

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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## **BE NOT LOVING THE WORLD — ISMS**

In a previous issue titled *Where Were You?* [#02-0816 March 14, 2008] I wrote of how Christians are being distracted from the one message that we have that is the only answer to the many problems that mankind faces. The only answer is **Jesus, the Savior of the world**. In particular, I brought to light how some churches are joining forces with environmentalism, especially the movement to stop what many call climate change or global warming, as if mankind can do something about it. There is nothing wrong with being good stewards of the earth upon which we live. However, is it the purpose of the ecclesia of God to join forces with unbelievers, many of whom are truly against Christ, to supposedly save a planet that can only be saved by the Creator of it? The world view of the environmental movement is *man*-centered; it is not *Christ*-centered. Actually, some in the environmental movement are not even *man*-centered, for they see man as the entire problem and that the earth would be better off without man. Let us not forget that Elohim created man to have dominion over this earth, and He has not changed His purpose in this regard. Have God's people lost sight of the fact that Christ is coming soon, and when He does come, this earth and the nations of the earth will enter a renaissance, if you will, a rebirth? Christ will begin to bring mankind into the place of dominion with Himself as the King of the earth. His body, which is the ecclesia, will be His complement in the heading up or summing up of all things in the heavens and on the earth. This is all in accord with the purpose of the eons.

The people of the world often divide themselves along many different lines, whether certain emphases, issues, movements, theories, politics, ideologies, doctrines, religions, or world-views, to name a few. It seems to me that these sorts of divisions can be traced to the destruction of the tower of Babel when God confused the language of the whole earth (Genesis 11.9). It is interesting that most of these divisions end with the three letters *ism*. The English dictionary defines *ism* as "a system or theory." Thus, we discover communism, socialism, capitalism, liberalism, conservatism, environmentalism, Buddhism, Judaism, feminism, and the list goes on, almost without end. We could say that the world is divided along the line of *isms*. Of equal importance is the fact that Christianity is never described as an *ism*. There is no such thing as *Christianism*. Why is this so? It is because Christianity is not a system or theory; it is not a movement, an ideology, an emphasis, a doctrine, or even a religion. Christianity is about a person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Creator, and the Savior of the world; and a living relationship with Him. As believers in the Lord Jesus and His finished work, we should never lose sight of this fact. Yes; Jesus is a fact! He is not a system or a theory. And by the way, neither is the ecclesia (church), which is His body. The body is related to the Head of all.

Unfortunately, Christians have also divided themselves along many lines. **Christ has been divided!** The church of our day is what could be called *emphasis*-centered. Depending on the particular group (so-called churches), the emphasis could be on baptism, soul-winning, deeper life, tongues, gifts, healing, prophecy, or apostles; and again the list goes on, almost without end. However, as if this were not bad enough, the modern-day church is now joining forces with the *isms* of the world that are destined to pass away when **the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign for the eons of the eons** (Revelation 11.15 NASB/CV). Today, God's people need to be reminded of the admonition of John, the apostle of love.

**Be not loving the world, neither that which is in the world. If ever anyone is loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for everything that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the ostentation of living, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing by, and its desire, yet he who is doing the will of God is remaining for the eon.** (1 John 2.15-17 CV)

One area in which Christians around the world have become embroiled is politics. In the United States, it is generally acknowledged that evangelical Christians (note, this is another division) have embraced what could be called **political conservatism**, which is considered by detractors as the far right wing of politics. Their purpose is to instill Christian morals into the laws of the land or to keep immoral laws from being enacted. To make this even more confusing, now there are those on the left side of the political spectrum, ones who hold to **political liberalism**, who are trying to take back the so-called religious ground as people of faith. My purpose is not to take sides with either spectrum. These are *isms* that John tells us will pass away. **Be not loving the world!** The word *world* in the Greek is *kosmos*, which refers to an orderly arrangement, or, we could say, a system. To paraphrase John: **Be not loving the systems, the isms!**

The people of God need to be reminded of Jesus' words as He faced the cross. The Jews were looking for a political leader to lead them out of the rule of Rome; however, what they needed was a King who would serve them and die for their sin. Consider what Jesus said to Pilate in answer to his inquiry of Jesus' kingly stature.

**“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”** (John 18.36 NASB)

Those of us who believe in Jesus need to be ever mindful that **He has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son** (Colossians 1.13 NASB). We have been born from above into the spiritual kingdom of God, and He **seats us together among the celestials, in Christ** (Ephesians 2.6 CV). He **blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ** (Ephesians 1.3 CV).

If this is not enough to make the point, then consider Paul's word in his Colossians epistle.

**Therefore, since you were raised together with Christ, be seeking the [things] above, where Christ is, sitting at [the] right hand of God. Be setting your minds on the [things] above, not [on] the [things] on the earth. For you died, and your life has been hid with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, [who is] our life, is revealed, then also we will be revealed with Him in glory.** (Colossians 3.1-4 ALT)

If you believe in Jesus, according to God's word, where are you right now? Your life is hid with Christ in God. Where is Christ today? He is seated at the right hand of His Father. Then where are you? You are seated among the celestials in Christ. Oh, I realize we do not see this with our natural eye; we are to discern it *in* spirit and hold to it *in* faith **until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts** (2 Peter 1.19 NASB).

Dear beloved in Christ, let us not get caught up in the *isms* of the world that are passing away and will be no more when our Beloved King comes to this earth to take the scepter of the kingdom of this world and to usher in His kingdom of righteousness and justice. Today, the realm of the King dwells in you in spirit. One day, the realm of the King will be manifested upon this earth for all to see and to experience, and all the nations will be ruled by His righteous law.

Let us not embrace the causes of the world! Let us not be loving the world! Let us embrace Christ Jesus our Lord and not be moved from proclaiming Him and Him alone!