

The Significance of the New Martyrs of Russia for the 21st Century Metropolitan Jonah

The New Martyrs of Russia, hundreds of thousands of bishops, priests, deacons, monastics and lay people, the Royal Family, aristocracy, merchants and peasants died at the hands of the Socialist powers for the sake of their faith in God, in Jesus Christ and the Gospel. What did they die for? Why?

They died because they believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He is the ultimate criterion of Truth. He is Himself The Truth.

Either Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, crucified and risen from the dead. Or he is a dead, failed Jewish prophet and liar, like so many others. Christianity is then all a lie and we are most to be pitied for having believed a delusion; and we can continue to do our quaint ethnic rituals in the sacred gloom, but they are meaningless. So asserted those who killed the New Martyrs, and those who assented to their murder.

Either our hope is in vain, and we are fools—or Jesus Christ is the Son of God, risen from the dead. The New Martyrs reveal to us the two ways: the way of hope and eternal life in Jesus Christ; or the way of despair, nihilism and death.

This stark contrast, this radical choice, must cut through the complacency of us who are lulled to semi-consciousness by the self-gratification of materialism and hedonism. We are anesthetized by the comfort and security of our middle-class lives, so that we lose sight of the need for a transcendent hope, and immutable criterion of truth, and a disciplined way of life that nurtures our spiritual awareness, the consciousness of the immanent Presence of God.

The reality is that we are being faced with a choice, and that choice is the same as those men and women a century ago faced: do we remain faithful Christians no matter what the cost, even torture and death, because we know the Truth; or do we capitulate to the world, the political movements of the times, and stay safe and comfortable, while losing our souls? Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” The world asserts, “There is no truth.” We Christians say, “Jesus Christ is the Truth.”

Jesus said, “He who would save his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake and Gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt 16:25f).

The New Martyrs refused to compromise their faith, and lost their lives for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. They stood for the Truth. Will we also stand for the Truth? What will we give in exchange for our souls?

If we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Truth Incarnate, then we must conform our lives to His teachings, and “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” The Church is there to support us in this task of repentance, the transformation of our minds and hearts, our lives, according to the Gospel, and support us in that commitment. Our commitment to Christ and His teachings affects every aspect of our lives, every attitude, every action. Striving together, it forms Christian culture, the shared commitment to Christ and the Gospel.

These Gospel principles produced the dream of a wholly Christian society, which inspired St Constantine’s vision of the Christianization of the Roman Empire. The earliest

Churches, from the time of the New Testament and through the initial persecutions, held everything in common and lived in community as far as possible. This formed the roots of early monastic life. Beginning with the reigns of Emperors Ss. Constantine and Theodosius in the 4th Century, there was a vision of a fully integrated Christian society, permeated and structured with Christian values. It endured the Germanic invasions from the north, the Muslim invasion from the east, internal schisms, and was only finished off a thousand years later by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Despite schisms between the churches, the vision of a Christian society survived, in the East in Russia and other Slavic kingdoms; and in the West, with the Holy Roman Empire, and its successors, even the British Empire. It was based on the principles of the Gospels and the common faith in Jesus Christ—shared by the highest elites and nobility to the lowliest peasants and slaves. The Church sanctified marriages, baptized the children and provided the context for social interaction. It imparted Christian identity through participation in its Sacraments. The family was sanctified, not just the nuclear family but the multigenerational clan, as the source of identity, love and comfort. The disciplines of spiritual life, ascetic discipline, relational discipline, and work ethic rooted in the Gospel nurtured social consciousness. While in no way perfect, it functioned for hundreds of years. Traditional Western culture stood entirely on the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ and the structure of society and daily life inculcated and blessed by the Church.

During the last three centuries, forces arose that rejected the Christian vision of society. The Protestant Reformation shattered the unity of the Church in the West, and the philosophical trends led to the so-called Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions. These began the process of secularization, the compartmentalization of religion and the removal of its influence on society. With seeds in the radical elements of the French Revolution, and the German philosophical trends that lead to Hegel and Nietzsche, Marx and Engels laid the foundations of Socialist philosophy. It fed off a bitter hatred of Christianity, and Christian society, and sought its destruction through radical secularization. This profoundly influenced the alienated intellectuals in western Europe, who developed it into the revolutionary ideology that conquered much of 20th Century Europe. Marxist inspired Socialism in two variants, Communism in the East, Fascism in the West, was responsible for the slaughter of tens of millions of people in the 20th Century.

The western synthesis of socialist thought has created, in Western culture, an externally less hostile variant than existed a century ago: Progressivism, as it was called at the beginning of the 20th Century, and is now generally known as Liberalism. This of course is the complete opposite of classical liberalism, which is laissez faire capitalism. Yet underlying it are the same goals as its more violent predecessors: the subjection of all aspects of society to the almighty State, the suppression of Christianity and other religions, the curtailing of personal liberty, and the corporatization of the economy dominated by the State.

The key dogma of the Liberal Progressive agenda, atheism, is gradually being imposed on the entire society, ripping out the ancient foundations of faith and the Church. It operates through secularism. The process of secularization affects the entire society—the rejection of Christian values, the compartmentalization of the churches and their influence in society, the elimination of religious speech, concepts and values in the society. They are to be replaced by the imposition of new moral standards through laws and enforced through political correctness. These are the “progressive” measures that gradually delegitimize not only the

churches but faith itself. The State gradually replaces the churches and family as the source of identity.

As Orthodox Christians in 21st Century Western culture we live in a society that has rejected the Gospel, and is pursuing secularism. It has not been the kind of violent upheaval as the Bolshevik coup of 1917—people are not being tortured and shot for their faith, yet. Instead, people are being lured slowly into a compartmentalized secularist life, a practical atheism, where religion is simply one more optional activity, neatly contained and not allowed to spill over or influence other areas of life. The more faith is compartmentalized, the more it loses its influence on society and the culture, but especially on the lives of individuals.

This is particularly the case when it comes to values, and the coercive nature of a politically correct criterion of value. Thus, what was unthinkable 50 years ago is now asserted as a norm, and those who dissent are penalized for their positions. Divorce and its fruits of bitterness, abortion, living together outside of marriage, feminism, homosexuality, transgenderism, and so forth are all examples of these “progressive values” that have been asserted as politically correct norms over the past few decades. Now it is politically incorrect to not validate these behaviors, now become identities, and in some places it is punishable by law. To even speak against them, the latter two in particular, is labeled “hate speech.”

“God” has been banned from public discourse, especially from schools. Not only the mention of Jesus Christ, but even reference to God, has led to people losing their jobs and positions. Politically correct society wants to exorcise God from the collective consciousness. Instead of religion, we have new opiates for the masses: sex, sports and consumerism. These are the great distractions that keep people from thinking about their lives and their situations, and about God.

In the meantime, the exorbitantly funded Socialist political elites wage their endless ideological agendas in programs for social engineering. Democracy is manipulated to bring about the desired results. The underlying reality is the battle for power, to attain and retain power at all costs, by manipulating the population, distracting them and anesthetizing them, and imposing more and more radical changes to make the society “progress”. The goal of this progress is some kind of utopia: the Marxist utopia of Communism, or some variant of it. But it is a utopia where the elites retain their privilege and power, having equalized the lower classes and enslaved them, and anesthetized them with sex, drugs and cheap consumer goods.

There is a radical contrast between two systems of values: Christianity and Socialism. Scholars have classed Socialism as a religion in itself, one that has secularism as a prime principle, and has a fundamental dogma that God does not exist, or if He does, he has nothing to do with the world. Its agenda is to undermine, root out and destroy Christianity, and to make the whole society dependent on the State. The State becomes god, providing everything for all the people, and instilling the values of the Socialist State as the highest and best Good. It is the cult of the State, the god of this world, which tolerates no rivals.

Thus Christian values and institutions have to be destroyed: the family, the churches, civic institutions: first they have to be compromised, then outlawed. If the system is Communist, private property is all seized by the State; if it is Fascist (also a Socialist system), property remains relatively private but corporations are dominant tools of the State. Not only

do Christian values and institutions have to be destroyed, but all things that impart identity apart from the State as well. This cuts to the fundamental issue of personhood.

In Christian society, the family, churches, and civic institutions are not only endowed with Christian meaning, but they impart identity to people—in other words, people define themselves in term of their relationships to their family, church and other people. This is the essence of personhood. In contrast, in a Socialist system, the “New Man,” like the “New Soviet Man,” is the creation of the State, draws his very identity from the State, and his position and his work within it, rather than from his personal relationships. The “New Human” of the 21st Century defines himself by work: what is produced and what is consumed. Hence, personhood is reduced to an economic unit, an autonomous anonymous individual. Depersonalization is at the heart of the Socialist agenda, because such economic units can be more easily manipulated and used to fit the needs of the State, without the interference of personal relationships and ties that complicate matters. As Pasternak wrote of the Soviet system, “The personal life is dead in Russia.” The result is that people are left alienated and in despair, nihilistic and profoundly isolated.

We live in a culture in which the old Christian foundations, rooted in Faith and the Church, have been undermined and infected with Marxist inspired secularism. We are already reaping the bitter fruits of the cultural and political incursions of Socialist ideology. So also was the Russia of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

There is an eerie resemblance between the Russia of 1917 and the West of 2017. Both were confident in the stability of their economic and political systems: in Russia, in the centuries old Romanov Autocracy; in the West, in the Post-War order of Nato and “democracy.” The Russian confidence in their old order was in vain. Is our confidence in our New World Order also in vain?

We must not romanticize Old Russia.

From the mid-19th Century, there was a growing alienation of the aristocracy from the Church. They lived lives of decadent luxury and often moral corruption. Certain groups and classes of people, excluded from the bounty of the wealthy, were alienated from the society and were influenced by the dissemination of Hegelian and Marxist philosophy. The liberation of the Serfs led to their migration into the cities to lives of abject poverty and hardship. Alienated from their former context of family and church, they fell into a nihilistic despair, and they became ripe for the Marxist doctrines of class warfare. This formed the framework for the growth of radical socialism, of which its primary dogma was militant atheism; not simply a disregard for faith and the Church, but a burning hatred of God and all things holy. Theirs was a deep, visceral hatred, violent and destructive. They hated believing Jews and Muslims as well, but their greatest animus was against Christianity and the Church.

The root of this hatred was their anger against their situation, their poverty and oppression, the decadence and corruption of the ruling class, and of the Church. Their anger turned to hatred, and they were thus easily manipulated by those who sought to benefit from the destruction of the existing system. This particularly was the case of the Jews, who sought to have the onerous restrictions against them lifted, and among whom there was rage at their

oppression by the Christian establishment. They produced many revolutionaries, and the great majority of the Communist leaders, both Bolshevik and Menshevik.

We can read all about this period in the novels of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, and the writings of St John of Kronstadt, who tried to minister to the vast hordes of the poor.

Sadly, the Church was also profoundly corrupt. Many of the revolutionaries were sons of clergy. Stalin had been a seminarian. The clergy were trapped in poverty in rural areas, and in the system of ecclesiastical schools. Abuses of power within this system, and the sense of being trapped created anger and rebellion in their ranks. Drunkenness, further abuses of power, atheism and hypocrisy among the clergy turned people against the Church. The Monarchy, Tsars Alexander and Nicholas II were faithful Orthodox Christians, but much of the aristocracy and intelligentsia were completely alienated from Orthodoxy. The bishops and clergy were often inaccessible to the people. They became easy targets for propaganda in their wealth and excesses, in stark contrast to the poverty of the masses. [I. S. Belliustin, Description of Parish Clergy in Rural Russia. Trans Gregory Freeze (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)]

The Left began to undermine society through violence, assassinations and strikes. They called for democracy, the abolition of the autocracy and monarchy, and incited the people to riot. They used yellow journalism—fake news—to slander and libel the ruling class and to undermine faith in their leadership. There were, of course, calls for reform and the introduction of a constitutional monarchy on one hand; and radical church reform on the other, the restoration of the patriarchate, but also massive lay participation in the governance of the Church. These did happen, but were short lived in practice.

The whole structure of Russian society was weakened by the First World War. The Tsar was forced to abdicate in March, 1917, and the Provisional Government was unable to hold the country together. They were overthrown by the Bolsheviks in a coup in November, starting a civil war. The Bolsheviks were significantly supported by German and American money, outside influences seeking power and control, (shall we say regime change?) and unleashing the internationalist Socialists who were hell bent on the destruction of Orthodox Russian Society. Among others, one American Jewish banker, Jacob Schiff, had threatened to finance a revolution if the restrictions on Jews were not lifted; he made good on his promise.

No sooner than Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power that the murder of the clergy began within a few weeks, Hieromartyrs Archpriest John Kochurov and Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev. The era of the New Martyrs of the Russian Church had begun.

With the perspective of a hundred years, and from the perspective of a totally different culture, we wonder how such a thing could happen. In the US, we think it could never happen to us; and yet, the Left is rearing its ugliness in abject hatred, political violence and the legislative and judicial curtailing of civil liberties and the imposition of anti-Christian morality and legislation. In the universities, the Left has come to dominate the whole educational system, substituting its socialist ideology for classic studies, and replacing critical thinking with political ideology, reinforced by political correctness.

The unfolding of the Marxist agenda has been in process throughout the 20th Century through growth of Liberal Progressivism that began at that time and the process of intentional secularization. While the socialist idea had been very influential in the early 20th C, with the rise

of Fascism, it rose to new levels of influence in the 1960's with the unfolding of the socialist agenda. The Sexual Revolution and the degradation to decadent and libertine immorality has led to the dissolution of the nuclear family, with brutal consequences for its victims. The basic social unit of the family, of traditional marriage, has been so damaged that already several generations have grown up without a family identity. It has created generations of people who are angry at being deprived of a normal family, and turn that anger inwards into resentment and self-hatred, as well as outward toward the System. They so often become alienated, nihilistic, with poor prospect for the future, other than dependence on the almighty State.

The mainline churches have been severely compromised and secularized into insignificance, through their acceptance of the anti-Christian morality promulgated by the laws and courts, and have accepted the Progressive agenda. This has contributed to the destruction of the family.

The abolition of gender distinction, the interchangeability of men and women, feminism, transgenderism, are all parts of the agenda. They are manifestations of the goals of the destruction of the traditional family, and the reduction of persons into anonymous individuals, economic units of production and consumption. Abortion keeps down the birth rate, keeps women in the work force, and weeds out "undesirable populations." As Margaret Sanger, the founder of the abortion movement in the US, and Liberal icon, said "Birth control is nothing more or less than weeding out the unfit."

Any mention of Christianity is politically incorrect in Progressive circles, and anti-Christian and atheist propaganda abound in the media, in the schools and from the government. This has deeply damaged the ability of the churches to reach out to people. Those seeking consolation and healing from the brutality of the world have no refuge in those secularized churches, where it is politically incorrect to realize that one has sinned and is in need of repentance.

The welfare state has expanded to the point of creating multiple generations of dependents, and is virtually inescapable for those caught in its vicious cycle. Welfare pays far more than an unskilled person can earn from a basic job. Thus it creates enclaves of poverty in the inner cities, exacerbating racial and ethnic tensions, which are cynically manipulated by the "community organizers" into blocks of "oppressed peoples." Their resentment is stirred into hatred, and their hatred incited to violence against the police and against the majority population. The Black Lives Matter group is a perfect example.

The old categories of class warfare—the workers against the bourgeoisie—have been replaced with the neo-Marxist categories of the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors, in an identity politics which deals with groups and classes of people rather than individuals. It is the same Marxist dynamic. The manipulation of racial tension through labelling and incitement of "oppressed groups" has created a social bomb ready to explode in violent riots and destruction.

There are many parallels between Russia and the US, between 1917 and 2017. What the Bolsheviks enacted by violent overthrow and forced on Russian society, the American and Western Internationalist Globalist Left gradually, over 50 years, is trying to impose on the West. Instead of nationalizing property, Communist style, they have corporatized the economy. Instead of Communist, it is Fascist. For either Socialist variant, everything is ultimately

controlled by the State. There may be different economics, or at least ownership, but the same government control of people's lives, industry and resources.

Mussolini said that "Fascism should be more appropriately called Corporatism because it is the merger of state and corporate power."

The coalition between big government and big business is obvious in the military-industrial complex, which relies exclusively on government money for its existence; and on the endless wars to keep it in business. But what about the rest? Who owns the house you live in? Do you, or the bank which holds the mortgage? Who owns them? The stockholders, usually Wall Street investment firms, or the Feds who bail them both out when they fail. The business we own or work for? Again, the banks who hold the loans, that depend on the State. Our credit cards? Again, the banks. How many small business jobs exist in relation to jobs with companies owned by large corporations or conglomerates? How many of the small businesses rely on sales to the government, or to businesses that service the government and its corporate vassals? Then there are the pension funds, the insurance companies and all the rest of the financial sector: they rest on Wall Street, which depends on the State: the Fed and US treasury bonds.

It is a single complex, highly integrated system. Nothing is independent. The government regulates and oversees the banks and financial industry, and every other industry, which affect every aspect of our lives. The question is, Who controls it and how much?

The Socialist idea is that society can and should be controlled to bring about "progress"—toward an earthly utopia, perhaps a communist paradise, of complete egalitarianism. The use of regulations, policies and laws manipulate businesses, institutions and population according to the will of the lawmakers. Then there is social engineering, to keep the flow of labor, production and consumption; and on the other hand, to dictate the parameters in which people may live and function. The underlying question is, Who makes the laws and regulations, and according to what principles?

By levying enormous taxes on the wealthy and giving tax breaks to the poor, the government facilitates an equalization of income through wealth redistribution. Except of course for the elites who are "more equal than all the others." The system becomes a means of endless self-enrichment for the elite; and for the common people, slavery.

The State controls the media, from the propaganda that passes as "news" to the increasingly explicit television programs and movies, to the endless river of pornography on the internet—violent, sexual and political. The media become the means of social engineering by adjusting the "norms" so that what was abhorrent becomes normal. People learn what is and is not politically correct. The "Russiagate" scandal is a great example. It was interesting that the editor of one of the largest German newspapers wrote that the CIA dictated the positions they were to take. What is amazing is that they readily complied. Truth goes to the highest bidder.

The ultimate goal of the socialist agenda is to make the State into a god, from whom all blessings flow, as well as punishment for dissent. Everything and everyone becomes dependent on the State—for money, housing, transportation, food, clothing and for correct thinking. It leaves no place for the true God, or the Church, or for dissent or liberty, or self-

determination. Everything is subordinated to the “public good.” And the ultimate public good becomes the concentration of power in the hands of a few, who dictate the lives of the people.

If you are ignorant of history, you are destined to repeat it.

The New Martyrs stood up and refused to offer incense to this false god, refused to give it obeisance and stood up for the Truth. They paid for it with their lives. I hope that the above exposition reveals that it is the same spirit of anti-Christ that took flesh in the lust for power and hatred of God of the early 20th C. Bolsheviks that slaughtered the New Martyrs, as it is today incarnate in the “smiley faced fascism” of the globalist Liberal Left. The methods are different, the goal is the same: to cast out Christ from the mind and heart of western culture, and instill practical atheism and the cult of Science, the cult of the State, and the exchange of personal liberty for government control. Its all about money and control.

The Liberal internationalist edifice has taken decades to construct, funded by the US Treasury and a few ultra-rich “benefactors.” It has been fifty years since the ideological ferment of social revolution became rooted in the culture. And it has been a hundred years since Socialism, in its Fascist and Communist incarnations seized control of Europe (and even America with Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt).

In our own day, the Liberal movement, in the name of Democracy and Equality, but otherwise known as the Anglo-American Empire, has swept North America and Western Europe, as well as Australia, imposing its immorality, destroying family, religion and national identity. The Liberal elite owns the media, and thus dictates its contents. Its agenda is a homogenization, according to their ideology of social engineering, to create a uniform culture and single market across the globe, relativizing borders and cultures and extinguishing human distinctions. By controlling the flow of information, money and the means of production, it makes everyone dependent on those Elites. The price for non-conformity is to be deprived, on one hand, of Imperial largesse; and on the other, regime change.

Once again, they want a kingdom of this world, with themselves upon the throne.

The martyrdom of thousands of Russians and Ukrainians, not to mention other Eastern Europeans, who stood up for their Faith in the face of Socialist persecution, the victims of Communism, is as relevant for us today in the West and in Australia as it was for the people of those same countries over the past hundred years. There was nothing subtle about the Communist persecution in Russia; thousands were summarily shot, others arrested and tortured, brutalized and left to die. For us, it is far less blatant, using the ideas of equality and justice, democracy and tolerance. Liberal agendas are legislatively and judicially imposed, and those who resist them are labelled and execrated as elitist, racist, homophobic and fascist (not understanding what fascist means). Violence has been validated, as it becomes politically correct to hate these hateful people; with no apparent realization that the angry protesters are infinitely more hatefilled than their victims. In the US, it is only a matter of time before more people are killed.

What are we to do?

First, we have to affirm our faith in Jesus Christ and His Church, and lead lives focused on repentance and the Gospel: “to commit ourselves and each other and all our life to Christ our God.” The more we conform our lives to the Gospel, the more we will be able to clearly see the Socialist agendas for what they are: designed to destroy faith and the Church.

This means that we need to shape our values according to the Gospel, both personally and as communities. The Apostle James wrote, “He who would be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” These Socialist agendas are “the world.” We must try to resist them in every aspect of our life. We may have to pay a heavy price, and it will not be popular. Moreover, we need to be a refuge for those souls hurt by the world and its depersonalization, to reach out with the healing message of the Gospel, and have the doors of our hearts and churches wide open. In short, we need to build an alternative society, a counter-culture, to the prevailing politically correct world. In all of this, we have to be ready to accept rejection by the world. “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.”

Finally, we need to stand up and expose the evil for what it is. We need not be judgmental towards anyone, but have true discernment as to what is from God and what is evil. It may be in the political arena or the social arena, and certainly within the community of the Church. This is what the New Martyrs did. St Tikhon spoke boldly, and excommunicated the Communists and those that wrought violence. Some stood up against their violence. Others, clergy, monastic and lay, refused to capitulate to those who sought to compromise their conscience, and make them betray others to death in an act of selfishness. In our time, some Orthodox young people think that what is legal makes it moral, and that the government determines morality. This is a sign that they have swallowed secularism completely, and the conscience has been extinguished which discerns right from wrong. Rather, it is God that has revealed what is moral and is immoral, and speaks to our conscience within us. It is precisely this kind of darkening of the conscience that we have to fight against.

The significance of the Russian New Martyrs for the 21st Century is that they have exposed socialism for what it is: an ultimately murderous and dehumanizing power grab that destroys culture, the family, society and faith. It ends in the reduction of personhood to anonymous and autonomous isolated individuals, alienated from one another, and plunged in despair. Socialism breeds nihilism, and is powered by hatred and violence. The New Martyrs have revealed the true nature of the enemy: it is the power and spirit of antichrist.

“Antichrist” is a Greek word, meaning “instead of Christ.” The Latin prefix “anti-“ means against. But the Greek sense is precisely the relevant meaning. The Socialist agenda is the exaltation of the State, instead of God; and ultimately, the false Christ instead of the true one. The end of their “progress” is the kingdom of Antichrist, who will be enthroned in the Third Temple in Jerusalem as the heir of David, and proclaiming himself god incarnate; ruling the world and promising peace and justice. This one has not yet been revealed, but the spirit of antichrist, and the mark of the beast that is hatred in a person’s heart, is manifest in the torture and murder of each of the New Martyrs.

The New Martyrs have shown that there can be victory over that nihilism. It consists in hope in Christ, and confident hope in the Kingdom of God, overcoming even fear of death. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” The renaissance of the Church in Russia and other areas devastated by socialism arose from the witness of those who gave their lives for Christ. The life of faith is renewed and thousands of churches have sprung up, filled with new believers that have come in repentance. The blood of the martyrs cries out “Repent!” to the world that is lost in the intoxication of socialist globalist idealism and despair. It cries out

that they may turn back to Christ, to the values of the Gospel and away from the path of destruction, and find healing for their lives. This means to value each person in love, and not simply “humanity” or any particular group; to set God first before everything, so that we allow no false gods that may gratify our senses but destroy our souls. So that we may be a people who call ourselves by the Name of Jesus Christ, and seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, Who is Himself glorified to all ages.