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Nine Steps to Christian Unity

This article by Robert McAfee Brown is taken from the October 1964 issue of Presbyterian Life magazine.

Robert McAfee Brown, a protestant who attended the Second Vatican Council, suggests nine steps toward greater Protestant-Roman Catholic understanding:

- 1) Pray to our common Father  
A life of prayer is always a step toward greater unity.  
Prayer for one another can by the power of the Holy Spirit be transformed into prayer with one another.
- 2) Confess mutual guilt  
We need a common acknowledgment of our guilt for the events that separated us in the past.
- 3) Engage in inner renewal  
Protestantism's best gift to the ecumenical future will be a purged and purified Protestantism. Catholicism's best gift will be a purged and purified Catholicism.
- 4) Clarify terms  
We must be clear about the nature of the unity we do and do not share. A good symbol of what our true situation is "separated brethren".
- 5) Deepen acquaintance  
One of our basic tasks is to become better acquainted with one another.
- 6) Reassess past differences  
Both Protestants and Catholics need to restudy their own past history. There needs to be a reassessment of the past.
- 7) Study the Bible together  
There are over two hundred joint Protestant-Catholic Bible-study groups in France.
- 8) Cooperate against injustice  
We can join forces in the sharing of our common civic responsibilities.
- 9) Be ready for risks  
There are awesome barriers that stand in the way of full unity, and it is paradoxically a step toward Christian unity to recognize the apparently discouraging fact of those barriers.

Portland, Oregon

Recently, George Norton, from the San Francisco group, was in Portland to see if he could help in any way in Mrs. Hall's divorce trial. An ex-member from San Francisco had given damaging and false testimony regarding this work so he wanted to clear our Master's name and testify in behalf of this work.

He spent a day in the Portland chapel, and the Portland family had a time of rich blessing in our fellowship with him. He attended one of our meetings. It was the same time that Mrs. Hall's lawyer attended. We are confident that with the combined prayers of the Portland and San Francisco groups that we will have complete victory in this battle for this work.

George spent a time of fellowship with David Kim in Eugene and I know he must have been blessed in his time of fellowship with David Kim. We can see how the barriers are being broken down between the three groups in America, and in God's time we believe that we will all be woven together in one great and powerful organization that will conquer this continent for our Master. For this we pray.

Seoul, Korea

As scheduled, Lt. Col. Pak arrived safely in Seoul on October 7th and met many of the members of our heavenly family at the airport. Unfortunately our Master and other key members were out of town at that time. Our Master's trip out of Seoul was to encourage all our families in the Southern districts during this 6 month Evangelical Campaign.

Bible Study for This Week

This Bible study is from Mark 13:24-27. This study deals with the symptoms of the Second Coming of Christ.

The liberals do not believe these verses on the Second Coming of Christ. They believe it is figurative.

As we study verse 24 and 25 we can see the impossibility for the literal darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars from heaven. God is a God of science, therefore He cannot change or violate His own law. This is to be taken symbolic.

Jesus borrowed scriptures from the Old Testament when He quoted from Isaiah 13:10, 34:4, Ezekiel 32:7, Joel 3:30, 31 and Amos 8:9. These scriptures are all symbolic symptoms of the last days. Since this statement by Jesus concerning these signs of the last days was borrowed from the Old Testament it was not an authoritative statement. If this was fulfilled in those days we would not live on earth. This was only figurative language.

It has been 2,000 years and Christ has never appeared. Jesus' followers actually thought He would return in their day.

1) In verse 26, the coming in the clouds refers to Daniel 7:13. This is not Jesus' own words since He again quoted from the Old Testament, but He quoted this scripture for His own sake. The coming in the clouds in Daniel means THE THRONE OF GOD. For further reference on the coming in the clouds see Isaiah 19:1 and Psalms 97:2.

2) Coming in the clouds is a symbolic statement. Clouds are evaporated water. Clouds mean that everything is clean and segregated from the world. Clouds are high above the world; regenerated saints.

3) In I Thess. 4:16,16 Paul used for the latter days symptoms he borrowed from Mark 13:24. Paul only re-used old scriptures. This was not a divine revelation of Paul's. Paul, many times borrowed scripture from the four gospels.

In verse 27, angels mean God's messengers. We are His messengers (angels) in that sense. Paul utilized this in I Thess. 4:16. Paul borrowed this from Jesus' statement and it is not to be taken literally.

We must study the Bible earnestly, and in this way we began to see and understand the scriptures regarding the Second Coming in a new light.

In our next Bible study we will discuss the time of His Second Coming. Truly we are living in the time of His Second Coming.

Editor: Mrs. Esther Carroll