

Five Dangers of Becoming a...

"Gospel Guru"

DANGER: My capacity for self-righteousness grows.

1 I am becoming an expert at verbalising the Gospel.
People look up to me.

DANGER: My capacity for judging others grows.

2 I can smell sin ten kilometres away—someone else's, that is. I have developed X-ray vision and have become an expert analyst of the root sins of others.

DANGER: My resistance to repentance grows.

3 I am becoming an effective teacher of the Gospel, so I need to be right. *Other people* need to learn about repentance; I've done enough of it. I am seeing great success in my ministry. Others are not as effective as me.

DANGER: I have more and greater opportunities to minister in the power of my flesh.

4 To rely on the Holy Spirit means I must deny myself and die to myself, but, this dying to self is becoming tiresome. Besides, *I am gifted. I can do this!* People are being deeply changed and I am quite sure that my superior grasp of the concepts of grace and my superior way of presenting them accounts for it.

DANGER: I am full of religious knowledge .

5 I confuse knowing and being, rightness with righteousness. I am speaking into many people's lives, but no one is speaking into mine.
I am caught in a dangerous downhill spiral: I have mastered a lot of biblical truth.
- I have gained much experience, and, as a result...
- I have developed a complete inability to listen to others.
- I have reached a point that it is virtually impossible for me to grow—*unless* I endure the pain of a fresh repentance.

THE ONLY SOLUTION: Keep being humbled as you preach the Gospel to yourself.

1. "I am a BIG sinner." (Name your sins. Be specific. - I Jn. 1:9)

2. "I have a WONDERFUL Savior!" (Fix your eyes on him. - Heb. 12:2)

A PROFOUND LITTLE POEM:

*The older I get, the more I see,
I need to preach the Gospel...
To me.*

- Dr. Gene List, DDS



TRYING TO FINISH THE JOB ON YOUR OWN

A wee parable on "SPIRITUAL DIY" (trying to live the Christian life in your own strength).

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to your request for additional information regarding my accident insurance claim.

In box number 3 of the Accident Reporting Form, I wrote "*trying to finish the job on my own*" as the cause of the accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully. I trust that the following details will suffice.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the date of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-storey building. When I had finished my work, I discovered I had about 250 kilos/40 Stone of bricks left over.

Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out just over the side, and loaded the bricks into it.

Then I went back down to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the barrel of bricks. You will note in box number 11 of the Accident Report Form that my weight is 80 kilos / 12.5 Stone).

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rather rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone.

Slowed only slightly by my contact with the barrel, I continued my ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were drawn into the pulley.

Fortunately, by now I had regained my presence of mind so, in spite of the pain, was able to hold on to the rope.

However, at approximately the same time as my fingers entered the pulley, the barrel of bricks hit the ground. The impact caused the bottom to fall out of the barrel. Now, devoid of the bricks, the barrel now weighed about 15 kilos.

I refer you again to my weight in box number 11. I then began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

Then, in the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and trunk.

Fortunately, my encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen the injuries sustained when I fell onto the pile of bricks, so only three vertebrae were fractured.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks - unable to stand - when I looked up and saw the barrel hovering six stories above me, I once again lost my presence of mind and let go the rope. The empty barrel weighted more than the rope, so it fell on top of me, breaking both legs.

I trust this has given you additional information you require.

Kindest regards,

Justin Payne

The Thirty-Nine Articles

of the Church of England (1563)

Article I: Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Article II: Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

Article III: Of the going down of Christ into Hell

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

Article IV: Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

Article V: Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

Article VI: Of the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical books of the Old and

New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
The First Book of Samuel
The Second Book of Samuel
The First Book of Kings
The Second Book of Kings
The First Book of Chronicles
The Second Book of Chronicles
The First Book of Esdras
The Second Book of Esdras
The Book of Esther
The Book of Job
The Psalms
The Proverbs
Ecclesiastes or Preacher
Cantica, or Songs of Solomon
Four Prophets the greater
Twelve Prophets the less

And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras
The Fourth Book of Esdras
The Book of Tobias
The Book of Judith
The rest of the Book of Esther
The Book of Wisdom
Jesus the Son of Sirach Baruch the Prophet
The Song of the Three Children
The Story of Susanna
Of Bel and the Dragon
The Prayer of Manasses
The First Book of Maccabees
The Second Book of Maccabees

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

Article VII: Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore there are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

Article VIII: Of the Three Creeds

The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius' Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture.

Article IX: Of Original or Birth-Sin

Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

Article X: Of Free-Will

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Article XI: Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings: Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

Article XII: Of Good Works

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgement; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

Article XIII: Of Works before Justification

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

Article XIV: Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary Works besides, over, and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Article XV: Of Christ alone without Sin

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as Saint John saith, was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Article XVI: Of Sin after Baptism

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Article XVII: Of Predestination and Election

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into a wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

Article XVIII: Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

Article XIX: Of the Church

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred: so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

Article XX: Of the Authority of the Church

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

Article XXI: Of the Authority of General Councils

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

Article XXII: Of Purgatory

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping, and Adoration as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

Article XXIII: Of Ministering in the Congregation

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

Article XXIV: Of speaking in the Congregation in such a tongue as the people understandeth

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have publick Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood by the people.

Article XXV: Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same have they a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

Article XXVI: Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacrament

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same

in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in the receiving of the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally being found guilty, by just judgement be deposed.

Article XXVII: Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

Article XXVIII: Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

Article XXIX: Of the Wicked which do not eat the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

Article XXX: Of both kinds

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people; for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

Article XXXI: Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross

The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

Article XXXII: Of the Marriage of Priests

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

Article XXXIII: Of Excommunicated Persons, how they are to be avoided

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

Article XXXIV: Of the Traditions of the Church

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained

against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgement, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

Article XXXV: Of Homilies

The second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood by the people.

Of the Names of the Homilies

1. Of the right Use of the Church.
2. Against peril of Idolatry.
3. Of the repairing and keeping clean of Churches.
4. Of good Works: first of Fasting.
5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness.
6. Against Excess of Apparel.
7. Of Prayer.
8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer.
9. That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue.
10. Of the reverent estimation of God's Word.
11. Of Alms-doing.
12. Of the Nativity of Christ.
13. Of the Passion of Christ.
14. Of the Resurrection of Christ.
15. Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.
16. Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
17. For the Rogation-days.
18. Of the State of Matrimony.
19. Of Repentance.
20. Against Idleness.
21. Against Rebellion.

Article XXXVI: Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth,

and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither hath it any thing, that of itself is superstitious or ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated or ordered.

Article XXXVII: Of the Civil Magistrates

The Queen's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England, and other her Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the Queen's Majesty the chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen doth most plainly testify; but only that prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers.

The Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.

Article XXXVIII: Of Christian men's Goods, which are not common

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Article XXXIX: Of a Christian man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge, that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgement, and truth.



Grace4Life - John Wade Long, Jr.
London UK - www.grace4life.com

The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were established in **1563**, and are the historic defining statements of Anglican doctrine in relation to the controversies of the English Reformation; especially in the relation of Calvinist doctrine and Roman Catholic practices to the nascent Anglican doctrine of the evolving English Church. The name is commonly abbreviated as the Thirty-Nine Articles.

The Church of England was searching out its doctrinal position in relation to the Roman Catholic Church and the continental Protestants. A series of defining documents were written and replaced over a period of 30 years as the doctrinal and political situation changed from the excommunication of Henry VIII in 1533, to the excommunication of Elizabeth I in 1570.

Prior to King Henry's death in 1547, several statements of position were issued. The first attempt was the Ten Articles in 1536 which showed some slightly Protestant leanings; the result of an English desire for a political alliance with the German Lutheran princes. The next revision was the Six Articles in 1539 which swung away from all reformed positions, and the King's Book in 1543 which re-established almost in full the familiar Catholic doctrines. Then, during the reign of Edward VI in 1552, the Forty-Two Articles were written under the direction of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. It was in this document that Calvinist thought reached its zenith of its influence in the English Church. These articles were never put in to action, due to the king's death and the reunion of the English Church with Rome under Queen Mary I. Finally, upon the coronation of Elizabeth I and the re-establishment of the separate Church of England the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were established by a Convocation of the Church in **1563**, under the direction of Matthew Parker, then the archbishop of Canterbury, which pulled back from some of the more extreme Calvinist thinking and created the peculiar English reformed doctrine. The articles, finalized in 1571, were to have a lasting effect on religion in the United Kingdom and elsewhere through their incorporation into and propagation through the Book of Common Prayer.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty-Nine_Articles

A Justification & Adoption Mini-Drama

a Leader's Guide for the "Maasai blanket" Illustration (ref. page 3-5)

BEFORE THE DRAMA.

You will need: 1. a red or white piece of material to drape over your volunteer. 2. a chair. 3. a volunteer. 4. (Optional. In the EU, Africa and India, I use a set of Football Penalty Cards - yellow and red - available on eBay for the paltry sum of £2.99.) In the USA, sometimes I use baseball terminology for the incriminating answers, "Strike one, etc., then, I'm sorry, but you're out!")

Caution: When you chose your helper, be sure to select someone who 1. has a clear Gospel testimony, and 2. who is humble enough to admit to having broken God's Law in the last week. *Check ahead of time!* (Don't ask me how I know why this is so necessary.)

Be sure to have the chair set up with your cloth draped over it up front beforehand. This will generate people's curiosity.

1. INTRODUCING THE DRAMA

A. Have your volunteer come up and sit in the chair you've put up front.

B. Explain to the audience that you will be asking **FOUR** questions of the volunteer and that you will expect honest answers. (You can use humour, if you like.)

C. Drape the cloth over your left arm and explain that in the drama, the red (or white) cloth will be used to represent the righteousness of Christ covering a sinner.

2. SETUP FOR THE FOUR QUESTIONS

In Matthew 22:34-40, the top lawyer of the Pharisees was sent to get involved Jesus in a complicated debate about the law to try to make him look foolish. Dumb move. Jesus is the Author of the Law.

A. Read aloud: Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

B. "Before we go any further in the story, let's review the Ten Commandments? Here's the simple version:"

The 1st tablet of the Law has four commands regarding our love for God.

1. NO other gods, **2. NO** Idols, **3. HONOUR** God's Name, **4. HONOUR** God's Day.

The 2nd tablet of the Law has six commands—our duty to our neighbour.

5. HONOUR Parents, **6. NO** Murder, **7. NO** Adultery, **8. NO** Stealing, **9. NO** Lying, **10. NO** Coveting.

There it is, that's the Law: NO-NO, HONOUR-HONOUR-HONOUR, NO-NO-NO-NO-NO! :)

BUT, the Pharisees focused only on the outward requirements of the ten rules. They totally neglected LOVE—the real point of it all, "the rule beneath the rule".

3. THE FOUR QUESTIONS

Say to your volunteer: "Now to the Pharisees and the 4 questions. Ready?"

The Pharisee asked Jesus, "Which is the first and greatest commandment?"

But Jesus surprised him. Rather than picking out one of the TEN, he grouped the first four together and said,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, this is the first and greatest commandment."

QUESTION #1

"So, _____, in the last 7 days, have YOU loved the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind?"

He/she answers, "No." (If the audience laughs, ask, "And what are you laughing at? You haven't either, and neither have I!")

!!! YELLOW CARD !!!

This SHOCKED the Pharisee, but Jesus wasn't finished. He continued by summing up the second tablet of the law, the last six commandments regarding our love for our neighbour: "and the second is like it, 'love your neighbour as yourself.'" (vs.39)

AND, in another shocker, in vs. 40 Jesus adds, **"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments!"**

QUESTION #2

"_____, in the last 7 days, in the past one week, have YOU loved your neighbour as you have loved yourself? - and, before you answer too quickly.. " Remind your volunteer of another encounter with another

Pharisee recorded in Luke 10 over the same question. And this Luke 10 Pharisee was so convicted by Jesus' answer (to love his neighbour as himself), "*wishing to justify himself, he said, 'Who is my neighbour?'*" And, as we all know, Jesus answered him with the shocking story of the "Good Samaritan" who did the unthinkable. He rescued a Jew, an enemy, from certain death!

He/she answers, "No."

!!! YELLOW CARD !!!

(And again, you confess, "*Neither have I*" and involve the audience, asking them. By this time in the drama, most of the chuckles will have stopped and the mood gets serious.)

NOW EXPLAIN that things are about to get a whole lot worse because of the third question.

In John 15:34, 35 Jesus told his disciples, "***A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.***"

ASK your class why this is "new". Yes! It raises the bar. Now the measurement of our love is not loving others as we love ourselves, but loving them as JESUS loves us. And, how much does he love us? *He laid down his life for us!*

QUESTION #3

"So, _____, in the last 7 days, in the last one week, have YOU loved others as much as Jesus has loved you?"

He/she answers, "No." ("Neither have I." "How about all of you?")

!!! RED CARD !!!

FOLLOW-UP. "**_____, to be perfectly honest, in the last 7 days, in the last one week, who have you loved more than anyone else?"**

He/she answers, "Myself!" ("Me too." "How about all of you?" Yes, we may have WANTED to love God and others, but we all know that we have fallen far short of the perfect love Jesus wants."

THE TRUTH IS, YOU AND I HAVE BEEN BOWING DOWN TO, WORSHIPPING AND SERVING AN IDOL - OURSELVES! (We are indeed "sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. - C.S. Lewis)

CAN YOU SEE the seduction of legalism!

We can boast that we keep the rules - that we don't **steal** from our neighbour who is in need, but we don't love him enough to relieve his burden. No, we don't commit **adultery** with our neighbour's wife, but our hearts burn with lust towards her. No, we have never **murdered** anyone, but there are whole races and classes of people we utterly despise and look down on in our hearts. And yet, like the Pharisees of old, we pronounce ourselves righteous!



SO, what does this sinner sitting here deserve? He/she has broken the FIRST and greatest commandment, the SECOND great commandment, and the NEW commandment.

HE/SHE DESERVES: God's wrath and curse! And, we all stand condemned. Oh, we've done quite a good job of keeping "the 10 rules" like the Pharisees. It's quite easy to keep the OUTWARD RULES but never love anybody except ourselves!

WELL, THIS IS ALL MORE THAN A LITTLE DEPRESSING, but there is a **FOURTH** question that, believe it or not, could radically change everything.

QUESTION #4

OKAY... depending on your answer, may change everything.

"_____, have you, by faith, received Jesus Christ as your sin-bearer? Do you trust him as your Saviour and Lord? Have you asked him to forgive your sins because he died for you on the cross?"

He/she answers, "Yes!" Then you say, "According to **2Cor.5:21**, this changes everything!" "**GOD made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him!"**

3. CLOTHED IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST! This changes everything! BY FAITH we lay our sins on Jesus, and Jesus CLOTHES US in his righteousness!

Now, DRAPE your subject in the blanket. (See the photo on p. D-2).

EXPLAIN that he/she is acceptable to God not because of any righteous of their own, but because by faith, they are covered in the "wholly alien" (Luther) righteousness of Jesus.

QUOTE 2 Cor. 5:17 (You may also want to make reference to Rom.13:14; Gal.3:27; Rev.7:14)

WHAT IS THE 3-FOLD EFFECT OF THIS?

A. JUSTIFICATION
What happens?

Isa. 53:6 - "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, but the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all!"

Rom.5:1 - "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

STICK WITH ME. THIS GETS EVEN BETTER!

B. ADOPTION - Gal. 4:4-7; Rom. 5:1; John 1:12

EXPLAIN that, although you (the presenter) are just a human being, you will now play the part of God the Father to your volunteer.

Here you demonstrate God's ADOPTION by actually putting your arms around the volunteer and **EMBRACING HIM/HER** and speaking to them AS IF you were God the Father speaking his love and approval. (photo - Ahmed in Spain)

SUCH AS: "_____, You are my son/daughter; I love you because you are my son/daughter. You are my precious little boy/girl. And I want you to understand something: I love you not because of what you do for me, though I surely do appreciate it. I love you because you are my child! AND, there is nothing you could do for me tomorrow that would make me love you any more than I do right now today. I am PLEASED with you! You are beautiful to me because you are clothed in the perfect righteousness of my Son! I love you! Don't you forget it, okay?"

NOW stand upright and point to the volunteer. REITERATE: JUSTIFICATION is the LEGAL aspect of our relationship to God.

EMBRACE THEM AGAIN: ADOPTION is the FAMILY aspect of our relationship with God. God doesn't want a collection of saved souls. Jesus died to make us God's children. God wants us as his *family*.

NOTE: It is not uncommon for the person thus draped to weep with joy, to squeeze your arms, etc.! NOR is it uncommon for people to LAUGH as if this is funny. I OFTEN preclude laughter by saying, "Even though this may LOOK a bit strange, this is not a joke. On the contrary, this is something of utmost seriousness. It is our very LIFE." MORE OFTEN, some in the congregation will WEEP on seeing the demonstration. Don't be surprised at what **GOD** might do when you explain the GOSPEL in such a clear and dramatic way. **ENJOY IT!**



C. SANCTIFICATION (Gal.3:1-5) I often go on to explain that when we are CONSCIOUSLY CLOTHED in Jesus' righteousness, we don't need to strive to prove anything to God or others. The struggle for righteousness is over, AND, as we live in this very HUMBLE position before God and others, the Holy Spirit comes in greater measure to give us his fruit (LJPPKGFSGS).

WRAP-UP Our prayer is that you will be bold in using this tool in your ministry. Now, if you happen to be English, to use it may take a dose of Churchillian courage, but that is readily available if *you* consciously clothe yourself in Christ! We also hope you will see the skit's evangelistic potential. We have seen many people converted, and many believers come to a profound sense of their adoption through this simple mini-drama.

"THE ROBE OF JESUS' RIGHTEOUSNESS... WEAR IT AND SHARE IT!"

Blessings! — Johnny