

# Watchman. what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!" Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

### 6(9.3)

# THREE NEW PUBLICATIONS CRITIQUED

# LETS TALK IT OVER

Two of the books which we discussed in the lead article focus on the impersonation of Satan as Christ coming the second time. And this is true. Satan will come as the Christ of the world in an attempt to set up his kingdom on this earth. There will be the battle of the great day of God Almighty. One may ask why then be concerned about the methods used in interpreting Scripture if each author by his own method arrives at the same ultimate conclusion that Satan will appear as Christ?

Throughout the ages of the Old Testament, the prophets focused on the coming of the Messiah giving details concerning the One who was to come. When He came the Jewish world was in expectation of this event. Yet how many recognized in the babe of Bethlehem, the incarnate God? Then when He began His ministry how many received Him for what He really was? Today, we have a reverse situation. Satan instead of Jesus Christ will come first. Will we fall for his overmastering deception because when he comes he will come in a different manner than we said he would come? Could we have known, if we had set up a true Scriptual basis, and developed on that basis instead of on a false hypothesis?

For example, Burrill, in his book - The New Order - discusses the Battle of Armageddon. (p. 165) He is absolutely correct in his understanding of the word in the Hebrew tongue as demanded by the text in Rev. 16:16. Yet because of the prophetic hermeneutic he adopts that all prophecy which is fulfilled after 34 A.D. must be spiritualized into meaning the

A new paperback - The New World Order - has been printed by the Review & Heraid Publishing Association for Seminars Unlimited at Keene, Texas. It is evangelistic in approach and Written by Elder Russell Burrill, format. of the North American Director Evangelism Institute in Chicago, Illinois, it carries a foreword by Mark Finley, speaker for the TV program - It is Written - who had himself previously headed the same institute in Chicago. The cover design is intriguing. Placed on a Chess Board, the symbolism is expressive of current forces at work in the world and particularly in America. The Stature of Liberty wears the clergy collar; the American Eagle overcomes the Hammer and Sickle. At the top of the Chess Board sits the Papal crown. back cover gives a very accurate summary of the present forces at play in the development of a New World Order. It reads:

"People everywhere have been stunned by the swift collapse of communism and the emergence of the United States as the world's sole remaining superpower. The stage has suddenly been set for the arrival of an entirely 'New World Order.'

"But the United States is not the only world power jockeying for control of this new world order.

- "[1] The head of perhaps the world's most powerful church - a religious leader who played a significant yet almost-unknown role in the communist collapse - is positioned to play a major role.
- "[2] The religious right while seeking to champion "family values," prayer, and the sanctity of human life - may in reality be unwittingly taking the first steps down a path that in time

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could lead to the greatest religious intolerance ever witnessed.

"[3] And even in the non-religious world - dominated by secular humanism - ancient occultism strides aggressively forward under the New Age banner."

The heart of the book discusses aspects of Daniel 11, and seeks to make modern day application of current events in the light of the prophecies found in that chapter. events prophesied in the closing verses of Daniel 11 are about to be fulfilled is beyond question. The basic subtle error of the book involves the application of principle 23 of interpretation. Burrill writes: "All Old Testament prophecies of Israel are to be reinterpreted through the eyes of the New Testament if fulfillment is found after A.D. 34." But he takes this one step further and applies it to New Testament prophecies stating -

"Likewise, in Luke 21:24 Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled. If we read this text without the New Testament understanding of Israel, it would be possible to conclude that when Jerusalem is given back to the ethnic Jews, the prophecy would be fulfilled." (p. 66)

But it is in this statement that Burrill's false becomes application of prophecy The prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:24 apparent. is connected with Luke 21:20. As one Adventist writer has so aptly observed, "Jerusalem is both the beginning and the culmination of Jesus' prophecy." (Christ of the Revelation, p. Jesus had stated plainly - "And when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." (21:20) Now to apply Burrill's false interpretive principle would mean that the Christian Church of Jerusalem in A.D. 66 erred when they understood the Roman armies surrounding the literal city of Jerusalem to be the signal for them to leave the city. Those early Christians had no understanding of Jesus' prophecy as Burrill has set it forth in his They took Jesus literally. Jerusalem was book. the city of Jerusalem, and not the Christian Church.

The New Testament clearly distinguishes between the application of the terms, Israel, and Jerusalem. Jerusalem in the spiritual sense applies to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Paul wrote to the Galatians - "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." (4:26) And again to the Hebrews, he stated - "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." (12:22) As for the term, "Israel," there is a new "Israel of God," to whom the promises given to ancient Israel have application. (Gal. 3:29; 6:16; Rom. 9:8) The prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:20-24 involves the city, not the nation nor the temple.

Burrill only compounds his confusion as he seeks to compare Jesus' prophecy in Luke 21:24 with the revelation given through Jesus in the book of Revelation, chapter 11:2-3. In Luke 21, Jesus uses literal language. In Revelation figurative language is used. John is instructed to "measure and the altar" yet no the temple of God, measurement in literal dimensions is given. John is even told "to measure...them that worship The "court" is given the Gentiles for therein." 42 months. (ver. 2) Burrill even states this to be symbolic, and says it is "1260 years" (p. 67) The prophecy further indicates that "the holy city" will be trodden down for this period of During this period of 1260 years, the Papacy was only involved with literal Jerusalem during the Crusades, but during this whole period, the power of papal Rome was focused against the true sanctuary of God, and those who The whole of by faith did worship therein. Revelation 11:1-3 is symbolism.

Now in the book an astounding conclusion is drawn - "the times of the Gentiles are forty-two months." (p. 67) If as Burrill stated on the previous page that to interpret Jesus prophecy as being fulfilled in 1967 "would mean that the times of the Gentiles was ended - a strange interpretation indeed for Christians today." much stranger is his conclusion that the times of the Gentiles ended in 1798. There is no question that the very expression - "times of the Gentiles (nations)" - means "the period set aside by God for the evangelization of the heathen nations." (Christ of the Revelation, p. 72). Now if the "times of the Gentiles" ended in 1798, what then would be the purpose for the Three Angels' Message to every nation, tongue and people which came after 1798. When we seek to escape the obvious import of Jesus' own prophecy, we ourselves into all kinds of ridiculous applications of the Word of God.

The same misapplication is seen in the chapters in this book where Daniel 11 is discussed with its resultant questionable conclusions.

As a Church, we have vaciliated regarding Jesus' prophecy in Luke 21:24. The first understanding was written just prior to Ellen G. White's

counsel connecting what Jesus said in Luke 21 would "come upon Jerusalem" and "the scenes which were to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Letter 20, 1901) Her son, James Edson White, in his book, The Coming King (1898), wrote:

"We also read that 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' Luke 21:24. Jerusalem has never again come into the possession of the Jews, and will not until 'the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' This will be when the work of the gospel is finished." (p. 98)

In the 1940's, the Pacific Press published two books on Israel in prophecy. The first one, Palestine in Prophecy (1944) actually became a book of the month for the Voice of Prophecy. It stated unequivocally concerning A.D. 34 - "This date marked the end of the probation for the Jews as a nation." (p. 47) (This is true!) Then based on this fact, the conclusion was drawn through the interpretation of other prophecies that "Palestine and Jerusalem do not have a bright future in this present world, and those who are holding the hope of national restoration for the Jews are following a theological will-o'-the-wisp." (p. 95)

Then in 1947, the second book - The Jews and Palestine - was published. The author, Roy F. Cottrell, wrote: "Careful study of both the Old and New Testament reveals that the literal descendants of Abraham, as a nation, will never be re-established in the Holy Land." (p. 61; emphasis supplied) Yet the next year - 1948 - Israel did become a nation. The Church had misinterpreted prophecy. What was to be done?

In 1952 a world-wide Bible Conference was held in the Sligo Park Church under the direction of the President of the General Conference. this conference, Arthur S. Maxwell addressed this question. He noted the "dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel." In view of this, he said that "there is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should all be watching with special care," and quoted Luke 21:24. He pointed out that though the arms of Israel were successful in every other part of Palestine, they failed to achieve their "most cherished goal" the capture of the city of Jerusalem. Then he asked a question - "What could be the reason?" To this he replied - "Only that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled." He then concluded -"Jerusalem is to remain trodden down by Gentiles till the probationary time of all Gentiles has run out. If this be correct, how much hinges upon the fate of this ancient city and the power that occupies it!" (Our Firm Foundation, Vol. II, pp. 230-231)

In 1967, Jerusalem was captured by the armies of Israel, and in 1980, the capital was moved from to Jerusalem thus completing Tel Aviv fulfillment of Because the Jesus' prophecy. world did not end at either date, the Church then made another assumption. At a series of Bible Conferences in 1974 held in the North American Division, Dr. Herbert Douglass made the assertion - "Adventists do not see theological importance in the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 or the annexation of Old Jerusalem in 1967." ("The Unique Contribution of Adventist Eschatology," p. 6) They did in 1952, what made the change in 1974? From a prophecy that "we all should be watching with special care," it had become a prophecy to which there was "no theological significance." Why? The Church did not want to face the reality of the significance which this fulfilled prophecy of Jesus was telling them. This new book by Burrill is only adding to the blindness of Laodicea in regard to Luke 21:24.

[For a detailed study of the significance of Luke 21:24, write for The Hour and the End. Send US\$4.00 postpaid to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Arkansas]

#### ANOTHER BOOK

Another book, with almost the same intent but with differing interpetations of some of the same prophecies, is a new paperback from an independent ministry. To Be God of One World, written by Robert Sessler, also contains the basic fallacy of Burrill's book - inaccurate premises.

Sessler is to be commended in this book for adopting the historistic method of prophetic interpretation. This would signal the abandonment of the dual application hermeneutic which he used in his previous manuscript - The Abomination of Desolation.

In the first chapter, Sessler quotes extensively from Roger Rusk (a "Babylonian"?) in support of his usage of the historic Protestant method of understanding prophecy. He evidently is still not aware that this was the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church until Desmond Ford introduced his "apotelesmatic" theory. This is the problem with many of these younger

independent "voices". They are ignorant of what was taught in fundamental Adventism, and are not willing even now to learn. They prefer to quote a "Babylonian" scholar, and with the stroke of the pen call the Church, "Babylon." What the Church was, and what the Church has become are two different things! Even as with Israel of old, Jesus could say during His ministry, "Salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22) He didn't quote from Babylonian sources to sustain His position. He quoted from the historic sources of the Jewish Church - the Old Testament.

As Sessler begins his prophetic interpretations, he writes of the seven heads on the beast symbols of Revelation - "So the seven heads evidently stands as an identifying mark of the plans and characteristics of Satan;..." (p. -9) There is no need for guess work here for one of the angels of the Seven Last Plagues clearly defines these heads. The record reads:

"Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." (Rev. 17:9-11)

avoid this clear reason Sessler must the Angel interpreter becomes definition by obvious as one reads on, He writes - "The Roman Catholic church is still very powerful, and she has great influence in many different areas, but she will not play the leading role in this last great controversy." (p.12) This conclusion does not square with the counsel we have been given. It reads that "all need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth's history." (TM, p. 118; emphasis supplied) mystery of iniquity" (II Thess. 2:7-9) now become something other than the Papacy? Do we write that the "method of Bible interpretation which gave rise to the great Reformation Movement from the Dark Ages, was blessed of God, and is still appropriate to use today!" (Sessler, p. 3) and then at the first opportunity abandon it? That method of interpretation called "the mystery of inquity" the Papacy.

This false premise is further compounded in his attempt to interpret the "beast" of Revelation 17. It is true that the dragon of Revelation 12 is "bright red or flame colored." This ties the imagery into paganism and the worship of the devil as the sun-god of antiquity. Sessier notes

that the beast of Revelation 17 is "scarlet" colored, and seeks to display linguistic skills by noting a number in Strong's Concordance (p.13) But one needs to know more than Strong gives to utilize the Greek meaning within the context of its use. The Greek word for scarlet is kokkinos. But the context and use of the word in Scripture must be considered. This Strong does not give, and thus leaves dangling one who does not know This word, kikkinos his Greek New Testament. and/or kikkinon is used six times in the New Testament. Four of those six times its use is in connection with one reigning, even if used in an act of derision. (See Matt. 27:28) The woman riding the beast is also clothed in scarlet (17:4). She declares of herself - "I sit a queen, and am no widow." (18:7) She is married to her "king," who has also decked his firey red skin "scarlet."

What Sessler fails to note is that Satan is converted after the modern order of things, and comes as an angel of light working through his earthly agent, the Papacy. Both Burrill and Sessler involve the Adventist Church in the final play of eschatological events. Burrill perceives of it as the "remnant" Church, while Sessler places the separationists as the players in the drama.

#### A THIRD BOOK

The first book we discussed above was written from the vewpoint of the regular Church; the second from the perspective of a dissident movement which takes a very strident attitude toward the Church, and now this third book which we shall consider deals directly with the Church and how the author perceives its need. Corporate Repentance by Elder R. J. Wieland sounds once again his call to the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church to turn around from the course it is pursuing. It is a book of desperation written by a man who is reluctant to admit the reality of what he sees taking place within the Church to which he has given his life in service both at home and abroad,

This desperation is sounded in a "Dear Friends" letter he mailed out earlier this year. One final sentence of the letter reads - "Yes, 8T 249-251 MUST be fulfilled." Herein lies the crux of his problem and desperation. Pages 249-251 are not the whole of the testimony which Ellen White wrote following the close of the General Conference in Oakland in 1903, and before it reconvened in Battle Creek. True, the reassembled delegates did not know that Ellen White had written this testimony the day before

they reconvened, but the timing does relate it directly with the 1903 session. This Wieland bypasses in his new book - Corporate Repentance, when the very pages which he declares "MUST" be fulfilled deal with the need for corporate repentance arising from this sesion, not 1888! It was the action taken at the 1903 session which was the "now" time of the call for such a repentance. The sentence reads - "Unless the church, which is now being leavened by her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat the fruit of her own doing until she shall abhor herself." (p. 250; emphasis supplied)

There are two kinds of "abhoring" one's self revealed in Scripture. Peter abhored himself over the denial of his Lord, and went out and wept bitterly. Judas, also abhored himself over the betrayal of Jesus but he went out and hanged He found no place for repentance; he had crossed the unseen line. This is the critical point which is involved in what Wieland says, "MUST be fulfilled," The second paragraph of Ellen White's testimony decisively declares that "the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed" in the balances of the sanctuary. (p. The Church, corporately, must face the judgment of the sanctuary. It is further revealed that if she has not proved true "to the work entrusted to her, or her will be pronounced the sentence, 'Found wanting'" (ibid.) This Wieland ignores, and declares in his new book, there is no such possibility. The Church will go through,

Here is where Jesus' prophecy and the Day of Atonement meet. The Church is a corporate body. The confessions of corporate Israel were recorded on the horns of the Altar The agenda of the Day of Atonement reveals that the cleansing of the First Apartment was the second act of the on the Day of Atonement. (Lev. 16:16; Ex. 30:10) Then followed the cleansing in the Court. (16:18-19) The prophecy of Jesus dealt with "nations" [same word in Greek for "Gentiles"] as corporate The Bible also considers religious bodies as corporate entities, or "nations." (Isa. 26:2: Eph. 2:12-13) Thus Jesus' prophecy tells us when the judgment in the sanctuary would take place, and yet time would linger on for the individual Laodicean to open the door and let Jesus come

It is this point which Wieland in his new book desperately seeks to avoid, and in doing so violates the simple Greek of Revelation 3. This is tragic for he closes the chapter, "The Lord's Most Serious Problem of the Ages," with this paragraph -

"Committee actions, polished programs, high pressure promotion, can never truly motivate. Truth must be the vehicle, reaching human hearts, for only truth, "the third angel's message in verity," can penetrate the secret recesses of the soul." (p. 57; emphasis supplied)

This is so very true, and the fact that the message of the righteousness of Christ is "pure, unadulterated truth" (TM, p. 65) is what makes Wieland's violation of Greek usage in Revelation 3 so inexcuseable. It is the confused thinking of a desperate man seeking to avoid the message of fulfilled prophecy.

Let us consider the message to Laodicea, both its corporate call via the "angel" of the Church, and the individual call to "any man" who hears "the voice of the True Witness," and will "open the door." A mere casual reading of the message to Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) reveals a change from the second person singular to a third person singular. In other words from "thy," "thou," and "thee," in verses 15-19 to "any man" in verse 20. There is no question but that verses 15-19 are speaking to the "angel" or messenger in a corporate sense. Then the message is directed to the individual, Jesus is still outside the door of corporate Laodicea - the counsel is unheeded, and so He turns to the individual, "any man," to respond and let Him come in. This means simply that His intent in verse 16 - to "spue thee out of my mouth" has been carried out. conclusion Wieland seeks to avoid and violates the Greek in an endeavor to accomplish his designs.

Wieland writes - "The appeal in Revelation 3:20 ("If any man hear my voice") contains a significant Greek word, tis, which primarily means "a certain one," not just "any one." (p. He cites a use of tis in Mark 14:51, 52. But the question must be raised - Is this a valid comparison? And the answer is - No! Tis, an indefinite pronoun, can be used as either a substantive, or with a substantive. In the book of Revelation, tis, is used ten times, and in each reference as a substantive. For example see 13:9; 14:9; 22:18, 19. When so used, "tis may be equal to 'any one,' 'anybody,.' or 'anything,'..." (A Grammar of the Greek New Testament A. T. Robertson, p. 742) The reference cited by Wieland is the use of tis with a substantive. On this point, the noted Greek grammarian wrote:

"But the commonest use of tis with substantives is [it equals] 'certain' (really rather uncertain!) [References cited] Sometimes it is difficult to give more force to tis than the English indefinite

article. [References cited] Indeed it is nearly always true that our 'certain' is too emphatic." (ibid., p. 743)

Yet this is what Wieland has done, even going to the extent of seeking to supply a substantive where John did not so do! This is adding to the Word of God. When will he let truth "penetrate the secret recesses" of his soul as he demands of the Church leadership?

In another place in his book, Wieland writes:

"In our case, our problem is not our "27 doctrines" or our history. Their general validity is unquestioned. Our corporate nakedness is our want of the one truth that alone can made those "27" meaningful + "the message of Christ's righteousness" which the Lord tried to give us a century ago." (p. 30)

Here we go back to square one. Plainly, clearly, and without any reservations, the Messenger of the Lord stated why the message was rejected in 1888, and the same applies today. She wrote:

"Because the Spirit is to come, not to praise men or to build up their erroneous theories, but to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, many turn away from it. They are not willing to be deprived of the garments of their own self-righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth." (TM, p. 65)

The righteousness of Christ will not make meaningful that which is not truth, neither will that righteousness cover a false delineation of our history. The only solution today for "any man" who hears Jesus knocking is to heed the message given through His messenger – "My mind was carried into the future, when the signal will be given, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.'" (R&H, Feb. 11, 1896; emphasis supplied)

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Church, he misses the very literal explanation given by the angel to John in verses 14, 16.

Jesus gave an illustration as He closed the Sermon on the Mount. Two men built houses, and these houses may have looked very much alike. The problem was that one built on rock, the other built on sand. It is the base on which our superstructure rests that counts. That base must be truth, pure and unadulterated. Anything

less than this is to build on the sand. The whole issue is truth in each of the books discussed. There is so much that is true in the book by Wieland. For example, he writes:

"This issue is not whether we understand and preach the popular version of righteousness by faith as do the Sunday-keeping Evangelical churches. We can do that for a thousand years and still fail to give the unique message the Lord "commanded" us to give. God has not called us to ecumenism." (p. 28; emphasis his)

But the question goes still deeper. What was God trying to get us to learn in justification by faith, so that we might be ready to receive the final atonement? Actually the reception of the robe of Christ's righteousness, giving up our figleaf garment, and in that moment sensing our nakedness, is what the final atonement is all about. (Zech. 3:4) And Wieland has well stated this point when he wrote:

"Righteousness is never in any way innate; never our own. All that we have of ourselves is unrighteousness. In other words, except for the grace of Christ, we are no better than any other people. If we had no Saviour, we would be stark 'naked.' The sins of others would be our sins, but for His grace.

"The realization of this truth humbles our pride in the dust. There is no way for us to obtain that special robe of His righteousness unless we first become conscious of our spiritual nakedness, and are willing to exchange our false ideas for the truth, which alone can cover our shame." (p. 29)

Here again the issue is truth. We must give up our false ideas "for the truth." This even In this he Wieland is not yet willing to do. book is still insisting that Revelation 3:16 does not mean what it says, and compounds it with a violation of Greek grammar to support his false It is not that I have not This is sad. written to him personally about this, prior to this public discussion of the issue. I did several months ago - but no reply has been forthcoming, the Christian courtesy acknowledgement of the letter.

No longer can the issue revolve around the one question of acceptance or rejection of the 1888 message by the Church. The resolution of whether the message was accepted or rejected lies not in the message, but rather in its application as far as the corporate Church was concerned. It was not until 1903 when the

Church was being leavened with its own backsliding did the call come for denominational This was coupled with the clear repentance. announcement that the Church as a coporate body was to be weighed in the balances of the heavenly sanctuary. (8T:247, 250) To say that one part of this testimony "MUST" be fulfilled and ignore the other is not being honest with The acceptance of the truth of our own church history has been side stepped in this Yet Wieland claims that "we possess a corporate conscience devoted above all else to truth." (p. 31; emphasis his) Do we? why not? Are we still wearing our fig-leaf garments?

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#### "REFLECTIONS"

In each Christianity Today, there is usually a page devoted to "Reflections" filled with "Classic and contemporary excerpts." In the April 5, 1993 issue was one which contained a penetrating insight into the character of Jesus not often expressed and even less welcome. Dorothy L. Sayers in A Careless Rage for Life, wrote:

"I believe it to be a grave mistake to present Christianity as something charming and popular with no offense in it... We cannot blink the fact that gentle Jesus meek and mild was so stiff in His opinions and so inflamatory in His language that He was thrown out of church, stoned, hunted from place to place, and finally gibbeted as a firebrand and a public danger. Whatever His peace was, it was not the peace of an amiable indifference." (p. 61)

Paul writes of "the offense of the cross." (Gal 5:11) It has not ceased, but it is despised and rejected, even as the one who glorified it. But how can we really call ourselves followers of the Lord Jesus Christ and ignore the meaning of a life that ended on a cross. Is not one of the three criteria for victory over the power of evil, and the evil one - "they loved not their lives unto death." (Rev. 12:11)

#### **METANOIA**

In this present era darkened by the collapse of character, and the dissolution of faith, God's people need to maintain their spiritual integrity. This begins with what the Greeks called metanoia, which means a "change of mind" and is translated in the New Testament as "repentance."

Repentance is commonly thought of as simply an acknowledgment and confession of sin. But repentance is more than this. It is the process by which we see ourselves, day by day, as we really are: sinful, needy, dependent people. It also involves the process by which we see God as He is: awesome, majestic, and above all else, holy. It is the essential experience of the "new birth" which sets our thinking in right relationship to God, and so completely alters our perspectives that we start to see things through the eyes of God, and not our own. In the ultimate it is the daily surrender of self.

It was not by accident that the first of Luther's 95 Theses reads - "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' He willed that the entire life of believers [whether corporately, or individually] be one of repentance."

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