

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Number 176 Copyright 20003 John W. Robbins Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 October 1999  
Email: tjtrinityfound@aol.com Website: www.trinityfoundation.org Telephone: 423.743.0199 Fax: 423.743.2005

## The Reformation Day Statement

We, the undersigned, having gathered together for the purpose of exposing the fundamental errors of the Roman Church-State and her superstitious and deceptive doctrines, as well as to re-affirm the Biblical doctrines of grace which alone can counter the persistent heresies of Rome, do of one mind stand together after the example of Paul the Apostle to exhort all Christians to stand boldly against those today who are not being "straightforward about the truth of the Gospel" (*Galatians 2:14*).

There have risen within the ranks of those professing the Christian Faith some divisive persons who do not cherish or do not understand the distinctive doctrines of the Bible, but rather have trampled the Gospel and the unity of the Christian church underfoot. These men have twisted the clear Biblical doctrine of justification. The Biblical truth is that justification is strictly the act of God's grace alone in which the Lord declares legally righteous those who are his own, by the imputation to them of the perfect righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ alone, through faith alone. They have abandoned the Biblical phrase "imputed righteousness" and taught that justification is a transformative rather than a purely forensic act. This alteration carries with it the old lie of Satan—of conveyed, imparted, or infused righteousness ("you shall be as God"). They have proclaimed major doctrines that annul the grace of justification to be secondary issues, yet to be resolved. These men have persisted in their divisive behavior without the benefit of church discipline commanded by Christ in

*Matthew 18:15-20* and modeled for us by Paul the Apostle.

In light of the recent proliferation and popularity of such unbiblical concordats as *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (March 1994) and *The Gift of Salvation* (November 1997), we see that it is once again time for the church of Jesus Christ to rise up to stand on the Bible alone so that it may be said of us what was said to the Philadelphians: You "have kept My Word, and have not denied My Name" (*Revelation 3:8*), for his Word alone is truth (*John 17:17*). It is therefore strongly urged by those present at this Conference that all who read this *Statement* join with us and sign it. In so doing we seek to obey the command of Christ "in a spirit of gentleness" so that we may receive from him either the restoration of our transgressing brethren (*Galatians 6:1*), or the clarity and courage of mind necessary to excuse them from our midst in order to preserve the unity of the church for which Christ prayed in *John 17*, "that they all may be one in Us." To God alone be the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Reformation Day Statement was initially adopted October 10, 1998, at The Trinity Foundation Conference on Christianity and Roman Catholicism, Erwin, Tennessee. Its signers as of October 10, 1999, included:

Richard **Bennett** Dr. James **BORDWINE** Timothy **KAUFFMAN** Dr. John W. **ROBBINS** Robert M. **ZINS** Francisco **OROZIO** (Mexico) Bret **LAUTZ** Donald **TUCKER** (Spain) Arden **HODGINS** Jerry **MOSER** Cecil **ANDREWS** (Northern Ireland) Steve

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**REBAND** II Mark T. **SMITH** James **ANEMA** Ian  
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*The Trinity Foundation invites all Christians to sign The Reformation Day Statement. To obtain further information about Christianity or The Trinity Foundation, to receive our free monthly essay-letter and free book, tract, and tape catalogues, or to sign The Reformation Day Statement, please write to The Trinity Foundation, Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692. You may also sign the statement at our website: [trinityfoundation.org](http://trinityfoundation.org). Address email to: [tjtrinityfound@aol.com](mailto:tjtrinityfound@aol.com). Telephone: 423-743-0199. Fax: 423-743-2005.*

The Bible alone is the Word of God.

## *The Reformation Day Statement vs. World Magazine*

In September 1999, Dr. John Robbins of The Trinity Foundation reached an agreement with an advertising salesman on the staff of *World* magazine to buy space-a two-page spread costing between \$3,000 and \$4,000-in the October 23 issue of *World*. The space was reserved, the price agreed upon, and the placement in the magazine was discussed. The purpose of reaching this agreement was to publish *The Reformation Day*

*Statement* and its list of hundreds of signers, most of whom are officers of churches or para-church organizations, and some of whom are very well known in Christian circles.

But after reading *The Reformation Day Statement*, the magazine's publisher, Mr. John B. Prentis of St. Louis, decided not to publish it. Rather than calling Dr. Robbins to inform him of and to explain his decision to break the agreement, Mr. Prentis assigned the task to Jennifer Graham of the magazine's staff. On October 12, Ms. Graham informed Dr. Robbins by telephone that the content of *The Reformation Day Statement* was the basis for *World's* refusing to publish *The Statement*. In the opinion of *World* magazine, *The Reformation Day Statement* is unloving.

Ms. Graham gave The Foundation no good reason for refusing to publish *The Reformation Day Statement*. She did not allege that *The Statement* was slanderous, libelous, inaccurate, scatological, fraudulent, or lewd – typical reasons publications sometimes give for rejecting paid advertisements. *The Statement* is simply unloving. *How* it is unloving, Ms. Graham did not disclose. Dr. Robbins asked her to send a letter to The Foundation stating the magazine's refusal to publish the *Statement*; she immediately agreed to do so; but as of this writing, we have not received a letter.

Although *World* has given no good reason for refusing to publish the *Statement*, and it is hard to imagine there being any good reason, there are several bad reasons the magazine might have for refusing to publish *The Statement*:

### **Love of Money**

Perhaps *World* magazine fears that it would lose either advertisers or subscribers were it to publish an accurate description of the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church-State. Perhaps *World* fears financial loss were it to publish a *Statement* that describes accurately the authors and signers of the ecumenical documents produced by Evangelicals and Catholics Together. The beliefs expressed by the signers of Evangelicals and Catholics Together show them to be persons who do not understand and therefore cannot believe, or who do understand but refuse to believe, the Biblical doctrines of salvation. This fear of financial loss seems to be a major concern of all the leaders of the magazine,

despite the fact that it operates under the umbrella of a 501(c) (3), nonprofit, charitable organization.

A year ago *World's* editor, Marvin Olasky, mused in an editorial:

As I write this, I'm looking over a list of subscription cancellations from July to September, with reasons cited: "movie reviews...offended by ad...wrong point of view...too intellectual...it upsets me...no time to read...can't afford...WORLD is filthy trash...Clinton coverage...not worth the price." We understand some of those losses – our magazine costs a dollar per issue, and some people would rather spend that dollar in other ways. We don't want to raise the price any higher, and the key to holding the line is gaining advertising revenue, which means accepting some ads we do not necessarily like.

Our principle has been that the editorial and advertising parts of WORLD have different functions, and we hope our readers understand that. On the editorial pages (24 of them in our normal 36-page issue) we only print what we believe to be true; of course, we report on and quote accurately some wrong-headed folks, but we'll communicate to readers what we think is right. The advertising pages, however, are different: The goal of those pages is to bring in revenue while serving as a forum used by all sorts of individuals and organizations.

One example of how far we're willing to go concerns a book on Bible translation called *The Inclusive Language Debate*. We've run ads for that work even though it takes a position completely opposed to the one we took last year in the Stealth Bible controversy. But we want folks on the gender-neutral side to accept advertising from groups like the Committee on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, so we do the same even for books that mischaracterize last year's debate.

A second example: Our view of the Y2K bug is that the problem is serious but the big scare-narios are overstated – and yet, we

may run some ads that are scary. We do trust in the ability of our readers to be discerning. Besides, we may be wrong and the advertisers may be right. The ad pages, in a sense, are the paid equivalent of our mailbag, where we also run pros and cons.

My final example comes from our toughest call. Several years ago we carried a series of ads from a Catholic publisher who aggressively challenged some Protestant thinking. Many of our Protestant readers were offended by that, but we followed through on our distinct approaches to editorial and advertising matter: Recently, we've run an ad for a conference taking place this month on "Christianity and Roman Catholicism." The very title of the conference is obnoxious to Roman Catholics, and some of the lecture titles are even more pointed.

That ad has left us uncomfortable for two reasons. First, we all know there is a difference between disagreeing with someone and baiting that party with ornery language. Second, frankly, since we're looking for advertising dollars to hold down the subscription price, it particularly hurts when some ads actually lose money for us. That's been the case here.

In the abstract, I relish provocative ads almost as much as I do provocative articles. The rationale is revenue but also education: I really do believe that iron can sharpen iron. The problem, though, is that words can be sticks and stones, breaking not bones but the morale of readers. We'll scrutinize ads, but our desire is to maintain a mostly open forum.

Despite editor Olasky's desire to maintain a "mostly open forum,"

- despite the fact that *World* (out of a desire for mutual back-scratching) has published (by its own admission) ads advocating mistranslation of the Bible,
- despite *World's* policy of running ads that "we do not necessarily like,"

- despite *World's* "principle...that the editorial and advertising parts of WORLD have different functions,"
- despite *World's* statement that "The... [advertising] pages...[serve] as a forum used by all sorts of individuals and organizations,"
- despite *World's* willingness to "run some ads that are scary,"
- despite *World's* "trust in the ability of our readers to be discerning,"
- despite *World's* willingness to admit that "we may be wrong and the advertisers may be right,"
- despite *World's* recognition that "The ad pages, in a sense, are the paid equivalent of our mailbag, where we also run pros and cons,"
- despite *World's* publishing a series of ads from a Roman Catholic publisher "who aggressively challenged some Protestant thinking,"

despite giving all these reasons why *World* should have published *The Reformation Day Statement*, *World* abruptly cancelled its agreement with The Trinity Foundation and refused to publish *The Statement*.

But if love of money were the sole reason for its outrageous action, why would *World* turn down a \$3,000-plus paid announcement? Of course, at a subscription rate of \$49.95 per year, 65 subscription cancellations would cost *World* more than it would have gained from publishing *The Reformation Day Statement*. Those cancellations seem to be what *World* fears most – the fear of men seems to grip the CEO, editor, and publisher of *World* magazine. They do not share Martin Luther's priorities: "Let goods and kindred go, some readership also" – and they prefer to silence those who would speak truth so as to avoid offending their Roman Catholic readers. The leadership of *World* is, however, quite willing to offend Protestant readers by publishing advertisements from aggressive Roman Catholic publishers. They are betting the Protestants won't have the courage to cancel their subscriptions.

## **Animosity Toward The Trinity Foundation and Dr. Robbins**

There may be some substance to this motive also, for in the editorial quoted above, *World* attacked, without cause, the paid advertisements for The Trinity Foundation's 1998 Conference on Christianity and Roman Catholicism. *World* accepted our six advertisements and our money, and then gratuitously attacked the advertisements in its editorial columns, apparently in an effort to placate angry Roman Catholic readers who cancelled or threatened to cancel their subscriptions. Neither the editor, nor the publisher, nor the CEO of *World* ever offered an apology for the magazine's unwarranted, inaccurate, and baseless statements that last year's advertisements were "obnoxious," "pointed," "baiting," and "ornery." *World* accepted the advertisements, and *World* kept our money. But if it was simply personal animosity toward Dr. Robbins or The Trinity Foundation, why did *World* accept and publish advertisements for the 1999 Trinity Foundation Conference on Christianity and Economics?

## **Creeping Apostasy**

Perhaps here we have struck closer to the truth of the matter. After all, the accusation of being unloving is nothing new; it has been the constant cry of the liberals against Christians for the past century. For years *World* magazine has been heavily promoting the books of William Bennett, former Secretary of Education and Chairman of the Catholic Campaign for America; and of Charles Colson, co-chairman (with the Roman Catholic priest Richard Neuhaus) of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, the ecumenical movement of the Religious Right. Bill Bennett (whose brother Bob Bennett is one of President Clinton's lawyers) is a personal friend of Joel Belz, CEO of *World*. (Mr. Belz says so.) While pretending to be an evangelical magazine, *World* has been supporting Roman Catholics and ersatz-evangelicals who are doing their best to bamboozle everyone into cooperating with Rome. No wonder *World* refuses to publish *The Reformation Day Statement*. *The Statement* conflicts with *World's* agenda.

## **What Is To Be Done?**

Readers who are concerned about the outrageous action of *World* in refusing to publish *The Reformation Day Statement* can do several things:

**Call** or **write** the editor, publisher, and CEO of *World* to let them know what you think of their refusing to publish *The Reformation Day Statement*. Send a copy of your letter to The Trinity Foundation for our records.

CEO **Joel Belz** maintains his office in Asheville. *World* magazine, Post Office Box 2330, Asheville, NC 28802. Telephone: 1-800-951-4974. 1-828-253-8063. Fax: 1-828-253-1556.

Publisher **John B. Prentis** maintains his office in St. Louis, and receives his mail in Asheville. Telephone: 1-314-983-9013.

Editor **Marvin Olasky** maintains his office in Texas and receives his mail in Asheville. Telephone: 1-512-471-7908.

**Cancel** or do not renew your subscription, if you are a subscriber to *World*. Potential loss of revenue seems to be the greatest fear *World* has. A theological debate with the magazine's leadership is likely to be unfruitful, but they do seem to listen to money. Make your subscription dollars speak loudly and clearly. Help the theologically challenged folks at *World* make the right decisions; since they are unlikely to listen to theological reasons, we must give them pecuniary reasons to choose wisely. Besides, you will get a lot more news for a lot less money by subscribing to *Christian News*, a weekly newspaper published by Herman Otten, a Lutheran minister who still fondly recalls the Reformation. His address is 3277 Boeuf Lutheran Road, New Haven, Missouri 63068. A year's subscription to *Christian News* is \$25.00, but you won't get a book written by an apologist for the Roman Catholic Church-State as a subscription premium.

**Pull** your ads, if you are an advertiser in *World*, until *World* changes its policy of accepting aggressive Roman Catholic advertisements and rejecting announcements favoring the Reformation.

**Write** to the Christian leaders who have signed *The Reformation Day Statement* and thank them for doing so.

**Sign** *The Statement* yourself, if you have not already.