

Pastor's Papers | Ronald H. Gann
Questions & Answers

Is There Such A Thing As A True Seeker?

(Extracted From *Fa\$T-Food Churchianity*; Ronald H. Gann [Aventine Press, 2009])

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Sadly, it is not out of character for Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors to shun theological preaching. With a demeaning wave of the hand, many write it off as woefully inapt at capturing the short attention-spans of their seeker target audience. So I was not surprised when my conversation with Pastor Jack turned sour. What had started out as a friendly interview quickly devolved into a contest of wits. Pitted against his therapeutic philosophy of ministry was my Calvinistic approach.

“Candidly, Ron,” he remarked to me, pointing to the church entrance hall, “the people who come through those doors every Sunday don’t give two-bits about Calvinism or Reformed Theology. They don’t even know what it is, nor do they care. They have *real problems* that theology books conveniently ignore.”

In the end, Pastor Jack admitted that Reformed ideology, particularly my advocacy for theological study, was “irrelevant and impractical.” The point inferred was that the study of God and His relationship to the world was for *bookworms*. Therapeutic outreach, he implied to the contrary, was antidotal and the bait by which a fledgling church could expand its attendance numbers. Regrettably, my appeal to Acts 2:42-47 as the biblical grid for church ministry was swept aside nonchalantly as nothing more than “Bible-thumping.” Alas, Pastor Jack’s seeker-sensitive mentality had won the day.

Categorically, I am a five-point Calvinist. I regard the Calvinistic acronym T.U.L.I.P. as the definitive plumb line, or measuring rod, by which God’s redemptive plan for mankind is brought to bear in Scripture. In Reformed Theology, the doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints are the compass that steer Calvinistic thought. Apart from the Protestant doctrine of Justification, this theological system—as conceptualized by Augustine of Hippo, crystallized by Martin Luther and John Calvin, and later canonized at the Council of Dort—is the hallmark of Reformation thinking.

I admit unapologetically that it is through the lens of Reformed Theology that I view Scripture. Yet one need not subscribe to this system to appreciate its contribution to the historic understanding of God and man. That the sovereignty of God and the depravity of man are given exhaustive treatment in the Bible is not a view exclusive to Reformed teaching. They are, in large part, universally accepted tenets within Christendom. At issue here is whether or not Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive churches view these doctrinal pillars in the same manner, and with the same vigor, as the Patristic Fathers, the Reformers, the Puritans, and most importantly, the Word of God.

Sovereignty implies authority; that is, the authority and right to rule supremely. It is the right to do what one wishes, to decree what is lawful and what is not, and to impose one's will on others while demanding conformance to that will. Supreme sovereignty has the right to reward obedience and to punish disobedience. In connection to this, the Bible teaches that God is sovereign and can do whatever He pleases in His creation without being answerable to His creatures (Dan. 4:35; Job 9:12; Rom. 9:20).

Unique to the Reformed tradition is the *degree* to which the absolute sovereignty of God is stressed. While most schools of Christian thought champion God's sovereignty, not all agree as to its extent. Some systems of thought, such as Arminianism, place limits on divine autonomy, insisting that God *cannot* force His redemptive will upon a sinner's heart without that sinner's volitional approval. To their way of thinking, the Almighty is constrained by the free-will of His creatures. Thus, while God graciously makes salvation *possible* and does everything He can, short of coercion, to persuade an unbeliever, it is ultimately the fallen will of the unbeliever that steers the vehicle of salvation. God is merely a copilot who maps the direction. For this reason, Arminianism promotes an inadequate view of God's sovereignty.

Others, particularly those who hold to Open Theism, suggest that God does not fully determine the future; consequently, humanity does in fact have the capacity to thwart His determining actions. To an Open Theist, mankind has veto power over God's sovereignty insofar as it relates to the outcome of natural events—even going so far as to have the decisional capability to *surprise* God or to affect an end that He did not anticipate. In view of God's diminished omniscience, therefore, all future things are subject to change or, using their vernacular, *open-ended*. Similar to Arminianism, it is mankind and his actions that are the sovereign determinate in Open Theism.

Reformed Theology rejects as unorthodox the downgrading of God's sovereignty by both Arminianism and Open Theism. Instead, we uphold the clear teaching of Scripture that God reigns supreme in and over all things, including the salvation process (cf. 1 Cor. 8:6). He sovereignly decrees "the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:10 cf. Acts 15:18) and ordains the steps of man "before one of them came to be" (Psa. 139:16).

God is utterly self-ruling. "[E]verything," says the apostle Paul, is "under his control" (Php. 3:21). And even though "We may throw the dice," it is the Lord Almighty, Solomon observed, who ultimately "determines how they fall" (Prov. 16:33, NLT). Called the "Sovereign Lord" no less than two hundred and fifty times in Scripture, the psalmist testifies to God's controlling power:

For he spoke, and [all creation] came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations (Psa. 33:9-11).

Reformed Christians also recognize that we tread on holy ground when analyzing this divine attribute. We are reminded that there are aspects to God's sovereignty that we cannot fully understand (Deut. 29:29). It is impossible for our finite minds to clearly identify with the nomenclature of an infinite Being. Nevertheless, while we cannot *comprehend* all that there is to know about God's sovereignty, the Scriptures provide

enough revelatory light so that we may at least *apprehend* it. And it is on this mountain of divine supremacy that Reformed Theology stakes its ground.

Everything that exists in the universe exists because God ordained it, decreed it, and called it into existence according to His good pleasure. “Our God is in heaven,” the psalmist declared, “he does whatever pleases him” (Psa. 115:3). Likewise, “The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths” (Psa. 135:6).

According to the apostle Paul, the sovereign Lord “works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Eph. 1:11b). The apostle later adds, “For from him and through him and to him are all things” (Rom. 11:36) and “For in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). In short, the Bible teaches that because all things find their purpose and sustenance in and from God, He does whatever He so pleases (to whomever or whatever He pleases) in accordance with His Triune will.

Even Albert Einstein, the great theoretical physicist and religious pantheist, recognized a controlling order behind the universe. When expressing his doubts about quantum mechanics and its lack of deterministic causality, he famously concluded: “God does not play with dice.” To put it in biblical terms, God is not capricious; He does not sacrifice His sovereignty on the altar of random chance. *Everything* that comes to pass does so orderly because He predetermined that it should. Both general revelation and special revelation make clear that God is the Supreme Controller of the universe.

No doctrine is more despised by the natural mind than the truth that God is absolutely sovereign. Human pride loathes the suggestion that God orders everything—including evil and calamity (Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6; Lam. 3:38)—and that He controls and rules over all. The carnal mind, burning with enmity against God, abhors the biblical teaching that nothing comes to pass except according to His eternal decrees. Most of all, the flesh hates the notion that salvation is entirely within the providence of God’s choice. If God chose those who are to be saved, and if His choice was settled before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), then believers deserve no credit for any aspect of their redemption. And such a notion is unthinkable to fallen man’s pride! The whole idea of divine determinism runs counter to our democratic, free-will way of thinking.

It is at this crossroads that I take issue with the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive philosophy of ministry. While giving lip service to God’s sovereignty, some pastors appear to recoil from it in actual practice.

Do proponents of this movement *really* believe that God is sovereign over His creation, including the eternal destinies of mankind? Do Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors *really* believe that it is the work of God—not marketing methodology, therapeutic programs, or Hollywood shtick—that is responsible for wooing an elect sinner unto salvation? Do they *really* believe the words of Christ when he stated categorically that “no one can come to me *unless the Father has enabled him ... and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him*” (John 6:65; Matt. 11:37, emphasis added)? It would seem by their tendency to cheapen the gospel that Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors do not wholly believe that God is sovereign enough to win the lost.

To be clear: I am *not* an advocate for *hyper*-Calvinism. Owing to its distorted view of election, I reject wholeheartedly its willful and sinful disregard to evangelize sinners, sanction mission trips, or to pray for the lost. *Hyper*-Calvinism is a heresy

which molests Reformed principles and disrespects the missiological and evangelistic teaching of Scripture. In contradiction to the *hyper-Calvinist* error, the Bible clearly teaches that while God is sovereign, the means of saving the lost (or gathering His elect unto Himself) is the proclamation of the gospel (Rom. 10:14-15). As Christians, therefore, we are to be passionate and determined in sharing our faith with unbelievers, *since we do not know who the unsaved elect are*. (It would no doubt surprise many to learn that Calvinists are largely responsible for spawning some of the greatest evangelistic crusades in Church history—not the least of which are the Reformation and The Great Awakening).

Noting this, my objection to the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive movement is not on the grounds of its willingness to evangelize unbelievers, which I applaud, but on the grounds that it is *negligent with the gospel* in its attempt to do so. Its man-centered methodology and market-driven gimmicks only patronizes the belief in a sovereign God, misleads many with its startling propensity for worldliness, and ultimately undermines the Church's call to separate herself from the world.

Judging by the degree to which Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors fumigate the gospel and secularize the Sunday morning church service to attract unbelievers, this philosophy of ministry does violence to evangelical orthodoxy. With its watered-down version of Christianity, lukewarm liturgy, milquetoast sermons, sanitized preaching, therapeutic pep-rallies, compromised doctrine, and performance-driven worship, the user-friendly Church in America shows itself to be at odds with the belief that God is the sole proprietor in winning the lost. While He does indeed command His followers to carry out His evangelistic purposes (and expects us to be obedient to that calling), He does not look kindly on those who neuter the Christian faith or shipwreck the gospel in the process.

The sovereign God of the universe does not require our artistic genius, publicity stunts, or our musical skills in order to draw, regenerate, and save those whom He has elected for salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-5). And He certainly does not look approvingly on pastors who soften the blow of Scripture with the aim of growing their churches. Forgotten in the marketing-evangelism of the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive movement is the glorious truth that it is our sovereign God *alone* “who provides the growth in accordance with His good pleasure” (1 Cor. 3:6).

As evidenced by the rise of pragmatism within the evangelical community, Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive churches have lost sight of God's sovereignty. They have lost confidence in the power of God to use the preached gospel to reach hardened unbelievers. Whereas the apostle Paul could say, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16), Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors show by their eagerness to give Christianity a face-lift that “they have denied its power” (2 Tim. 3:5).

Total Depravity: Can Dead People Seek God?

In reviewing the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive model of ministry, our main point of interest here is the first petal in the T.U.L.I.P. acrostic—*Total Depravity*. It speaks to man’s spiritual incapability, moral inability, and innate unwillingness to seek God.

Although often misunderstood or mischaracterized by well-meaning Christians, Total Depravity simply teaches that every part of man—his mind, will, emotions, and flesh—have been corrupted by sin. As a consequence of the Fall of Adam, or Original Sin, every human being born into the world is enslaved to iniquity. Moreover, apart from the efficacious grace of God, man is not only *unwilling* to follow the way of holiness but utterly *incapable* of doing so. When left to his natural inclinations, man can neither choose God nor is he disposed to accept salvation as it is freely offered. When given the choice between good and evil, man will *always* choose that which he is enslaved to—namely, darkness (John 3:19).

Thomas Watson, the Puritan preacher and author, wrote, “When God bids us convert and turn, this is to show us what we ought to do, not what we can do.”¹ Likewise, J. I. Packer, one of the most influential evangelicals in North America and Western Europe, elaborates:

Any discussion of man’s free will must begin with an understanding of his nature because man’s will is bound by that nature. A prisoner has the freedom to pace up and down in his cell, but he is constrained by the walls of that cell and can go no further, no matter how much his will might desire it. So it is with man. Because of sin, man is imprisoned within a cell of corruption and wickedness which permeates to the very core of our being. Every part of man is in bondage to sin—our bodies, our minds, and our wills.²

That sin permeates the *totality* of our nature from birth is the wholesale testimony of Scripture (Psa. 51:5; 58:3 cf. Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22). It penetrates to the very core of our being so that *everything* we think, say, or do is tainted by it. So much so, we’re told by the prophet Isaiah that even “our righteous acts are like filthy rags” before a holy God (Isa. 64:6).

Thus, for God to redeem totally depraved sinners (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13), the Reformed position teaches that God must first predestine the sinner unto salvation (Rom. 8:29-30), draw the sinner to Himself (John 6:37-40), regenerate, or resurrect, the spiritually dead sinner by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3), induce the sinner’s will by renewing his mind (Eze. 36:26 cf. Eph. 4:23), and subsequently grant the sinner salvific faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8; Php. 1:29; Rom.12:3). Only then is the sinner justified by a just God (Rom. 3:26 cf. 5:1) on promise of future glorification (Rom. 8:30).

The Calvinistic understanding of salvation is therefore a sequence of supernatural events that is wholly of the Lord (Jnh 2:9), according to His discretion and good pleasure (Eph. 1:9 cf. Rom. 9:14), and ultimately so “that God’s purpose in election might stand” (Rom. 9:3). As a result, the enslaved will of man is liberated by divine election.

That man can claim no *precursory* responsibility in the decisional process of salvation is a biblical fact. It’s God’s decision, single-handedly, to save. Indeed, “It does

not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort," Paul said, "but on God's mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Similarly, the apostle John declared that men are reborn "not of natural descent, *nor of human decision* or a husband's will but born of God" (John 1:12-13, emphasis added). It is only after a sinner has been spiritually regenerated by the Holy Spirit and given a renewed mind that his thinking is enlightened and the gospel reckoned as *irresistible*.

In a word, Total Depravity is universal. It does not discriminate. But while most Christians are in agreement concerning sin's genetic defect, there remains wide speculation in the Church concerning its scope. And it is to the particulars of this scope that we now turn.

The preponderance of evangelical thought in America today is quick to support Paul's choice of words in Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13; namely that mankind is "*dead* in transgressions and sins" (emphasis added). Yet this same overwhelming majority—including most Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors—is slow to accept the Reformed explanation behind Paul's syntax. On the contrary, they hold tenaciously to the Arminian misinterpretation which puts forth the case that "dead in ... sins" refers—not to *lifeless inability*, as Calvinists insist—but to *spiritual separation* from God. And this separation, though severe, does not preclude man's ability to seek after the Creator.

To be "dead in ... sins," Arminianism argues, is not a pronouncement about the *permanency* of man's spiritual state; rather it is a *prognosis* of what *will be* permanent if not properly medicated. The apostle Paul, they argue further, is applying metaphorical terminology in reference to man's *relationship* with God and did not have in mind a *literal* or *active* sense of the word "dead."

To the point, to be dead in sins means that we are cut off from a relationship with God that is necessary for spiritual life. Arminians contend that our sin causes *potential*, not actual, spiritual death where mankind should be viewed, not as a corpse, but as terminally ill. This take on Ephesians 2:1 (and Colossians 2:13) is popularly called by some as the 'Wounded Man Syndrome.' In their line of reasoning, injured man possesses some semblance of life within the human heart that is still capable of looking for, responding to, and accepting God—separated though he may be. Man is an *idiot savant*, as it were, whose mental faculties contain a little island of righteousness, untainted by the deadening disease of sin, which preserves the freedom of the will to accept Jesus Christ.

Herein stands the fundamental disagreement between the two camps in terms of biblical exegeses. Whereas the Reformers interpreted Paul as saying that man is nothing more than a walking *corpse*—no more capable and no less willing to respond to God than a cadaver—the Arminian position holds that man is spiritually alive, albeit *wounded*, who, by God's grace, has enough life within himself to seek after God. Furthermore, whereas the Reformed Christian laments that "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jer. 17:9), the Arminian argues contrarily that the human heart is *not* so depraved that a man cannot rise above his own deceit and illness to seek out a spiritual remedy.

I take the time to belabor this difference between Calvinism and Arminianism and the depravity of fallen mankind because it goes to the heart of the Purpose-Driven philosophy, in general, and the seeker-sensitive movement, in particular. To adopt a

philosophy of ministry that is called “seeker-sensitive” assumes that there are in fact depraved sinners who are actually “seeking” God. It assumes that, despite the rigor mortis that pollutes our degenerate hearts, there still exists in the heart of man the ability to pursue, and the willingness to know, the Creator of the universe.

Objectively speaking, we must then ask two important questions: What exactly did Paul mean when he wrote that we were formerly “dead in ... transgressions and sins”? Additionally, in light of our sinful natures—whether dead or separated—we must ask if fallen man really possesses the wherewithal in their natural state to seek after God.

These questions cut to the heart of the issue facing the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive movement. Does “dead” mean dead to Paul’s way of thinking? When the apostle used this choice word to describe the human condition did he really have in view the argument that Calvinists put forward; namely, that man is “lacking power to move, feel, or respond” and is “incapable of being stirred emotionally or intellectually”³ toward the things of God? Or, as Arminians suggest, did Paul simply allude to a spiritual “means of division”⁴ that exists between God and man as a result of the Fall?

A return to the original Greek language in which Paul wrote Ephesians and Colossians is in order. It’s interesting to note that the Greek word for “dead” in Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13 is *nekros*. According to the New Testament Greek Lexicon,⁵ the *King James Version* of the Holy Bible translates *nekros* as “dead” 132 times, with both literal and metaphorical usage applied by the writers. Similarly, *nekros* is referenced 128 times by the *New American Standard* translation, where the term is used once for a corpse, 122 times in direct reference to being “dead”; three times for “dead man”; once for “dead men”; and once for “dead men’s.”

According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the Greek word *nekros* has both proper and figurative meaning—neither of which, however, supports the Arminian allusion to separation. Literally defined, *nekros* means “one that has breathed his last; lifeless; deceased; departed” and “one whose soul is in heaven or hell; destitute of life; without life; inanimate.”⁶ This is the proper, or literal, use of the word “dead” (*nekros*).

Continuing, if we allow for the metaphorical use of *nekros* in Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13, as Arminians reason, the Greek does even more damage to their case. According to Strong, *nekros* carries the symbolism of being “spiritually dead; destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God, because [one is] given up to trespasses and sins; inactive as respects [to] doing right; destitute of force or power; inactive; inoperative.”⁷

Notice the glaring absence to any metaphorical use of *nekros* that implies separation. “Spiritually dead,” according to Strong, as well as “destitute of force or power; inactive; inoperative” is the metaphorical meaning of *nekros*—not alienation.

It is clear from the root meaning of “dead”—whether taken literally or metaphorically—that the apostle Paul pronounced a death sentence on the heart and will of mankind. Man’s spiritual condition, according to the Bible’s original language and its English equivalent, is spiritually “inactive” and “inoperative” and therefore incapable of performing the U-Turn God requires. Even more tragic, man’s internal desire to want to change is “destitute of force or power.” Unable and unwilling to respond to God, the spiritual nature of the human race is effectively comatose.

Had the apostle Paul been an Arminian in his thinking and believed that man was simply alienated from God, one could then argue that the apostle's Greek erudition and rhetorical skills are in question (which both conservative and liberal scholarship reject). Logically, Paul could have used—and most likely would have used—the Greek word *apo* to make his case for separation and alienation. This word encapsulates exactly what Arminians allege Paul to be actually saying in Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13. *Apo* refers to “any kind of separation of one thing from another by which the union or fellowship of the two is destroyed.”⁸ To the regret and embarrassment of Arminianism, together with the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors who follow suit, Paul used *nekros*—not *apo*.

How can we be certain that the Calvinistic view concerning the “inoperability” of man's will to seek God on account of his deadness is what Paul had in mind? The answer is because other passages in the Bible, to include Paul's own writings elsewhere, make clear that there is no such thing as a true “seeker.” All mankind is polluted by sin *in totality* which adversely affects our ability to seek the Lord. Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive pastors should take note.

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophet Isaiah conveyed: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, *each of us has turned to his own way*” (Isa. 53:6, emphasis added). Solomon mourned that “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins” (Eccl. 7:20). Moses observed under the same inspiration “that every inclination of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil all the time” (Gen. 6: 5). David declared, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psa. 51:5).

Total Depravity, we read in Holy Writ, ravages like a deadly cancer the nature, heart, intellect, and the will of man from conception to death. As a consequence, King David—a redeemed man commended by God for having a redeemed heart that did indeed seek Him (1 Sam. 13:14)—lamented the effects of Total Depravity on the unredeemed will:

The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men *to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God*. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one (Psa. 14:2-3, emphasis added).

David understood clearly the bondage of the human will and its inability and unwillingness to seek after the holy. The apostle Paul echoes, and then expands upon, the Davidic psalm in Romans 3:11-12 and concludes outright: “no one ... seeks God” but “All have turned away.” Owing to mankind's fallen wickedness, the author of Psalm 10:4 also makes clear that “In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.”

If then, as Moses, Isaiah, Solomon, David, and Paul make clear, every inclination in the heart of man is wicked whereby no person can or will seek God, it stands to reason that the seeker-sensitive mentality is built upon a faulty premise. If there truly exists in this fallen world enemies of God who seek after Him on their own accord—in contradiction to the spiritual deadness of their hearts and their enslaved wills—then

neither David and Paul, nor the omniscient Holy Spirit who inspired them, know anything about them.

On the contrary, to suggest that unredeemed man has the wherewithal, let alone the interest, to seek a holy God is simply a theological fiction that flies in the face of Scripture's clear expose on universal depravity. What many unbelievers and so-called seekers actually seek in Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive churches are happiness and contentment; not holiness and conversion. They seek the benefits and blessings of God without a willingness to pay the cost or to bear their own cross (cf. Matt. 10:38). They seek to fulfill their quest for eternity that God has purposely placed in their hearts "yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (Eccl. 3:11). They long for the emotional comfort and security that often comes from participating in religious ceremonies but flee from God whenever the word "surrender" is mentioned.

The reader should not be surprised. Unless God grants the unbeliever the ability to seek His face by His sovereign will, the so-called seeker searches for God in vain. Protestant Reformer John Calvin summarized it aptly:

Since the human mind, through its weakness, was altogether unable to come to God if not aided and upheld by his sacred word, it necessarily followed that all mankind, the Jews excepted, inasmuch as they sought God without the Word, were labouring under vanity and error.⁹

While it is certainly not my aim to call into question the character of pastors who hold to the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive philosophy of ministry, I am compelled to examine the fruit of their labor in light of God's Word. Included in a pastor's fruit, to be sure, are his doctrine, epistemology, and his ministerial philosophy. I draw my conclusions, therefore, based on firsthand experience, having attended a number of megachurches at length, and having served alongside or under pastors who have been bitten by the bug of pragmatism.

Moreover, as servants, teachers, preachers, elders, pastors, deacons, and especially as Christians, it is our call of duty to expunge heresy and sinful thinking from our ministries lest the Bride of Christ blush from embarrassment when the Bridegroom comes for her. We have a responsibility to address error and to take corrective action.

We are exhorted as shepherds to protect the flock from worldliness. Any antidotal nonsense that disguises itself as orthodoxy yet romances the culture by its shameless repackaging of eternal truths stands culpable of theological duplicity. It is a sovereign God alone—not man's desire or will, let alone man-made methodology—who seeks and calls (Ezek. 34:7-16 cf. Luke 19:10). Any philosophy of ministry that plays fast and loose with the sovereignty of God and the depravity of man—whether it be the Purpose-Driven and seeker-sensitive movement or *pseudo-Christian* cults—must be rejected quickly, soundly, and loudly.

At the risk of sounding oxymoronic, I wish to be a *peaceful warrior* for the cause of Christ and His Church. I certainly do not want to be pigeonholed as a rebel rouser or a legalist. But inasmuch as I wish to be diplomatic and agreeable, I seek even more to be obedient to the truth of Scripture and to the God whom we serve.

My fight, as I noted in the Preface of this book, is not with any fellow evangelicals in particular but against the blasphemy of *Fast-Food Churchianity* in general that has

permeated evangelicalism for far too long. It is on this ground that we take our stand and bid the Church to take up the sword against compromise and religious secularism. Let us stand on the words of the great Augustinian monk and Reformer Martin Luther who, when contending for biblical truth against an apostate Rome, charged forth with the mantra: “Peace if possible, truth at all costs.”

—*Ronald H. Gann*

¹ www.intoutreach.org/seeking.html

² J.I. Packer; *Evangelism & The Sovereignty of God*; Inter-varsity Press; 1991

³ “Dead.” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2009. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dead

⁴ “Separation.” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2009. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/separation

⁵ See www.studylight.org

⁶ www.studylight.org/isb/view.cgi?number=3498

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ www.studylight.org/isb/view.cgi?number=575

⁹ John Calvin; *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ch. 6