregoing will have to suffice. The basic point is that salvation in Christ is cosmic in scope.

Discerning Structure and Direction. The practical consequence of the worldview I have sketched can in many ways be summed up by referring to the distinction between what I call *Astructure* and *Adirection*. Since creation is such a comprehensive concept, it follows that there is nothing in our experience which does not have a creational component, which is not significantly constituted and normed by God's creation ordinances. It is this creational component which I call structure. It refers to the kind of thing something is by virtue of its creational design, whether the *Asomething* in question is a Cocker Spaniel, a business enterprise, or a piece of art. Wherever we look we discern standards and regularities which define the proper identity of things within God's creational scheme. In some ways the term *Astructure* is misleading, since it can easily be misunderstood to imply a static or rigid configuration which inheres in the factual existence of things. But what is meant is something flexible and dynamic which allows for normative change and development, and which is not identified with the actual factuality or empirical existence of creaturely kinds. Perhaps a better term would be *Adesign*. Take for example the structure or design that holds for the family. The nuclear family, consisting of just parents and children, is one legitimate variant of that design, but it is not the only one. There is a variety in the way the creational design for a family can be realized. But all families have certain basic features in common, having to do (among other things) with the care and protection of children by their parents. Yet the basic set of features which defines a family cannot be identified with the way families actually exist and function, since all of them, to a greater or lesser degree, do not live up to the norm of caring for and protecting the younger generation, to mention only that part of God's creational design. In other words, actual reality is affected by the results of the fall.

It is the fall which introduces what I have called *Adirection*. By bringing about a deviation from God's creational design, the fall into sin twists and distorts what God had meant for good, and causes a situation that cries out for redemption, that is, the renewed ability to live according to God's good design. It is these two realities--the sinful deviation from, and the unearned renewed

compliance with, the ordinances of creation that constitute direction. It refers to a spiritual direction which either pulls away from, or draws toward God and his purposes. What Kuyper called the antithesis is the spiritual opposition between these two movements. It is this antithesis which defines the spiritual warfare that rages throughout the fallen creation, and which correlates with the claims of Satan, on the one hand, and the claims of Christ, on the other. This is a spiritual warfare which is not restricted to the kind of deliverance ministries which have become so widespread in recent years in the so-called Third Wave of spiritual renewal, although it certainly includes these. But the spiritual warfare of which Ephesians 6 speaks is much broader, for it encompasses every corner of creation where Christ seeks to reclaim creation from the enslaving rule of Satan. It also extends to the realms of politics and business, education and scholarship, child-rearing and sports. The whole terrain of culture, in fact the full extent of creation, is the arena of this spiritual warfare.

The crucial issue in engaging this battle on the cultural front is in discerning structure and direction. What is it about a particular phenomenon that is creational, and what is it that is directional, that is, represents a perversion of God's creational design which must be corrected out of the renewing power of Christ's Spirit? What is healthy and God-ordained, and what is sick and in need of God's healing? What is it about a particular family, or about the family life of a particular culture, which we as Christians should seek to affirm and support as in line with God's creational intent, and what is distorted and perverse which we should seek to combat and rectify?

In many cases it is easy to make that distinction between structure and direction. Despite debates in the secular west today, it is relatively easy, in the light of both Scripture and empirical observation, to see that marriage is heterosexual in design, and intended to be a lifelong loving commitment. Homosexual partnerships and widespread divorce are clearly a directional deviation from that design. But in many other cases the discernment of structure and direction is not nearly so straightforward. What is a normative structure for the business enterprise, for example, or what is the proper role of competition in sports? These are cases where the light of Scripture is less specific, and our reliance on Spirit-led good judgment, on the basis of creational experience, sanctified common sense and critically evaluated scientific data, becomes proportionately greater. It may be that in many of these areas Christians may come to significantly different conclusions, and will have to tolerate a diversity of opinion. Nevertheless, the framing of the question in terms of structure and direction, of creational design and religious spirit, is crucial for coming to Christian answers which are squarely based on the Bible's perspective on the world. According to Scripture, we must everywhere seek to do God's will, and to search out how he wants us to walk in his world.

Such an approach stands in stark contrast to the way the secular humanism of the West has sought to order human affairs. Where the Christian seeks to *find* his way in the world, that is, to discern the paths laid out in God's creation where God wants him to walk, the humanist seeks to *make* his way in the world, that is, to chart his own course in a world which is ultimately of his own design and making.

The foregoing is a very sketchy and incomplete survey of some of the main points of my book *Creation Regained*, supplemented here and there with more recent reflections on the relevant themes. Once again, the book was designed to be a worldview introduction to reformational philosophy, especially the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd. One could say that *Creation Regained* was written in order to make intelligible to a North American audience unfamiliar with Dutch Neocalvinism what Dooyeweerd meant when he said that the ground-motive (the fundamental religious driving force) of the Christian religion--a ground-motive which stands in opposition to the ground-motives of classical antiquity, medieval scholasticism, and modern humanism--is that of creation, fall and redemption.

I turn now to the things that I believe should be added to *Creation Regained* if it is to function, not as an introduction to a particular Christian philosophy, but as a general introduction to a biblical worldview.

The first theme that I believe should be mentioned is that of the Bible as a grand narrative. The Bible tells a single story, from the origin of all things in Genesis 1 to the consummation of all things in Revelation 22. It is a metanarrative which gives a meaningful place not only to the millennia covered by biblical history, from creation to the early spread of the gospel, but also to the end times when Christ will usher in the new heaven and the new earth. Furthermore, and of particular importance for us today, it gives a meaningful place to the time in between, roughly the time between the first and second coming of Christ, which is the time of the church and the worldwide expansion of the gospel. Although there is a very general sense in which the triad creation-fall-redemption can be said to correspond to that overall world-historical perspective, it is clearly a highly schematized version of that narrative, which does not do justice to the long period of messianic expectation during the time of Israel's national existence, between Moses and Christ, or to the two millennia of the church's expectation of Christ's second advent.

Allow me to quote from a document which was adopted last year by my own institution in Canada, entitled *The Cross and Our Calling: The Identity and Vision of Redeemer University College*, a document in which I was privileged to have a hand, and which seeks to enrich and deepen the language of worldview with the language of biblical narrative. Under the heading *Biblical Foundations* we wrote the following:

To understand the nature and purpose of higher education, we need to recall the conception of history that should shape it. There is a true cosmic story of which our university is a part: the Bible is the true story of the world, the grand historical narrative of an earth and a people formed in creation, deformed by human rebellion and reformed by God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ. It is the story of God's redeeming love for his wayward creation, the story that will culminate in the restoration of the entire creation under the gracious rule of God.

In this cosmic historical drama we can discern six major acts. In act one the creation is formed by God, his original purpose for it is explained and he pronounces it good. In act two this good creation is defiled by human rebellion and begins to suffer the effects of humankind's willful separation from the Creator. The remaining four acts of the biblical story from the third

chapter of Genesis to the book of Revelation tell of God's mighty acts in history as he works to restore the creation, delivering his world from the bondage of sin.

Act three, narrated in the Old Testament, recites the work of God to form a people who will bear in their corporate life the promise of future restoration. This people is meant to be a light to the world and a channel of God's redemptive love for all creation and all nations (Gen. 12:2-3; Ex. 19:30-6). God gives to his people the law, the sacrificial system, priests, prophets, kings and more, to nourish the kind of life that points to his intention for all peoples. For many ages of Israel's history, as she is overcome by the darkness of her pagan neighbours, God's redemptive purpose appears to fail (II Kings 17:7-23). And yet God promises that from this wayward people will come a Saviour who will one day establish, in the power of the Spirit, a kingdom without boundaries of time or space. By this Saviour the creation will be renewed and restored; the corruption brought upon the world by sin, and sin itself, shall be destroyed (Is. 2:2-5; 9:6-7).

An act four that promise is kept when Jesus of Nazareth steps onto the stage of history, announcing that he has come to realize the expectation of Israel and to fulfill Israel's calling by bringing God's salvation to a broken world (Lk. 4:16-21). Jesus claims that the kingdom of God has arrived, that God's power by the Spirit to liberate and heal the creation is now present in himself (Mk. 1:14-15). Yet this kingdom does not come in the way that Israel had expected. While the renewing and re-creating power of God is present in the life and work of Jesus, the world is still in bondage to sin and death: Satan continues to hold sway (II Cor. 4:4). Though in redemptive history a new era has begun in which the saving and restoring power of the promised age to come is beginning to flow into history, the final judgment on evil is delayed (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43; Heb. 6:4-5). In this new epoch, though the kingdom is already present in Jesus by the power of God's Spirit of renewal (Matt. 12:28), the full restoration of creation is not yet complete (Matt. 6:9-13).

What is the meaning of this new period in redemptive history? This is an urgent question, because this is the era in which we live: it is our place in God's story. The answer to this question ought to shape the life of the Christian community in all its endeavours, including its educational task.

Ours is an era of witness to the coming kingdom (Matt. 24:14; Lk. 14:15-24). Jesus was the first witness to the kingdom in his life, words, and deeds: he embodied the power of God's purpose to heal and renew a broken world. At the completion of his ministry he gathered the nucleus of his newly formed community together to give them their marching orders: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (Jn. 20:21). A community of Christ's followers was called together (ekklesia, from which *église* derives) to continue the witness to the kingdom that Jesus had begun. A witness to be carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit working within and among the believers, the people of the Lord (kyriakos, from which comes church) (Acts 1:1-11; Acts 2:14-42). Their story, our story, is act five of the biblical drama. This era of witness must continue until the sixth and final act of world history, when Jesus Christ returns to judge the living and the dead, to make a final separation between his good creation and the parasitic evil which has obscured and thwarted it, and then to complete his work of restoration and renewal (Rev. 21:1-5).@

I have given this lengthy quotation from an official document of my own institution as an

illustration of the need to flesh out in biblical-historical terms the bare bones of a worldview presentation which focuses on the systematic connection between nature and grace, between structure and direction, and between creation, fall and redemption. After all, the canonical Scriptures as a whole are more like a story or a drama than a systematic exposition of confessional and theological concepts. Moreover, they tell a story in which we ourselves participate, they narrate a drama in which we ourselves are actors.

Implicit in this emphasis on narrative is a second theme which should be highlighted in the Christian worldview, namely mission. We live in a time of judgment postponed, a time when the gospel has been spread, and is being spread all over the world. The apostle Peter tells us that the delay in the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord is because of his patience for our sake. He does not want anyone to perish, but wants all to come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). Therefore for the people of God the overriding priority in these in-between times is to testify to the person of Christ and the glory of his kingdom.

However, we must be careful to understand what it means to testify, to witness to Christ and his kingdom. It certainly means sending out missionaries and evangelists, and it means speaking of Christ ourselves, as occasions present themselves, to our neighbours, our coworkers, our friends and family members. But witness is not restricted to the verbal articulation of the gospel message. We are called, in the entirety of our lives to witness to the kingdom of God. Allow me again to quote from the document *The Cross and Our Calling*: @

We are called to witness to the victory of Jesus Christ in our whole lives, to make known the good news of God's renewed reign over creation (I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17). Since the kingly authority of our risen Lord extends to the whole world, the mission of his people is equally comprehensive: to embody the rule of Christ over marriage and family, business and politics, art and athletics, leisure and scholarship (Matt. 28:18-30; Rom. 12). Thus the work of Redeemer University College must be understood as part of the call of God to proclaim the good news of his kingdom, a kingdom which is in our own day both present and yet-to-come (Col. 2:6-8). @

We need to remember that by far the largest part of our existence is involved in the stuff of everyday life. We sleep, we work, we eat, we rest, we tell stories, we sing songs, we play games, we get married, we raise our children, we tend the sick, we visit our relatives, we bury and mourn our dead. Even if we are pastors, missionaries or evangelists we spend most of our earthly lives doing these everyday activities. It is precisely in these ordinary and everyday activities that the Christian community is called to witness to the gospel. The very shape of our lives needs to be a legible letter speaking of Christ and his rule. When we do explain the gospel, such a verbal presentation should be embedded in the warp and woof of our daily Christian lives which in their integrality testify to Christ's saving power.

This is another aspect of our earlier emphasis on the foundational importance of creation. It is in the richly textured glory of *created* human life, in which mothers sing lullabies to their babies, and children run for the sheer joy of going fast, that God wants to be glorified by our service and

witness to him, so that all the world can see what redeemed human life is like, despite the scars and scourge of sin and death. Individually and communally we are to be posters of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. When the apostle Paul says that the church is the ground and pillar of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15, KJV) he certainly does not mean that we as people of God somehow shore up or sustain the truth of God. Instead, what his image probably conveys is that we as church are collectively like the walls and posts which bore the graffiti of the ancient world, sending messages to all and sundry who passed by. We are to be the billboards of the gospel in the extraordinary ordinariness of our daily lives—extraordinary because of the renewing power of the holy Spirit, ordinary because of the common creational stuff of our daily existence. Or, to put it another way: directionally extraordinary, but structurally ordinary. It is in that profoundly this-worldly and mundane sense that creation is the theater of God's glory, to use Calvin's arresting phrase.

In the third place I would like to say a word about spirituality and the Christian worldview, meaning by that term primarily prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. I remember vividly being somewhat stung in 1984 when a friend of mine, after reading the manuscript of *Creation Regained*, commented that it said very little about the importance of the Christian's devotional life. I was rather defensive about this because I did think the practice of piety was important for the Christian life, but didn't really give it an essential role in my conception of the worldview-philosophy relation. To this day I am not sure whether it should have such an essential role in that specific relation.

However, I do believe spirituality, if we mean by that much-abused term the practice of the so-called spiritual disciplines, especially prayer, is a vital component of the Christian worldview more generally speaking. It is in prayer that the believer cultivates his or her relationship with God in Jesus Christ, and is molded into the kind of follower who can be an effective witness to the kingdom. It is also in response to prayer that God is pleased to do amazing works on behalf of his kingdom in both personal and cultural ways. Without prayer the witness of the Christian community is mute and powerless. The Heidelberg Catechism, one of the doctrinal standards of the Reformed church of which I am a member, speaks of prayer as the chief part of thanksgiving, meaning that it is the most important part of the Christian life, but I suspect that this is not a practical reality in the lives of many members of my denomination. It is certainly true that it was not a reality in my own experience for most of my life, although I have grown in this area in recent years. It is an aspect of Christian godliness where the European and North American churches have much to learn from their Korean brothers and sisters.

Prayer is of course closely linked to the work of the Holy Spirit, both in prompting believers to pray, and being himself the gift believers pray for. I have been very impressed in recent years by the power of the Spirit as this has been manifested in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements of the twentieth century. Although I have serious reservations about some of the theology of these movements, and although I acknowledge that the power of the Spirit is also powerfully present in the coming to faith of covenant children, in the daily sanctification of believers, and in the development of orthodox dogma over the centuries, I still regard it as a great work of God

that the gospel has been so powerfully advanced during the last century by the fresh manifestations of the Spirit in Pentecostal and charismatic circles. Unfortunately, the impact of these circles has often been blunted by a dualistic worldview which tended to be escapist and anti-intellectual. However, this is not always the case, and there is certainly no reason why a charismatic Christian should not embrace an integral and holistic reformational worldview. In fact the German Lutheran charismatic theologian Arnold Bittlinger, whose work *Gifts and Ministries* has had a great impact on me, come very close to espousing such a holistic worldview. In my opinion the charismatic and reformational movements have a good deal to learn from each other. There is no reason why a reformational worldview cannot incorporate some of the seminal insights of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, especially with reference to spiritual gifts and deliverance ministries. On the other hand, it seems to me that these newer movements have a great deal to learn from the integral perspective of the Neocalvinist tradition, especially in not pitting Asupernatural @phenomena against Anatural @phenomena in the way many contemporary charismatics do. A few suggestions in that direction are already found in preliminary form in *Creation Regained*.

These are only a few relatively incidental remarks about ways in which I would like to supplement what I wrote in my book of twenty years ago. There is much more that I could add, for example about the role of the cross and suffering in the Christian life, but these few comments will have to suffice. It is my prayer that they will be stimulating and thought-provoking, and that they will contribute to a lively and fruitful exchange of ideas about the idea of a Christian worldview and its implications for our Christian obedience today.

Thank you again for the extraordinary honour which you have done me in inviting me to speak here today, and for listening attentively to my halting reflections. May God bless you all!