

DIVINE RENOVATION

SUMMARIZING CHAPTER FOUR

Clearing out the Junk

What We Need to Jettison if We Are Going to Rebuild

THREE CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH TODAY. “Three things are the consequence of the neo-Pelagianism of our time.

“(First) If salvation is getting my card punched so I can meet the basic requirements for salvation, it will breed a culture of minimalism. This is not covenant faith. It is not life lived in relationship with the God who says, ‘I am your God and you are my people.’ This is fundamentally paganism under a thin veneer of Christianity. When the minimum requirement is satisfied, that is where it stops. Covenant faith, rooted in a personal covenant relationship with God in the midst of a covenant community, can never do enough or get enough. It is a religion of extravagance rooted in a God who proclaims his insatiable thirst for us, whose thirst can be satisfied only in him. It is only this kind of faith that can yearn for authentic holiness. It is only this kind of faith that seeks to give all and do all.

“Second, as already mentioned, people who believe themselves to be justified by their own actions or ‘niceness’ will never know the sheer audacity of God’s mercy. Amazing grace will simply be a melody that sounds good on bagpipes. The Good News of salvation will never be fully grasped, and, consequently, the joy that is the hallmark of the authentic Christian life will never be known or communicated to others. The joyful song of praise to God for the gift of salvation never rises from the lips of the one who has no need of such a gift. I honestly believe that this is the reason why so many lips remain silent in our churches on Sunday morning. Too many people literally have nothing to sing about.

“Third, if we cannot move beyond the bare minimum of religious observance perceived to earn our own personal salvation, and if the authentic Good News is undiscovered, why are we surprised that many in the Church show evidence of little enthusiasm for the call to the New Evangelization? Obviously, only the evangelized can evangelize. Only those who have received the Good News as good news can proclaim it to others. Good news is never a burden to share with others – indeed, it is the most natural thing in the world. It becomes a burden only when we cannot share it. In the end, with neo-Pelagianism being so present among the faithful, and even among those in ministry, it is entirely understandable that we would suffer from a deep identity crisis about our missionary nature.”