

*The Christian World View of
Local and World Evangelism*

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With contributions by members of the
Local and World Evangelism Committee of
The Coalition on Revival

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What is the Coalition on Revival?

The Coalition on Revival is a network of evangelical leaders from every major denominational and theological perspective who share a vision for and a commitment to revival, renewal, and reformation in Church and society in America.

People of Anabaptist, Arminian, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Wesleyan denominational backgrounds are all represented among COR's leaders. Pre-, a-, and post-millennialists are cooperating with each other, sharing the exciting task of getting God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven insofar as that is possible between now and whenever Christ comes back to Earth. Charismatics and non-charismatics, covenant and dispensationalist theologians, have joined arm in arm in prayer and hard work to see revival, renewal, and reformation in the Christian Church and the American culture.

COR's vision is to see Christians everywhere doing all they can in the power of the Holy Spirit to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), in every aspect of life. Toward that end, we have developed a series of worldview documents that set forth what we believe are the fundamental and essential points of the total Christian world and life view. The COR worldview documents state what we believe are the biblical principles for all spheres of human life including theology, evangelism, discipleship, law, civil governments, economics, education, family, medicine, psychology and counseling, arts and media, business and professions, and science and technology. We believe that the COR worldview documents state where the entire Church must stand and what action it must take to accomplish its task in the remaining years of the Twentieth Century and on into the next century.

COR steering committee members from all walks of life were joined by many hundreds of other interested Christian scholars, pastors, and laymen in developing the COR documents during many series of workshops and conventions. Each document therefore, reflects input from theologians, philosophers, professionals in their respective fields, pastors, and lay Christians. We have sought to avoid denominational and theological bias in the documents; our aim has been to focus on principles so fundamental that we are convinced no Bible-believing Christian who studied the major questions related to each sphere of life would come to a contradictory conclusion.

COR views itself as a "Bible obedience, holiness movement" that crosses denominational and theological lines. The next step on its agenda, now that its basic documents are complete, is to disseminate them widely and to educate hundreds of thousands of Christians on how to make Christ Lord of absolutely every aspect of life. We plan to do that through publications, and through seminars, and training workshops in the major cities of America and Canada. COR will also work in cooperation with other Christian networking groups to help unify the pastors in major population centers around the vision of mobilizing their people to "Get God's will done in their city as it is in heaven" to whatever degree that is possible before the return of Christ. We believe America can be turned around and once again function as a Christian nation as it did in its earlier years. We believe that wherever the pastors of any city in the world join together in unity to make Christ Lord of every sphere of life, and, with Spirit led strategy, mobilize their people into a unified spiritual army; that city can and will become "a city set upon a hill" and be "a place where righteousness dwells."

About the 17 World View (Sphere) Documents

COR developed the 17 World View Documents, which set forth what we believe are fundamental and essential Biblical principles governing 17 major areas or *spheres* of human life and activity: law, government, economics, business and professions, education, art and media, medicine, science and technology, psychology and counseling, Christian unity, local and world evangelism, discipleship, helping the hurting, educating Christians about social and political moral issues, revitalizing Christian colleges and seminaries, marriage and the family, and pastoral renewal. These documents offer Christian leaders concise and comprehensive Biblical principles of how to apply the Truth of the Bible to all spheres of life and ministry. Each document includes short, creed-like statements of affirmation and denial that we believe state non-negotiable Biblical truths for that sphere of reality.

The 17 World View Documents were developed within 17 different committees made up of leaders with experience and expertise in the 17 different fields over an intensive three-year period of dialogue, critique, editing, and finally, a consensus conviction. Sixty of COR's National Steering Committee members with over 300 other theologians, pastors, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and Christian workers made up the 17 committees. COR sends forth these documents to the Church at large with the prayer that they may be used by God's Spirit to get God's will done on earth, as it is in heaven—to whatever degree that is possible prior to the Return of Christ.

Preface

When Jesus began His ministry, He said, "...the kingdom of God is at hand." God and man reconciled! Good news indeed! He went on, "...repent and believe the gospel [the good news]" (Mark 1:15).

In this first proclamation Jesus affirmed that the reign of God has invaded a humanity disordered by sin and that the only way to enjoy the Messiah is to repent and receive His kingly reign, both personally and in community. The kingly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ is ushered in and culminated by the saving events of His birth, life, death, resurrection, exaltation, reign, and coming again (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 20-28). This gospel is at the same time a message of absolute authority ("the utterances of God"—1 Peter 4:11) and of infinite compassion (Romans 5:8) presented in glorious power (Matthew 28:18,19; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

To His representatives, the bearers of the gospel, Jesus said, "...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..." (Acts 1:8), for only thus would they become the incarnation of what they preached. It was when they were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:31) that they proclaimed the gospel with authority and compassion in the power of God.

Paul speaks on the one hand of evangelists as "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20), and on the other hand of his posture as that of pleading with great compassion that men be reconciled to God, warning them day and night with tears (Acts 20:31). Thus both the gospel message and the messenger are marked by authority, compassionate application, and power from on high (1 Corinthians 2:7; 2 Corinthians 5:14).

These are the missing elements in much modern evangelism. This is why the world feels it can ignore us. Yet God is raising up a growing army of people burdened by the Holy Spirit, equipped with the Word for witness, and clothed in the power of God. True revival within the Church cannot fail to produce evangelism through the Church to the whole world.

Statements of Affirmation and Denial

The Nature of the Gospel

1. We affirm that the background against which we must understand and proclaim the gospel is the utter, universal lostness of mankind, Jew and Gentile, through inexcusable guilt and the corruption of human nature by sin and the subsequent "wrath of God ...revealed ...against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans 1:18).

We deny that man is not a sinner by nature, and that man can perfect himself morally, improve himself spiritually, or come to God apart from faith in the divine application of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

2. We affirm that the gospel that reconciles God and man must be understood in light of five basic elements: (1) God created and reigns over all things; (2) Jesus Christ, at once God and man, actually lived among us a perfect life under God's law; (3) Sin has alienated man from God, bringing judgment and hell; (4) Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised from the dead, was given lordship over all creation, and is coming again to deliver "the kingdom to the God and Father" (1 Corinthians 15:24) and judge all mankind (Acts 17:31); (5) God calls us to respond in repentance and faith to Christ's atonement and lordship.

We deny that these elements of the gospel are mythological, and that the historicity of the saving acts of Christ is unimportant.

3. We affirm that the law of God is designed to convict of sin and direct the sinner to Christ, while for the saved person the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in him as he walks not "according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4).

We deny that man can appreciate fully the riches of God's grace and salvation without first seeing himself as a defenseless transgressor in rebellion against God's law.

4. We affirm that the only proper attitude by which sinful man may appropriate to himself the saving benefits of the gospel is a Holy Spirit-wrought, humble repentance, which casts itself in total dependence upon the mercy of God in Christ alone for salvation.

We deny that a right proclamation of the gospel ever leaves man with any grounds for self-righteousness or self-justification based on anything he can do to secure his salvation or make himself acceptable to God.

5. We affirm that, insofar as the final reconciliation and submission of all things to the reign of God is intrinsic to and the culmination of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:23-28), affirming Jesus Christ as absolute Lord cannot be separated from proclaiming His saving role in the gospel (Romans 14:9).

We deny that the lordship of Christ is merely optional for the believer (Luke 6:46-49; Matthew 7:21), as if He could ever be one's Savior without also being one's Lord.

6. We affirm that this gospel is anticipated and foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament and is fully executed and defined by our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles in the New Testament as the revealed will, word, and work of God.

We deny that the saving gospel of Christ is only one of many ways to God.

7. We affirm that the gospel of Christ is exclusive of all man-devised systems of salvation or understanding God, and that it is the only possible means of salvation and of establishing a right relationship with God (Acts 4:12).

We deny that we can consistently hold to the gospel of Christ and simultaneously adhere to any philosophy that exalts man, his ideas, or his possessions to the supreme place of importance, which belongs to God alone—whether it be humanism, socialism, communism, materialism, existentialism, or any other system.

Definition of Evangelism

8. We affirm that evangelism is that activity whereby the Church, corporately and individually, locally and universally proclaims the gospel with its promises and demands, and calls upon people to repent of their sins, receive Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior, identify with His saving purposes and His program of redemption and sanctification, and bear the fruit of the Spirit.

We deny that evangelism is adequately conducted when it does not have in view, along with saving individual sinners, strengthening the established local church by ingrafting new converts or else planting new churches as local expressions of the Body of Christ.

9. We affirm that evangelism includes the plowing and seed-sowing aspects of witnessing that may not immediately lead to repentance and conversion, but may eventually do so.

We deny that the success of evangelism necessarily depends on or is measured by immediate visible results.

10. We affirm that the mandate given by Jesus Christ to His Church to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20) is as binding on the membership of the whole Church today as it ever was in the first century.

We deny that evangelizing the world is the sole responsibility of departments of the organized Church, special mission agencies, or specially called individuals.

11. We affirm that no one should claim exclusivity for any method of gospel presentation; that no one should say that evangelism is the sole prerogative of any one person; and that, in contrast, evangelism involves personal sharing in daily life, exercising influence in institutional structures, evangelistic preaching, group witness, and service in Christ’s name through any and all means by which Jesus Christ may be made known as Lord and Savior.

We deny that methods of evangelism and evangelistic movements ought to be critically compared, except in terms of their fidelity to the nature of the gospel itself; that there is any right standard for such judgment apart from Scripture alone; and that such judgments ought to be made for the purpose of condemnation rather than in edifying love.

12. We affirm that any group dedicated to evangelism needs a high level of commitment, particularly when it attempts to reach highly resistant groups, and we deeply appreciate the contribution of churches and bodies that undertake such commitments.

We deny that such a high level of commitment by those called to such a ministry, assuming the absence of doctrinal error, can in itself justly be regarded as inappropriate or dangerous to their spiritual lives.

13. We affirm that leaders of each local church must understand and fulfill their God-given duty to train all its members to present the gospel clearly and simply to the unsaved (1 Peter 3:15).

We deny that local churches that fail to provide personal evangelism training for all their people can fulfill the Great Commission of Christ.

14. We affirm that, while the whole Church is called to evangelize, God has called and bestowed on the Church men specially anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel as evangelists with the two-fold function of bringing lost people to the Savior (Acts 8:12; 21:8) and, together with pastor/teachers, equipping saints for the work of service and edification (Ephesians 4:11,12).

We deny that the call to be a vocational evangelist is no longer valid, as some church groups of our day seem to assume, fully recognizing the pastor/teacher as a gift to the Church but showing little or no recognition of the evangelist as a special gift to the Church.

15. We affirm that leaders in every church should lead it into local evangelistic action, should recognize that the Lord gives some of His servants various ministry gifts to build up the Body, and, therefore, should welcome the ministry of those servants of God who have the special calling or endowment of an evangelist (Ephesians 4:11,12).

We deny that any attitude of self-sufficiency or jealousy that withholds from the congregation the ministry of specially qualified evangelists is proper.

Evangelism and Social Service

16. We affirm that, whereas the Church, motivated by the compassion of Christ, may and should seek to meet all kinds of human needs and minister healing to the sick, such activities do not constitute the communication of the intrinsic elements of the gospel as defined in 1 Corinthians 15 but rather demonstrate Christian love and so help create a climate for evangelistic soul-winning.

We deny that fruits of the gospel, such as preservation of the Church as a loving community under the lordship of Christ or the social care and compassion that flow from such a community, can of themselves fully communicate the gospel to the unsaved. Furthermore, we deny that any Christian or church that engages in these legitimate and God-honoring relationships and services to humanity, without at the same time verbally, clearly, and pointedly communicating the basic elements of the saving gospel in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, is obeying the Lord in His clear command to “preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15).

The World Scope of Evangelism

17. We affirm that Acts 1:8 does not indicate simply a geographically sequential activity but a global responsibility that engages the obedient Church to evangelize and establish bodies of reproducing disciples among every people, who in turn will directly influence society to establish itself on Christian principles.

We deny that any church that does not make local and world evangelism a major priority in its thinking, praying, planning, and acting can enter or abide in that fullness of spiritual life bestowed by a glorified Lord in the midst of His obedient people.

18. We affirm that it is the responsibility of every local church to inform and encourage its members about world missions, and that this will result in recruiting, commending, and sending them out in the name of Christ as extensions of the local body, thus assuring the missionary of faithful prayer and financial support to enable him to proclaim the saving power of Christ effectively both at home and abroad.

We deny that the local church may give a lower priority to missions than to matters of local concern without detriment to the spiritual growth of its members.

19. We affirm that, if the Lord delays His return to earth and the population of the world continues concentrating increasingly in cities, churches and mission agencies should continually deploy evangelizing forces into the cities and population centers of the world and should back up their efforts with the necessary funds.

We deny that the masses of the great cities may not be reached successfully by the modern Church, and that reaching them with the gospel is either irrelevant or impossible in the context of city ghettos. Further, we deplore any policy of completely removing evangelical churches from inner city locations in the interests of preserving culturally homogeneous congregations.

20. We heartily affirm and commend the renewed evangelistic concern expressed in many segments of the Church today to make a persistent and sustained effort to reach and plant churches in every identifiable ethnic group or hitherto neglected sub-culture in the world. At the same time, we are fully aware of the urgent importance of bringing Christ to the nearly three billion people among whom there is not a single indigenous witnessing church.

We reject the pessimism of many in the Christian Church toward unreached people groups, such as the 900 million Muslims, as if such people cannot be reached successfully for the Lord.

21. We affirm that the ultimate goal of missions, while generally beginning with evangelism and church planting, goes far beyond this to making disciples of all the nations, and that the message of the missionary must be the totality of the gospel and the necessity of Christ's lordship in all of its fullness for all the life of individuals, families, churches, states, and other aspects of society.

We deny that the missionary task is confined to merely converting and discipling individuals and families and establishing local churches without training the people of God to apply the whole counsel of God to every aspect of life and society.

22. We strongly affirm that the many thousands of international students in major universities in our land present to Christ's Church an unprecedented opportunity for world evangelization with great potential for such students to be won to Christ, disciplined for His service, and sent back as living witnesses to their own people.

We deny and, therefore, deplore and oppose any policy of merely supporting our own missionaries while failing to invite into our churches and homes these student representatives of the very nations we seek to reach and evangelize.

Revival and Evangelism

23. We affirm that history shows that great awakenings and mighty revivals consistently lead to a renewed concern for evangelistic outreach both at home and abroad; that we must therefore earnestly pray for a mighty revival in our own day so that a new spiritual vitality may be seen in Bible-believing churches with a consequent outpouring of life, commitment, and financial resources to reach those masses of people on earth who are still "separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12);

and that to this end we must continue in prayer and active concern for the perennial revival of the Church, until all the true churches of Christendom are on the move to reach the whole world.

We deny and deplore as unbiblical any tendency to adopt evangelistic priorities on the basis of “cost efficiency” alone, and, on the basis of Acts 8:26-40, that considerations of finance, methodology, modern technology, psychology, or any other standard are more significant than the initiative of God Himself in directing the missionary outreach of His Church (cf. Acts 16:6-10).

A Call to Action in Local and World Evangelism

General Actions

Because of the preceding convictions, we call on all men and women committed to Christ as their personal Lord and Savior to join us in:

1. examining earnestly these affirmations and denials in the light of God’s Word to see if they are true, and informing us directly of those points in which they believe we have departed from Scripture or logic;
2. re-examining our own local and world evangelistic theories and practices and asking God to show us where we are falling short;
3. repenting of all known sins, confessing and forsaking them, asking forgiveness both of God Himself and of all those who have been offended, and then making all possible restitution;
4. praying for God to fill all of His people with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in order that we may bring our personal lives and our local and world evangelistic theories and practice into closer conformity to His revealed will on a permanent and consistent basis;
5. seeking guidance from our brethren and local church authorities as to how we can mutually support and influence one another to make our local and world evangelistic practices glorifying to God.

Having dealt with our personal sins and failures, and placing ourselves accountable to the Bible and to the brethren, we now commit ourselves to:

1. influencing any known Christians or Christian associations with whom we work to consider seriously our affirmations and denials with the goal of enlisting their Biblical responses;
2. influencing those in the field of local and world evangelism who agree with our affirmations and denials to implement these proposals in their work;
3. mobilizing and networking our Christian resources and working in concert with the other professional spheres both inside and outside COR, to see the behavior of the Body of Christ and our nation changed to approximate more closely the view reality and morality presented to us in the Holy Scriptures;
4. bringing about conferences and coalitions designed to study and promote true revival.

Specific Actions

To these ends, we make the following commitments:

1. We must systematically emphasize Biblical guidelines for evangelism as outlined above in order to encourage our evangelical churches to see the importance of such principles of healthy and proper evangelism as the following:
 - 1.1. With every evangelistic appeal to any person to trust in Christ and believe on Him, we must make clear that he must receive Him as Lord of his life, as well as his Savior. We must never make non-Christians think they can have Christ as Savior without having Him as Lord.
 - 1.2. Christ's blood atonement for sin is the only way for sinful man to be reconciled to a holy God. No other Savior exists, no other methods, philosophies, or actions prevail with God to save a sinner. Man cannot be saved by any works of his own, by any self-improvement in character or moral behavior, or by his own initiative, but only by the substitutionary atonement of Christ and a Holy Spirit-worked rebirth. The good works that mark the Christian life are the fruit of union with Christ but cannot earn or contribute to salvation.
 - 1.3. The gospel is not merely benevolent social action, even though it should and will produce significant social action.
 - 1.4. Evangelism is not to be relegated solely to any special department of a church or denomination, but should be understood as the responsibility of all Christians everywhere to the extent of their gifting and calling by God's Spirit.
 - 1.5. Evangelism is not the chief end of man, important as it may be. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Yet God is glorified by godly, thankful living, which in turn eventuates in soul-winning and evangelism.]
2. Every local church should have, or be part of, an ongoing evangelism training program for its members.
3. Whenever possible, it is highly commendable for churches within local geographic areas to mount united evangelistic campaigns together.
4. Urban areas and large population centers may not rightfully be neglected in our evangelistic outreach. Therefore, we should maintain systematic efforts to evangelize large cities within our reach, however much it might cost in effort and sacrifice. We should recognize that urban evangelism necessarily involves us in some difficult areas of social action and social reform.
5. We should conduct our evangelism as much as possible by personal involvement rather than impersonally. We should remember that God Himself in His missionary outreach to earth actually became one of us through the Incarnation and became involved in the humiliations and trials of our human life.
6. It is incumbent upon those who evangelize to be ready to welcome into local church fellowships and to nurture and train with pastoral care all who respond to the gospel without regard to the artificial and temporary distinctions of racial, social, or educational background.