

## Developing a Christian Mind

### Introduction

Are YOU a problem thinker?  
Here is one man's story:<sup>1</sup>

It started out innocently enough. I began to think at parties now and then to loosen up. Inevitably though, one thought led to another, and soon I was more than just a social thinker. I began to think alone - "to relax," I told myself. But I knew it wasn't true. Thinking became more and more important to me, and finally I was thinking all the time.

I began to think on the job. I knew that thinking and employment don't mix, but I couldn't stop myself. I began to avoid friends at lunchtime so I could read Thoreau and Kafka. I would return to the office dizzied and confused, asking, "What is it exactly we are doing here?"

Things weren't going so great at home either. One evening I had turned off the TV and asked my wife about the meaning of life. She spent that night at her mother's. I soon had a reputation as a heavy thinker.

One day the boss called me in. He said, "Skippy, I like you, and it hurts me to say this, but your thinking has become a real problem. If you don't stop thinking on the job, you'll have to find another job." This gave me a lot to think about.

I came home early after my conversation with the boss. "Honey," I confessed, "I've been thinking..." "I know you've been thinking," she said, "and I want a divorce!" "But Honey, surely it's not that serious."

"It is serious," she said, lower lip aquiver. "You think as much as college professors, and college professors don't make any money, so if you keep on thinking we won't have any money!" "That's a faulty syllogism," I said impatiently, and she began to cry. I'd had enough. "I'm going to the library," I snarled as I stomped out the door.

I headed for the library, in the mood for some Nietzsche, with NPR on the radio. I roared into the parking lot and ran up to the big glass doors... they didn't open.

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<sup>1</sup> Available online in many locations, including here: <http://psy.rin.ru/eng/article/196-101.html>

The library was closed. To this day, I believe that a Higher Power was looking out for me that night.

As I sank to the ground clawing at the unfeeling glass, whimpering for Zarathustra, a poster caught my eye. "Friend, is heavy thinking ruining your life?" it asked. You probably recognize that line. It comes from the standard Thinker's Anonymous poster.

Which is why I am what I am today: a recovering thinker. I never miss a TA meeting. At each meeting we watch a non-educational video; last week it was "Dumb and Dumber." Then we share experiences about how we avoided thinking since the last meeting. I still have my job, and things are a lot better at home. Life just seemed... easier, somehow, as soon as I stopped thinking.

## **I. The Need for a Christian Mind**

Now of course this is one of the major problems in the church today and one of the chief shortcomings in the lives of too many evangelical Christians, for we, too, have stopped thinking!

Our great responsibility and need today, as it has been in very age and epoch of the Church, is for the development of a robust Christian mind, for the in-depth formation and the steady, faithful application of a thorough-going Christian and biblical view of life and the world.

### **A. Because it is a biblical mandate (1 Cor. 2: 16; Phil. 2: 5; 1 Thess. 5: 23)**

First and foremost, this is a biblical mandate, for a Christian mind is not only a gift of our salvation — "we have the mind of Christ" — says Paul in 1 Cor. 2: 16, but it is also a task — "have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" — as Paul also says in Phil. 2: 5.

The problem is that we have been more intent on getting people saved but delinquent in getting them sanctified entirely, including that of the mind (cf. 1 Thess. 5: 23).

"The problem is not only to save souls," said Charles Malik in an address given at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center some 25 years ago at Wheaton College in which he chided the evangelical church for its anti-intellectualism.

The problem is not only to save souls, but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you

have not won the world. Indeed, it may turn out that you have actually lost the world.”<sup>2</sup>

For some observers, this is still an evangelical problem.

In the Tuesday, June 28, 2005, edition of the *Dallas Morning News*, editorial columnist William McKenzie wrote an article titled “Paving the way for evangelical progress” in which he focused on what evangelicals can learn from mainline denominations (he reversed the compliment the week before in an article on what the mainline denominations can learn from evangelicals).

In any case, here is his first piece of advice to enhance evangelical progress: “Evangelicals need more serious thinkers. Because of the anti-intellectualism found in some corners of evangelicalism, the movement has no abundance of “ideas people” sharpening its message.”

### **B. For the sake of the gospel and its receptivity in culture**

J.[ay] Gresham Machen, the founder of Westminster seminary, saw this problem coming some almost a 100 years ago in a speech he gave on “Christianity and Culture” that made a similar point.

Machen emphasizes the importance of developing a Christian mind and influencing the thought style of the culture for the sake of the gospel and its receptivity in the world.

False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.<sup>3</sup>

Many cultural critics recognize that there are so many false ideas out there, that the collective thought of our nation and of the world is overwhelmed by blarney and bologna.

Most recently, Harry G. Frankfurt has written a tiny book that has made the NY Times best seller list for fiction titled *On B...S* (though he doesn’t use the initials for this profane expression).

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1980), pp. 29-34.

<sup>3</sup> J. Gresham Machen, “Christianity and Culture,” *Princeton Theological Review* 11 (1913), pp. 1ff.

In the opening sentence of this little book, he writes: "One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much b...s."

He clarifies what he means by this claim later on in the work when he says that "BS is unavoidable whenever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about," and that the contemporary proliferation of BS "also has its deeper sources in various forms of skepticism which deny that we can have any reliable access to an objective reality, and which therefore reject the possibility of knowing how things truly are."<sup>4</sup>

### C. For the sake of searching, needy people

Now the practical, existential and truly tragic result of the church's neglect of the biblical mandate to develop a Christian mind, of saving souls, but not sanctifying the intellect, of allowing false ideas and the collective thought of the nation and the world to dominate, leading to tidal waves of BS is the impact it has on lost, misguided, lonely, searching, needy human beings who are longing for something more in their lives than what they can find in the world about them.

Pop music often captures these intensity of these unfulfilled longings for some unidentified something or other that can give life genuine meaning and joy.

The group "Sugarland" has song at the top of the country western charts that couldn't say any better. Listen carefully.

"Something More"  
By Sugarland

1. Monday, hard to wake up, Fill my coffee cup, I'm out the door, Yeah, the freeway's standing still today, It's gonna make me late, and that's for sure, I'm running out of gas and out of time, Never gonna make it there by nine.

Chorus:

There's gotta be something more, Gotta be more than this, I need a little less hard time, I need a little more bliss, I'm gonna take my chances, Taking a chance I might, Find what I'm looking for. **There's gotta be something more**

2. Five years and there's no doubt, That I'm burnt out, I've had enough, So now boss man, here's my two weeks, I'll make it short and sweet, so listen up. I could work my life away, but why? I got things to do before die.

[Chorus]

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<sup>4</sup> Harry G. Frankfurt, *On B...S* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 1, 63, 64.

3. Some believe in destiny, and some believe in fate, I believe that happiness is something we create, You best believe that I'm not gonna wait, **'Cause there's gotta be something more.**

4. I get home 7:30, the house is dirty, but it can wait, Yeah, 'cause right now I need some downtime, To drink some red wine and celebrate, Armageddon could be knocking at my door, But I ain't gonna answer that's for sure. **There's gotta be something more!**

For the sake of needy, searching people, then, for the sake of the gospel and its receptivity in a culture awash in so much stinking error, and because it is a biblical mandate plain and simple, how important is this task that is set before us all to develop the gift of a Christian mind.

But before I proceed to survey its content, first I want to explain what I mean by the phrase a “Christian Mind.”

## **II. Definition of the Concept of a Christian Mind**

### **A. Beware of an excessively cognitive conceptions of a Christian mind**

The primary point I wish to make is that the formation and development of a Christian mind is not just a cognitive or intellectual endeavor.

Christian traditions that have been excessively *mentalist* have suffered and are suffering from serious imbalances, just as those do that emphasize the feelings or the will.

Earlier this year I spoke at a Christian school where the students were almost in revolt against what they perceived as the one-dimensional, intellectual focus in their particular theological tradition. How these students were struggling and yearning for wholeness in their pilgrimage of faith.

Thus, I believe that the totality of human nature must be considered when it comes to this notion of a Christian mind. We can and must deepen our grasp of this expression, and this means we need to look at it holistically.

### **B. A holistic definition of the mind**

How, then, should we define the mind? I suggest we understand in this manner:

- ◆ The mind is what a person is on the deepest level of his/her total being.

- ◆ It is the spiritual center and conscious core of the human person from which all things flow.
- ◆ As such, the mind sets perspectives, determines attitudes and judgments, dictates loyalties, guides actions.
- ◆ The mind is the intellect, the affections, and the will fused into a unity and embedded in the body.
- ◆ Mind defines and identifies a whole human person. It is what makes me me, and you you.

### **C. The mind so defined equals the biblical notion of the “heart”**

This way of defining the “mind” is really what the Bible means by the term “heart.” In Scripture, the heart is the seat of intellect, emotion, will, and spirituality fused into one.

Thinking, feeling, choosing, and worshipping all transpire in the heart. Our intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual lives originate there, making it “the radiating center that suffuses all of man.”<sup>5</sup>

Of this heart, Augustine in his *Confessions* (10.3) explained it succinctly as only he can by saying that it is “where I am what I am.” It’s the man in man and the woman in woman. It is you and me as a total person.

And the heart is not some unattached, free-floating psychic force, but rather is indelibly anchored in the human body.

According to the Bible, then, life proceeds *kardiologically*, out of a vision of the embodied heart. Several Old and New Testament texts suggest as much.

- ◆ “Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life.” — Proverbs 4: 23
- ◆ “As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects man.” — Proverbs 27: 19
- ◆ “For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.” — Matthew 6: 21

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Evdokimov, *Woman and the Salvation of the World*, quoted in Kristen Michaelis, “Woman and the Salvation of the World: Reflections on the Thought of Paul Evdokimov,” unpublished paper, April 2005.

- ◆ “The good man out of the good treasure [of his heart] brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasures [of his heart] brings forth what is evil.” — Matthew 12: 35

So when we speak of a Christian mind, we are simultaneously referencing the biblical conception of the heart — that headquarters of embodied consciousness, defining us as persons at the deepest level of our being, directing the use of our bodies, and determining our way of being in the world.

In short, it is the most influential force in our lives, and for that matter, it is most powerful engine in human history.

Now since people rarely seem changed by routine expository preaching or moral exhortation, but might, indeed, be altered significantly by a “transformed imagination,”<sup>6</sup> at the heart of the development of a Christian mind is the need for a radical enhancement and grasp of God’s greatness and His larger creative and redemptive purposes for the world stirring us up at the center of our souls.

Such an expanded perspective can purge our spiritual sight of the “film of familiarity,”<sup>7</sup> renew our mindset or our heartset, (fusion of intellect, emotion, will, spirituality), and enable us to picture things anew.

“Glory be!” said C. S. Lewis’s old London cabby who was turned inside out when he witnessed the founding of Narnia unexpectedly. Its unspeakably beautiful music and thousand glorious stars in the night sky shook him to the core. “I’d ha’ been a better man all my life,” he said, “if I’d known there were things like this.”<sup>8</sup>

The cabby’s imagination was affected profoundly by this new revelation, and his life would have changed drastically had the disclosure not come too late.

It is only appropriate, then, that when we consider what is a Christian mind, that we stir up the imagination in the rich, full terms of (1) things to be believed, (2) things to be loved, and (3) things to be done. To these three things at the heart of a Christian mind we now turn.

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<sup>6</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Percy B. Shelley, “A Defense of Poetry,” *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, rev.ed., gen. ed., M. H. Abrams, vol. 2 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1962, 1968), p. 497.

<sup>8</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew* (New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955, 1970), p. 100.

### **III. A Christian Mind: Things to be Believed**

A Christian mind, as I am sure you all know by now, consists of the essential themes, the chief components of the biblical story or narrative from beginning to end.

Those, of course, are creation conveyed in Genesis 1-2, the fall found in Genesis 3, and redemption and restoration revealed in Genesis 3: 15-Revelation 22: 21.

The bible is basically the story of redemption, then, with a three chapter preface or introduction: two chapters on creation, one on the fall, and rest on redemption.

Redemption, of course, is promised in the OT, and fulfilled and consummated in the NT in Jesus, the Spirit and the church.

The whole story tells us about the formation, deformation, and reformation of all things. The scenario is first good news in creation, then bad news of the fall, and then good news again in redemption!

Standing behind each of these main concepts, of course, is the true star of the tale who is God the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God's power and wisdom are displayed in creation, His holiness and justice are seen in the fall, and His love, mercy and grace are seen in redemption and consummation.

Surely this big picture and these chief ideas comprised Jesus own thought style and shaped the very mind of Christ who is at the center of it all.

Now I would like to review each of these central items of CFR that constitute a Christian mind as things to be believed.

But I would like to do so from the vantage point of *shalom*, as well as sacramentally and eucharistically, and in so doing, perhaps we can develop a fresh perspective on these familiar teachings.

#### **A. Creation (Genesis 1-2)**

Of course, the bible opens majestically in its declaration that “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

The implications of this statement are total, telling us that the whole of reality, all things to be understood rightly must be understood theologically and religiously in terms of the Creator who made it all!



Then, on the first three “days” of creation, God forms what was originally formless, and on the second three “days” of creation, He fills what was originally void.

Light, Day, Night, Sky, Seas, Land, Plants, Trees, Sun, Moon, Stars, Birds, Fish, Cattle, Creeping Things, Beasts of the Earth, and eventually Humanity as the pinnacle of his creative work, all represent the way God ordered the realms of reality and filled them with their respective rulers.

He specified humanity’s identity and primary purposes in what I like to call the “original commission” of Genesis 1: 26-28.

Here we learn that we are made as God’s image and likeness which is the source of our uniqueness and dignity.

And we also see that He has commissioned us to rule creation, to be fruitful and multiply as male and female, to fill the earth and subdue it!

Thus we have been gifted with spiritual, social, vocational/cultural purposes by which we glorify God and find our happiness and fulfillment in God and in our tasks in the world!

The creation account in Genesis 1 ends on a very important high note.

Each thing God created was good individually. But put together, all that He made was *very good* (Gen. 1: 31), both ontologically in its being or nature or structure, and existentially for us as human persons.

But not only do we have this *chronological* six day account of creation in Genesis 1, but in Genesis 2 we have a *topical* narrative as well.

It focuses on the origin of the seventh or Sabbath day, and the making of man and woman, along with the institution of marriage, and a prohibition to test our covenant obedience and submission to the authority and kingship of the Creator God.

## **1. Shalom**

This whole arrangement was true paradise! It was an incredibly beautiful world, created not only *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) and *per verbum* (by God’s word), but also derived from God’s extravagant love (*ex amor*), and designed for the comprehensive happiness of its human residents for whom this world was home!

On this basis, many theologians and biblical scholars affirm that God’s original intention for humanity and the earth and all it contained is best expressed in and through the Hebrew notion of *SHALOM!*

I couldn't agree more!

Though commonly translated in English by the word "peace," we should not limit our understanding of this rich concept to a mere mental serenity or calmness of spirit.

Though it includes these things, the term primarily signifies a comprehensive soundness, wholeness, delight, and well-being that grows out of harmonious relationships between God, self, others, and the world.

*Shalom* is the way the world and human life is supposed to be.<sup>9</sup>

The kind of flourishing that *shalom* envisions is certainly spiritual in character, but it also signifies completeness, and incorporates the indispensable earthly and genuinely human aspects of personal welfare in its meaning.

As a Catholic biblical scholar explains. "Concretely, it is blessing, rest, glory, riches, salvation, life."<sup>10</sup>

The significant notion of *shalom*, then, sheds light on the character of the original creation and the rich, abundant kind of life envisioned in Scripture as God's design for you and me.

## **2. Sacrament**

We are tempted in our secular culture around us under the enduring influence of the Enlightenment to look upon the world in a disenchanting manner as mere "nature."

The Scriptures, however, will not permit this, and will never let us forget that the first and most important fact about the world is that it is created, that it is, indeed, God's creation!

As the Apostles' Creed confidently and joyfully begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

This means that this world as God's creation has the particular vocation, calling or purpose of displaying the glory of God and making His multifaceted character known to us in all things, whether great or small.

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<sup>9</sup> Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, new revised edition, s.v. "Peace."

This sacramental perspective on reality, as I am calling it here, is a fundamental dimension of a Christian mind and it finds scriptural support, not only in Genesis 1-2, but also Old and New Testament verses like these:

“O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Thy name *in all the earth*,  
Who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens!” — Psalm 8:1

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God;  
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.” — Psalm 19:1

“And one [seraphim] called out to another and said,  
‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts,  
*The fullness of the earth is His glory!*’” — Isaiah 6: 3 (literal rendering)

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes,  
His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen,  
Being understood through what has been made,  
so that they are without excuse.” — Romans 1: 20

Now I must say that the Catholic and Orthodox churches have been much more efficient than most evangelicals have been in emphasizing this sacred view of the cosmos and human experience.

With greater intention and effectiveness, the liturgical traditions have helped us see that “the world is charged with the grandeur of God,” as Gerard Manley Hopkins points out, in one of his famous poems.

In this regard, I would highlight my favorite Orthodox writer as proof of this.

Alexander Schmemmann has written what for me has been one of the most influential books I have ever read. Titled *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, he explains this sacramental outlook in quotes like these.

“All that exists is God’s gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man’s life communion with God. It [the creation] is divine love made food, made life for man. God *blesses* everything He creates, and, in biblical language, this means that He makes all creation the sign and means of His presence and wisdom, love and revelation: ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good.’”

“...the world, be it in its totality as cosmos, or in its life and becoming as time and history, is an epiphany of God, a means of His revelation, presence, and power. In other words, it not only posits the idea of God as a rationally acceptable cause of its existence [as in natural theology], but truly “speaks” of Him and is in itself an essential means both of knowledge

of God and communion with Him, and to be so is its true nature and its ultimate destiny.”<sup>11</sup>

What does this mean in practical, concrete terms? Augustine says we ought to, “Learn in the creature to love the Creator; and in the work [worship] Him who made it.”<sup>12</sup>

I have put it like this: “When I eat a good meal, chat with a friend, play with my dog, complete a project, ride my bike, converse with my spouse, view a sunset, enjoy a drink, sit by a fire, mow my lawn, jump on the trampoline, wash the dishes, chair the committee, gaze at the stars, teach a lesson, analyze a theory, say my prayers, and so on, with eyes to see and ears to hear, I see God and his glory and grace and wisdom and knowledge and goodness and love in it all. As a result, I give joyful thanks.

So, this sacramental view of the world and life, as a fundamental component of a Christian mind rooted in creation, allows us to see God and his glory in all things. There is no sacred/secular dualism here!

And this leads naturally, then, to the next feature of biblical thinking found in the word “Eucharist.”

### **3. Eucharist**

The word Eucharist, used often of Communion or the Lord’s Supper in liturgical churches, simply means to give “thanks.”

Just as we say thanks to anyone who gives us any kind of gift or shows us common courtesies, so also a fundamental trait of the mind of Jesus that we as his followers are to emulate is to give thanks to God for everything. Or as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5: 18. “In everything give thanks.”

Of course, we routinely give thanks for our spiritual blessings as we should.

But do we habitually express deep gratitude to God for all the ordinary, creation-dependent gifts we experience and enjoy daily? Even things like...

- ◆ Sounds of musical notes and major and minor chords, of animals that

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1963), pp. 14 & 120.

<sup>12</sup> Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 8 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), p. 122 (§40.8).

bark, neigh, and growl, of wind and rain, or of a fast ball as it whizzes past a batter with a pop into the catcher's mitt.

- ◆ Tastes of all kinds, like crème brulee and apple cider vinegar, fritos with your favorite sandwich, a cinnabon, a perfectly grilled salmon steak or a filet mignon.
- ◆ Touches and feelings, of silk or burlap, or the moist sandpapery sensation of a cat's tongue, or a dog licking you in the face, of a reassuring hug, a gentle kiss, a held hand, or the solid smack of a perfectly hit two iron that goes 220 yards to within 6 feet of the pin.
- ◆ Smells like freshly ground Starbucks coffee, the aroma of roses or gardenia bushes, Michaels for men or Burberry Brit for women, the unique odor of an antique book, or of cherryhill pipe smoke.
- ◆ Sights like Macy's fireworks show on the fourth over the East River in NYC, a lunar eclipse, the Grand Canyon, an Albuquerque sunset, a handsome man and a lovely lady, a freshly mowed lush Bermuda lawn.

Or what about giving thanks for things like these:

- ◆ Processes (metabolism, photosynthesis, nuclear fission)
- ◆ Cycles: (hydrologic, ecological, astronomical)
- ◆ Theories: (of cognition, history, personality, education)
- ◆ Practical tools and technology: (air conditioning, computers, electric lights, hybrid cars, contact lenses, penicillin, etc.)
- ◆ Cultural institutions: (schools, city councils, museums, labor unions, the family structure, cities, etc)

In other words, everything we can think of is a part of creation, CREATURELY in character, created by God in Christ, from alphas to zeta, from a beautiful Bach cantata to powerful X-ray machines. A Christian mind recognizes this and offers thanks to God!

Again, Schmemmann is worth quoting here:

"God blessed the world, blessed man, blessed the seventh day (that is, time), and this means that he filled all that exists with His love and goodness, made all this 'very good.' So the only natural (not supernatural) reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, [and] to thank Him.... The world was created as the 'matter,' the material of one all-embracing eucharist, and man was created

as the priest of this cosmic sacrament.”<sup>13</sup>

So, in fostering a christian mind, I suggest that we deepen our view of creation in shalomic, and sacramental, and Eucharistic terms.

Now, with these ideas in place, it is not hard to imagine how we might understand the fall and redemption in these terms as well. We can do so much more briefly.

## **B. The fall of humanity into sin**

### **1. The vandalism of shalom**

The rebellion of humankind against God was a catastrophe of unmitigated proportions, and the first reason for saying this is that it resulted in the vandalism of shalom.

That original soundness, wholeness, delight, and well-being that God planned for us in the beginning have been lost because of our sin, and it has been replaced with devastating opposites: capriciousness, fragmentation, irritation, and misery. Listen to this biblical description of the loss of shalom:

Cursed is the ground because of you;  
In toil you shall eat of it  
All the days of your life.  
Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;  
And you shall eat the plants of the field;  
By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread,  
Till you return to the ground,  
Because from it you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
And to dust you shall return.

— Genesis 3: 17-19

Let me paraphrase Neil Plantinga who has written most helpfully on this very point:

God hates sin not just because it violates his law but, more importantly, because it violates shalom, because it disturbs the peace, because it interferes with the way things are supposed to be. ... God is for shalom and therefore against sin. In fact, we may safely describe evil as any spoiling of shalom, whether physically (e.g., by disease), morally,

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<sup>13</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 15.

spiritually, or otherwise. ... In short, sin is culpable shalom breaking.<sup>14</sup>

If I were to list the results of the breakdown of shalom, perhaps it would include the following:

The love of futile and harmful satisfactions and their results: anxieties, agitations of mind, disappointments, fears, quarrels, disputes, wars, treacheries, enmities, deceits, flattery, fraud, theft, rape, broken faith, pride, ambition, envy, murder, parricide, matricide, fratricide, sororicide, cruelty, savagery, lust, promiscuity, indecency, unchastity, fornication, adultery, incest, abortion, euthanasia, sacrilege, idolatry, lying, violence, etc.<sup>15</sup>

How tragic is the condition of the human race under the judgment of God for the violation of shalom!

## **2. Sacramental blindness**

Not only did the fall rob us of our peace, but it also took away our vision, for we no longer apprehend the world as God's creation or recognize his glory or presence in the work of His hands.

We have fallen into a terrifying abyss of ignorance which is the source of all error from whose gloomy depths we are unable to extract ourselves despite our labor and toil to do so.

Consequently, for us, the world is now a closed door. We don't see through it to God any more.

Now it seems solid, thick, dense and not clear. We have cut the world off from God, and we look upon it as an end in itself, loving it for its own sake, rather than as an open window and gateway to its creator. We have lost the awareness that God is all in all.

We continue to depend on the world but we don't depend on the God behind the world, and our dependence, indeed, our search for happiness, is now limited to this world alone. But without God, this is no happiness at all.

Independently, on our own, the values we expect to find in the world lose all true value, and all things become futile and vain. For the world is only valuable as God's creation and as a sacrament of God's presence. We experience only

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<sup>14</sup> Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *Concerning The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson, intro. John O'Meara (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 1065 (§22.22).

the appearance of life but not of life in God. Now it is just earth, nature, dirt. We have become its slave. Vanity of vanities, futility of futilities.

This was the consequence of the fall: I call it sacramental blindness.

Again, as Schmemmann states, “It seems natural for man to experience the world as opaque, and not shot through with the presence of God. It seems natural not to live a life of thanksgiving for God’s gift of a world. It seems natural not to be Eucharistic.”<sup>16</sup>

How evident this was in our trip last week to NYC in Times Square, where people were seeking to enjoy every possible aspect of the creation, but utterly unaware of the source of their pleasures, or of their responsibility to give thanks.

### C. Eucharistic failure

That is the third consequence of the fall — not to live a life of thanksgiving for God’s gift of a world,” or what we might call a failure to be Eucharistic, a tragic failure of gratitude.

Nonetheless, God in his providence and common grace continues to bless the world and its peoples, “yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness,” as we read in Acts 14: 17.

And yet we take these blessings as if our own hand produced them and as if we deserved them, offering thanks to no one but ourselves or others.

But this thanklessness is the consummate mark of the ungodly person and the idolater. As Paul points out in Romans 1: 21...

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or **give thanks**; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

If we are to have a Christian mind, we must not only understand the concept of creation which is good news, but also this “uncreation” which is bad news, horrible news in fact.

Here is the bad news: The primeval rebellion of humanity in Genesis 3 resulted in the vandalism of shalom, a sacramental blindness, and a Eucharistic failure. These truths explain the catastrophic brokenness of humanity and the earth.

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<sup>16</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 16. The other thoughts about sacramental blindness in this section owe their inspiration to Schmemmann as well.



In this setting, listen carefully to this powerful statement from Augustine in the *City of God*, "From this life of misery, a kind of hell on earth, there is no liberation save through the grace of Christ our Savior, our God and our Lord."<sup>17</sup>

### **C. Redemption and restoration/consummation**

The gospel of the kingdom is the incredibly good news that God in Christ, through His life, death and resurrection has directed his sovereignty in conquest and triumph over the enemies of sin, death and satan.

To be sure, the coming of this kingdom is a two stage event, fulfillment in history *already* as a mystery in the form of a suffering servant, and consummation and final restoration at the end of history *not yet* when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords.

This is the gospel, accessed by grace through faith, and forming the church as the body of Christ sustained in its life and ministry by word and sacrament.

It gives reason to those who believe "to leap, dance and sing for joy" (Wm. Tyndale), for God has made all things new!

#### **1. Recovery of shalom**

There are some 87 verses in the NT that speak of the recovery of shalom or peace in the world, in the lives of believers, and in the church. These two passages from Jesus' Upper Room Discourse can be read with new appreciation. Jesus said:

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." — John 14:27

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." — John 16:33

And Paul, along with the other apostles, frequently introduced their letters to the churches with this familiar but profound greeting that included shalom:

Grace to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."  
— 1 Cor. 1:3

#### **2. Sacramental renewal**

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<sup>17</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, p. 1068 (§22.22).

In Christ, our vision is restored! We have been given the gift of new sight, new eyes, new perspectives!

Not only do we now know God as Creator and as Redeemer, but we also know who we are and where we are and what is the nature of this life and this world in which we live!

We see the glory of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God, the goodness of God, the righteousness of God in all things!

The whole of life is now communion with Him and is worship of Him and is blessing and grace and joy through Him. There is no sacred/secular distinction, for all things are holy, all things are spiritual, and all things hold the potential for our sanctification!

As Schmemmann puts it, "... in Christ, life — life in all its totality — was returned to humanity, given again as sacrament and communion, made Eucharist."<sup>18</sup>

This renewal of vision surely lies behind Paul's exhortations that whatever we do in word or in deed, we are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father (Col. 3: 17).

### **3. Eucharistic again**

If ingratitude is the trademark of the bona fide non-christian as we mentioned before, then, the mark of the Christian is not only love, but also thanksgiving, even as we just read from Col. 3: 17.

- ◆ Thanksgiving for redemption!
- ◆ Thanksgiving for the recovery of shalom in our lives (peace, soundness, wholeness, delight, well-being).
- ◆ Thanksgiving for the gift of a world and of a life that testifies to the power and greatness of God!

As the author of the book of Hebrews advises, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." — Heb. 13:15

These then are the things that are to be believed if we are to have a Christian: a comprehension of creation, fall and redemption in terms of shalom, sacrament and eucharist!

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<sup>18</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 20.

But as we said in our opening comments, a Christian mind is not just a cognitive matter, but also involves the affections and the will. So we continue by taking a look at the things to be loved as a central aspect of cultivating the mind of Christ.

## II. Developing a Christian Mind: Things to be Loved

### A. Love as the primary motivator

At the heart of this grand biblical story rooted in God, the themes of creation, fall, and redemption, and the blessings of peace, worship, and thanksgiving is the superlative power and virtue of love.

As the things to be known are a gift of grace, so also is this chief of all affections “because the love of God,” as Paul says in Romans 5: 4 “has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Love is our primary motivator, for we do, not what we know, or what believe or what say necessarily, but what we love.

We are propelled into action by what we care about most deeply, by what our deepest longings and desires lead us and encourage us to do.

Life is a roadway traveled by the affections.

As Augustine put it in the 13<sup>th</sup> book of his *Confessions*: “Love is the weight by which I act: wherever I go, my love is what brings me there.”

### B. The greatest commandments

Central then to the formation of a Christian mind are things to be loved, and Jesus has told us *what to love* and *how much to love what we are to love* in the first and second greatest commandments.

And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."  
— Matthew 22: 37-40

Before our conversion to Christ, our loves were inordinately directed to all kinds of different objects leading us to do all kinds of different things. Our disordered loves produced disordered lives.

Indeed, the Seven Deadly Sins are all a product of our misdirected affections:

- ◆ Pride, envy and anger are a manifestation of an excessive love for the

self.

- ◆ Sloth has its origin in an insufficient love for God and for the life of the mind and spirit.
- ◆ Avarice or greed arises in an inordinate love for money and possessions
- ◆ Gluttony is founded in excessive desire for food and drink
- ◆ Lust is rooted in an overweening drive for sexuality.

But in Christ we are given new purposes and new desires. Our loves have been reordered and so have our lives. For we are learning how to love God most of all, and in learning how to love God, we learn how to love ourselves, and in learning how to learn ourselves, we in turn learn how to love others.

And in loving others as we love ourselves we are in turn expressing our love for God, for these three loves are all interdependent.

And learning this kind of love for God, self and others, Jesus goes on to say, summarizes the totality of God's revelation to humanity, and is to be the final goal for every human activity.

Everything we are and do is to be motivated by and directed toward the fulfilling of this twin love for God and neighbor.

### **C. The pre-eminence, perfections, and permanence of love: 1 Corinthians 13**

St. Paul reinforces this supreme emphasis on love in 1 Corinthians 13. In this wonderfully poetic passage, he presents (1) the pre-eminence of love in vv. 1-3, (2) the perfections of love in vv. 4-8a, and finally, (3) the permanence of love in vv. 8b-13).

In terms of love's preeminence, Paul makes it crystal clear that if our eloquent speech lacks love, it is nothing.

If our prophecy, our knowledge and our faith lack love, they are nothing.

If our sacrifices of our possessions and our bodies lack love, they are nothing.

Love is the only thing that makes everything worthwhile, including our eloquent speech, our prophecy, our knowledge, and our faith!

In terms of love's perfections, Paul says there are sixteen characteristics to genuine love. I can do no better than to read them to you and stir you up by way of a reminder:

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Finally, Paul also tells us of love's permanence. While other things will pass away, love will endure.

Love will outlast our prophecies, our tongues, and our knowledge, for when Christ returns, these will be surpassed, just as adulthood surpasses childhood, as personal presence trumps a mirror image, and as complete knowledge outdoes that which is partial.

Though faith and hope will also abide, still, Paul says, the greatest of these is love.

Without this love, no one has a mind like Christ's. For this love was central to the life and ministry of Jesus.

#### **D. The emotional life of our Lord**

##### **1. Compassion and love of Jesus (synoptics and John)**

The venerable Princeton theologian from bygone days, B. B. Warfield, wrote a most insightful essay titled "The Emotional Life of Our Lord" that, among other things, shows how Jesus' entire mission was motivated by compassion and love. I highly recommend this piece by Warfield.<sup>19</sup>

Interestingly, the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke emphasize Jesus' **compassion** as the motivation for His great works on behalf of those in need.

In Greek the word is **SPLANCHNA** and it literally refers to the inward parts, to the entrails, heart, lungs, liver, spleen and kidneys, and intestines.

It indicates that Jesus' total being contracted convulsively when he observed the pitiful situations people were in and he was aroused with the most intense compassion, which itself means, with intense emotion, to alleviate their misery.

Jesus compassion, which according to the theologians, can be defined as that perfection of God whereby "he pities and relieves the misery of his creatures," is clearly on display in his merciful response to want, disease, and death in these synoptic gospels (pp. 96-102):

- ◆ The appeal of two blind men that their eyes might be opened (Matt. 20: 34)
- ◆ The appeal of a leper for cleansing (Mark 1: 41)

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<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, "The Emotional Life of Our Lord," in *The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 91-145. Page numbers in parentheses are to this essay.

- ◆ The sight of a bereaved widow who had also lost her only son (Luke 7: 13)
- ◆ The need of a hungry multitude (Mark 8: 2)
- ◆ The spiritually destitute, people as sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6: 34)

This profound compassion — SPLANCHNA — which characterized Jesus, quite clearly then, belongs to a Christian mind for a Christian mind includes things to be loved.

But it is very interesting that whereas compassion is attributed to Jesus frequently in the synoptic gospels, and love only once (in reference to the rich young ruler by the way, Mark 10: 21), in the gospel of John, compassion is never attributed to Jesus, but love is often (pp. 102-106)!

Here we see love, designated by both *agape* and *phileo*, as the energetic spring from which Jesus' ministry arose in John's gospel.

- ◆ His love to his Father impelled Him to fulfill all his Father's will in the great work of redemption (John 14: 31)
- ◆ His love for His disciples whom He had chosen to receive eternal life, especially by laying down His life for them as His friends.
- ◆ His love for specific disciples, John in particular, as in the expression "the disciple whom Jesus loved" indicates (John 20: 2)
- ◆ His love for Lazarsus whom He raised from the dead, and for Mary and Martha, his sisters (John 11: 3, 5, 36)

## **2. The anger of Jesus at the vandalism of shalom (John 11: 33-36, 38)**

Jesus' love for Lazarus and his two sisters is especially interesting not only because He was motivated by His love for them to raise Him from the dead, but also because of His intense emotional response that so moved Him in this setting and at the grave of Lazarus. Here is the text:

When Jesus therefore saw her [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, *He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled*, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They \*said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" ... Jesus therefore *again being deeply moved within*, \*came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

— John 11: 33-36, 38

Standing, then, before Lazarus's grave, Jesus after He had said a few more things, "cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus \*said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go" (John 11: 43-44).

In vv. 33 and 38, we see that this death of Jesus' friend, and this unrestrained display of grief moved Him deeply in spirit and that He was troubled.

Based on the terminology used, B. B. Warfield in this essay on the emotional life of Jesus, says that this indicates that when He approached the grave of Lazarus, He was not in a state of uncontrollable grief, but rather of "irrepressible anger" and "just rage."

Why was He so angry? What prompted this amazing display of rage? Here is how B. B. Warfield explains it:

The spectacle of the distress of Mary and her companions enraged Jesus because it brought poignantly home to his consciousness the evil of death, its unnaturalness, its 'violent tyranny' as Calvin (on verse 38) says. In Mary's grief, he 'contemplates' — still to adopt Calvin's words (on verse 33), — 'the general misery of the whole human race' and burns with rage against the oppressor of men. Inextinguishable fury seizes upon him; his whole being is discomposed and perturbed.... It is death that is the object of his wrath, and behind death him who has the power of death, and whom he has come into the world to destroy (pp. 116-117).

Now Warfield doesn't make this next point, but in essence what he is saying is that the reason why Jesus was so enraged and angry at the grave of Lazarus was because He was observing first hand *the tragic consequences of the vandalism of shalom* that God His Father had so desired and planned for the human race.

Lazarus's death and the great grief it generated, the general misery of the whole human race which it symbolized, the profound destructiveness of the destroyer, all these things Jesus knew were not supposed to be, and so His anger propelled him into action.

And so He raised Lazarus from the dead, itself a symbol of Jesus conquest of sin, death, hell, and satan. And in a most important statement, Jesus follows up and says on Lazarus's behalf: "Unbind him and let him go!"

What this episode shows is that good deeds and merciful works are not just the products of compassion and love, but also of righteous anger and holy rage, holy rage and righteous anger at the vandalism of shalom. The man or woman who cannot be justly angry cannot be merciful and do good deeds that restore shalom!

I would submit to you, then, that intense anger at the loss of shalom is a crucial component of a Christian mind. It will be this anger, coupled with our love and compassion, that empowers us to good deeds and merciful works by which we too raise things from the dead, we unbind them and let them go!

So, as we learn from the greatest commandments, from St. Paul in 1 Cor. 13, and from the example of Jesus, developing a Christian consists in things to be loved.

### **III. Developing a Christian Mind: Things to be Done**

And as we have just seen, this flows naturally into things to be done, deeds of resurrection, deeds of release, and deeds of freedom!

For if we really believe certain things, and if we truly love certain things as Christians, as disciples of Jesus, we ought also to do certain things as well.

But this is where a problem arises, for many profess both to believe and to love, but they fail to act on either in practical, concrete ways in their lives, in the churches or in the culture.

#### **A. The scandal of the evangelical conscience**

The evidence for this concern is more than anecdotal or intuitive as Ronald Sider's new book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* documents clearly.<sup>20</sup> His sobering stats show how little difference there is between Christians and non-Christians in the areas of divorce, giving, sexuality, racism, and so on.

Sider summarizes his findings in these rather gloomy words: "To say there is a crisis of obedience in the evangelical world today is to dangerously understate the problem. ... This is scandalous behavior for people who claim to be born again by the Holy Spirit and to enjoy the very presence of the Risen Lord in their lives."<sup>21</sup>

Assuming there is accuracy and merit in Sider's analysis, two passages of Scripture come to mind that we need to hear.

And He [Jesus] said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.'" Mark 7: 6

And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: "The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or

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<sup>20</sup> Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 39.



hot. 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.'" Revelation 3: 14-16

## B. Uniting things to be believed, things to be loved, things to be done

But if we wish to develop a Christian mind, we need to be reminded of the biblical connection between

- Knowing, loving and doing,
- Belief, affections and behavior,
- Convictions, compassion and conduct,

Specifically, the Bible teaches that those who believe and love God are bound to him by covenant, and the real proof of our beliefs and our affection for God and others is seen in our covenant obedience to Him. For we only really believe and love that which activates us.

The NT is replete with passages that make this connection.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. ...

"And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand.

— Matthew 7: 24, 26

"...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " — Matthew 28:20

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

— John 13:17

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

— James 1:22

Steve Garber's words from his book, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, capture well this action aspect of a Christian mind when he writes: "Knowing and doing, hearing and obeying are integrally connected for people whose convictions are truly and deeply Christian."

## **Conclusion:**

These then are some key components need to develop a Christian mind:

### I. The profound need for a Christian mind

1. Because it is a biblical mandate
2. For the sake of the gospel and its cultural receptivity
3. For the sake of needy people

## II. The definition of the concept of the Christian mind

1. Beware of an excessively cognitive conceptions of a Christian mind
2. A holistic definition of the mind
3. The mind so defined equals the biblical notion of the “heart”

Holistic concept, fusing intellect, affections, will, synonymous with the biblical theme of the heart where we think, feel, choose and worship.

Hence, a Christian mind includes these 3 things:

III. Things to be believed: Creation, fall, redemption, restoration/consummation, and as I have suggested, in terms of shalom, sacrament, and eucharist

IV. Things to be loved: We have the guidance of the greatest commandments, 1 Cor. 13, and the example of Jesus’ compassion, love, and anger!

V. Things to be done: covenantal obedience to the will and word of God.

Having developed a Christian mind, we must always be on guard against succumbing to the evil one.

In this light, I conclude with a new version of Screwtape letter written just for you or about you, perhaps I should say!

“Concerning the Centurions”  
A New Screwtape Letter  
By David Naugle

My Dear Wormwood:

I have just returned from our weekly meeting of the Infernal Lowerarchy\* where before my peers I was utterly humiliated to report that that ‘patient’ of yours has signed up to be a part of a Christian worldview training program called the Centurions, and that he is to attend another one of their conferences this weekend! For hell’s sake, how could you let that happen? He was supposed to be on vacation, playing golf, relaxing, and having a good time. You are on the verge of letting that man slip through your scaly fingers.

At that gathering, they plan on exposing things that we devils have been working assiduously to establish in their churches and in American culture for centuries. Your colleagues and I have labored night and day to promote various “Endarkenment” — I mean “Enlightenment” — assumptions about religion,

philosophy, science, morality and the arts that have created the current cultural morass in which they are now drowning. Even worse, they plan on discussing the content of a Christian mind! They want to show the connections between the central elements of a — uh, ugh — I can barely make myself say it — “biblical” vision of the world and their stupid little callings in life that the Enemy has given to each one of them. They may, hell forbid, discover how the Enemy’s Word establishes a lucid vision for everything, including personal change and cultural transformation. This cannot happen!

As you might imagine, our Father below\* is not pleased with these developments. He fears that the fragmented, compartmentalized, pietistic version of faith and life that we have successfully imparted to them through multiple avenues, including their own well-deceived seminaries and churches, may be undermined, not only in your patient, but also in others who attend this gathering. Consequently, he has told me to take immediate action, else the consequences will be unusually severe for both you and me.

You know very well that from the time of our cosmic takeover, our fiendish Father has inspired us with a shrewd vision of disintegration and corruption. The Enemy, who has a slight advantage over us as the Creator of the universe, has stamped His own triune nature on the world He has made. All things reflect the unity and diversity of His own miserable character, and He wants those loathsome little replicas of Himself\* to apprehend His creation as a “uni-verse” with its proper distinctions, overarching integrity, and moral order. We, however, have sought to undermine this coherent vision of reality, pitchfork and tail. We have aspired in all things everywhere to put asunder that which the Enemy has joined together. We have sought to exacerbate the diversity and destroy the unity, or to exacerbate the unity and destroy the diversity. We seek to reduce, to enlarge, to distort, to compartmentalize, to relativize, and to idolize everything *their* Creator has made.

Various unconscious human recruits have served us admirably in promoting our lies. Slubgob\* is famous throughout our kingdom for prompting both Plato’s forms/world distinction and the dualism of the Gnostics and Manicheans, not to mention his success in adequately infecting the thought of that sexually repressed, neurotic bishop of Hippo with a residual neo-platonism. Triptweeze\* caused these wonderful misunderstandings to endure throughout the middle ages, with only a slight scare when that Dumb Ox Dominican synthesized Aristotle’s philosophy with theology and reintegrated nature and grace. Fortunately William of Ockham’s nominalism restored the separation which we have successfully used to “bedevil” the Church’s thought and life ever since. Descartes and Kant contributed unwittingly to our covert cause to divide and conquer through their respective mind/matter and noumena/phenomena distinctions. The rise of idolized science (how we love to twist the Adversary’s gifts!), especially in its evolutionary form (Zozezas’ work on Darwin should be noted here), has undermined the notion of creation itself. Next to redemption, of course, there is no more important doctrine for us to destroy. This has made it certain that facts and values are forever severed and that any transcendent moral vision is forever nullified. Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, who by then

required very little coaxing from us, took things the rest of the way home. How excited we were when the latter of this triumvirate — our favorite infidel — announced to the world that God was dead! After all, our overall goal has been the liquidation of the Judeo-Christian worldview from the face of the earth.

But our crowning achievement has been in the churches. Under the well-intended but mistaken influence of their leaders, many believers are deliciously confused about the truth! The silly little Christians have identified the very good creation with sin itself, and now they can hardly wait to evacuate the planet and head off to heaven where they think they really belong! How joyfully they sing, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.” As a result, they promote heaven over earth, the spiritual over the physical, grace over nature, the soul over the body, the eternal over the temporal, faith over reason and so on. They see everything as essentially sacred or secular. They think that Christianity is its own distinct realm of life rather than a way of life for every realm. How proud they are of their resulting super-spirituality, nicely ensconced in their cozy, pietistic Christian ghettos! Their faith is privately engaging but publicly irrelevant. We have been able to enthrone a good, solid resounding lie at the center of their lives!\* Hahahahaha!

To be sure, my dear Wormwood, we must continue to spread these points of view in their churches, and we must do our best to undermine the effectiveness of those who have signed up to be “Centurions.” I thought we destroyed that rank and file with the collapse of the Roman empire? Anyway, after they learn all about a “Christian mind,” and apologetics, and cultural engagement, and spiritual formation and all that rot, they are expected to teach these things to others, and to serve as effective agents of change in the world through their callings on behalf of the Enemy.

I say: “Barf on all that.” We must devise long-term effective strategies to trip them up. Place before them irresistible sexual temptations. Create as much discord in their marriages and in their relationships with their children as you possibly can (undermining marriage and family life has been one of our greatest successes!). Attack them with weapons of mass distraction, especially through frivolous TV programs and the internet, and in the pursuits of more sex, more money and more power! Reinsert them into churches and Christian communities that just don’t get what it is they are trying to do. Pound feelings of intense guilt into their brains over their short-comings and sins. That is always effective! Humiliate them and cause them to think: “How could I do that? I don’t deserve to be a Centurion!” Make sure the opposition to their efforts at cultural change are always met with stiff resistance, giving them a sense of cynicism and despair. So, above all, discourage them, discourage them, and discourage them again by whatever means are available to you. If we can keep them depressed and in the doldrums, if they see few results from their great investments of time, effort, and money, then they will be kept from fulfilling what this stupid little program is designed to accomplish. Otherwise, our hard-fought victories in thwarting the development of a Christian mind among the Enemies’ children may be short-lived.

That's our long-term strategy. The pressing question now is: What are you going to do to make sure this weekend conference is as ineffective as possible? We must seek to suppress its malevolent influence as best we can. So, regarding your patient, I suggest that you sidetrack him with anxieties about matters back home. Or remind him about problems at work, or about rising interest rates, or terrorism in London, or the future of the Supreme Court (by the way, we are meeting about this issue next week). Of course, you can always employ our old standby tricks, distracting him with silly things like shoes that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, or funny hair, or the strange pitch of another's voice.\* That should keep him from profiting from this meeting, the one thing we can't allow. In any case, report back to me when the conference ends, and I expect to hear of significant success. Or else.

Your affectionate uncle,  
Screwtape

\*Indicates words or phrases original with  
Lewis

Outline of talk next page.

Developing a Christian Mind

Introduction

**Are YOU a problem *thinker*?**

**I. The Need for a Christian Mind**

A. Because it is a biblical mandate (1 Cor. 2: 16; Phil. 2: 5; 1 Thess. 5: 23)

“The problem is not only to save souls, but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you have not won the world. Indeed, it may turn out that you have actually lost the world.”<sup>22</sup>

“Evangelicals need more serious thinkers. Because of the anti-intellectualism found in some corners of evangelicalism, the movement has no abundance of ‘ideas people’ sharpening its message.”<sup>23</sup>

B. For the sake of the gospel and its receptivity in culture

“*False ideas* are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the *whole collective thought* of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.”<sup>24</sup>

“One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much BS. ... BS is unavoidable whenever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about,” and “also has its deeper sources in various forms of skepticism which deny that we can have any reliable access to an objective reality, and which therefore reject the possibility of knowing how things truly are.”<sup>25</sup>

C. For the sake of searching, needy people

“Something More” by Sugarland

1. Monday, hard to wake up, Fill my coffee cup, I'm out the door, Yeah, the freeway's standing still today, It's gonna make me late, and that's for sure, I'm running out of gas and out of time, Never gonna make it there by nine.

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<sup>22</sup> Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1980), pp. 29-34.

<sup>23</sup> William McKenzie, “Paving the way for evangelical progress,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 28, 2005, p. 15A.

<sup>24</sup> J. Gresham Machen, “Christianity and Culture,” *Princeton Theological Review* 11 (1913), pp. 1ff (emphasis added).

<sup>25</sup> Harry G. Frankfurt, *On B...S...* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 1, 63, 64.

Chorus: There's gotta be something more, Gotta be more than this, I need a little less hard time, I need a little more bliss, I'm gonna take my chances, Taking a chance I might, Find what I'm looking for. *There's gotta be something more.*

2. Five years and there's no doubt, That I'm burnt out, I've had enough, So now boss man, here's my two weeks, I'll make it short and sweet, so listen up. I could work my life away, but why? I got things to do before die. [Chorus]

3. Some believe in destiny, and some believe in fate, I believe that happiness is something we create, You best believe that I'm not gonna wait, 'Cause *there's gotta be something more.*

4. I get home 7:30, the house is dirty, but it can wait, Yeah, 'cause right now I need some downtime, To drink some red wine and celebrate, Armageddon could be knocking at my door, But I ain't gonna answer that's for sure. *There's gotta be something more!*

## II. Definition of the Concept of a Christian Mind

- A. Beware of excessively cognitive conceptions of a Christian mind
- B. A holistic definition of the mind
- C. The mind so defined equals the biblical notion of the "heart" (Prov. 4:23; 27: 19; Matt. 6: 21; 12: 35)

## III. A Christian Mind: Things to be Believed

- A. Creation (Genesis 1-2; esp. 1: 26-28)

1. Shalom

2. Sacrament (Psa. 8: 1; 19: 1; Isa. 6: 3; Rom. 1: 20)

"All that exists is God's gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man's life communion with God. It [the creation] is divine love made food, made life for man. God *blesse*s everything He creates, and, in biblical language, this means that He makes all creation the sign and means of His presence and wisdom, love and revelation: 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.'"

"...the world, be it in its totality as cosmos, or in its life and becoming as time and history, is an epiphany of God, a means of His revelation, presence, and power. In other words, it not only posits the idea of God as a rationally acceptable cause of its existence [as in natural theology], but truly 'speaks' of Him and is in itself an essential means both of knowledge of God and communion with Him, and to be so is its true nature and its ultimate destiny."<sup>26</sup>

3. Eucharist (1 Thess. 5: 18)

"God blessed the world, blessed man, blessed the seventh day (that is,

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963), pp. 14 & 120.

time), and this means that He filled all that exists with His love and goodness, made all this 'very good.' So the only natural (not supernatural) reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, [and] to thank Him.... The world was created as the 'matter,' the material of one all-embracing eucharist, and man was created as the priest of this cosmic sacrament."<sup>27</sup>

## B. The fall of humanity into sin (Gen. 3)

### 1. The vandalism of shalom (Gen. 3: 17-19)

"God hates sin not just because it violates his law but, more importantly, because it violates shalom, because it disturbs the peace, because it interferes with the way things are supposed to be. ... God is for shalom and therefore against sin. In fact, we may safely describe evil as any spoiling of shalom, whether physically (e.g., by disease), morally, spiritually, or otherwise. ... In short, sin is culpable shalom breaking."<sup>28</sup>

### 2. Sacramental blindness (Eph. 4: 17-18)

"It seems natural for man to experience the world as opaque, and not shot through with the presence of God. It seems natural not to live a life of thanksgiving for God's gift of a world. It seems natural not to be Eucharistic."<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Eucharistic failure (Acts 14: 17; Rom. 1: 21)

## C. Redemption and restoration/consummation (Gen. 3: 15-Rev. 22: 21)

### 1. Recovery of shalom (John 14: 27; 16: 33; 1 Cor. 1: 3, etc.)

### 2. Sacramental renewal (Col. 3: 17)

"... in Christ, life — life in all its totality — was returned to humanity, given again as sacrament and communion, made Eucharist."<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Eucharistic again (Heb. 13: 15)

- ◆ Thanksgiving for redemption!
- ◆ Thanksgiving for the recovery of shalom in our lives (peace, soundness, wholeness, delight, well-being).
- ◆ Thanksgiving for the gift of a world and of a life that testifies to the wisdom and love of God!

## IV. Developing a Christian Mind: Things to be Loved

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<sup>27</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 20.



A. Love as the primary motivator (Rom. 5: 4)

“Love is the weight by which I act: wherever I go, my love is what brings me there.”<sup>31</sup>

B. The greatest commandments (Matthew 22: 37-40)

C. The pre-eminence (vv. 1-3), perfections (vv. 4-8a), and permanence of love (vv. 8b-13): 1 Corinthians 13

D. The emotional life of our Lord<sup>32</sup>

1. Compassion and love of Jesus

a. Compassion (*SPLANCHNA*) in the synoptics (Matt. 20: 34; Mark 1: 41; Luke 7: 13; Mark 8: 2; 6: 34)

b. Love (*AGAPE* and *PHILEO*) in John (14: 31; 15: 13; 20: 2; 11: 3, 5, 36)

2. The anger of Jesus at the vandalism of shalom (John 11: 33-36, 38, 43-44)

*He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled....* (v. 33)

*Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within....* (v. 38)

“The spectacle of the distress of Mary and her companions enraged Jesus because it brought poignantly home to his consciousness the evil of death, its unnaturalness, its ‘violent tyranny’ as Calvin (on verse 38) says. In Mary’s grief, he ‘contemplates’ — still to adopt Calvin’s words (on verse 33), — ‘the general misery of the whole human race’ and burns with rage against the oppressor of men. Inextinguishable fury seizes upon him; his whole being is discomposed and perturbed.... It is death that is the object of his wrath, and behind death him who has the power of death, and whom he has come into the world to destroy.” pp. 116-117

## V. Developing a Christian Mind: Things to be Done

A. The scandal of the evangelical conscience (Ronald Sider; Mark 7: 6; Rev. 3: 14-16)

B. Uniting things to be believed, things to be loved, and things to be done (Matt. 7: 24, 26; 28: 20; John 13: 17; James 1: 22)

### Conclusion:

I. The Need for a Christian mind

II. The Definition of the Concept of a Christian mind

III. Things to be Believed

IV. Things to be Loved

V. Things to be Done

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<sup>31</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.3

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, “The Emotional Life of Our Lord,” in *The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 91-145.

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