



Office of the President  
3015 Ave K NW  
Winter Haven FL 33881  
863.299.4084

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER - FEBRUARY

"But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?" (2 Corinthians 3:7-8)

The theme of the 2004 CLC Convention is "**O BLESSED MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION**" based on 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. The background for this glorious ministry of reconciliation is laid out for us in the first four chapters of Paul's second letter to the congregation at Corinth. The ministry of reconciliation is the Gospel proclamation that God **in Christ** was reconciling the world to Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them. God has committed this ministry of reconciliation to us. All believers are given this Gospel ministry of reconciliation and function as ambassadors for Christ. By our calls into the public ministry, we as pastors have been entrusted in a very special way with this word (message) of reconciliation. For a pastor there is no more comforting book than Paul's second letter to the Corinthians.

There is no higher calling than that of the public ministry. Every minister of Christ should marvel each day that God called a sinner such as himself to proclaim the forgiveness of sins to other sinners. Jesus could have chosen angels to proclaim these good tidings of great joy. God could have chosen the rich and powerful and the influential to be His ambassadors. However, God, in keeping with His Gospel ministry of grace, chose us to be pastors and teachers of His glorious Gospel of reconciliation. The divine call to serve as an undershepherd of Christ is a special privilege. We have been called by Jesus into the Gospel ministry. Pastor Norman Madson reminds us, "Unless a pastor be absolutely certain that it is the Holy Ghost who has made him an overseer of the flock, he will sooner or later come to grief in his momentous task of feeding the Church of God, which Christ hath purchased with his own blood."

The glory of the Gospel ministry is not readily apparent to human eyes and including those who preach Christ crucified. This is because the very Gospel itself is a mystery and a paradox. So the Apostle Paul speaks of the **PARADOX OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION**. The paradox of the glory of the ministry of reconciliation is contained in the remarkable glory of the New Covenant. This glory of the New Covenant is contrasted with the glory of the Old Covenant.

The Old Covenant was given by God through Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Old Covenant was a covenant of law, "This do and you shall live." The Old Covenant was a reflection of the divine glory of the perfect God. The problem was that the Old Covenant of law could never result in anything except death and condemnation. The problem lay not with the law but with sinful people who cannot keep God's holy law or produce a righteousness that avails before God.

The glory of the Old Covenant was very apparent to the people of God gathered around Mt. Sinai. God's mountain itself was covered with the visible manifestations of the glory of the holy God. The mountain was covered with clouds and rumbled with thunder and lightning. None of the children of Israel were allowed to come near the mountain of God. Only Moses was allowed to come up to the mountain and see the glory of the Lord. Here on Mt. Sinai, God gave His people His holy covenant of law. The glory of this covenant was reflected in the face of Moses.

Moses' face was so bright with the reflected glory of God that he had to wear a veil so that the people could even look at him.

However, the glory of the law only produced death and condemnation before a righteous God. Thank God that we do not have to preach a message of only law. The law can only produce self-righteousness and condemnation for poor sinners. The law produces people concerned about rules and regulations (the letter of the law).

We have been called to be ministers of the New Covenant, the Gospel of the cross of Christ. The Spirit has revealed a ministry that produces life and salvation to those who hear and believe. We are ministers of this New Covenant. Consider the glory of this ministry of the New Covenant.

"If the ministry that brought death came with glory, ...will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?"

"If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!"

"If what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory that lasts?"

II Corinthians 3:7-11

The Gospel alone is able to change the hearts of sinners with the good news of a free salvation through the power of the cross of Christ. The glory of the Gospel ministry does not consist in the thunder of threats and damnation and works of the law. The glory of the Gospel ministry consists of the power of Christ Jesus who has become our righteousness, holiness, and wisdom from God. You are privileged to have been made ministers of the New Covenant of the cross and the forgiveness of sins. May the glory of this New Covenant sustain you in your high calling of grace. This ministry of reconciliation is a ministry of the Holy Spirit, who has transformed us into ambassadors who implore lost sinners on God's behalf: "Be reconciled to God." As our convention approaches, we are reminded of our purpose as ministers of the New Covenant and are given the means to accomplish this purpose as we view the glorious ministry of reconciliation. The paradox of our ministry is reflected in the content and the power and the glory of the New Covenant of reconciliation revealed through the foolishness of the preaching of reconciliation.

O blessed ministry of reconciliation that shows the way to God and brings to us salvation!  
By thine evangel pure, Lord, Thou preserv'st thy fold,  
Dost call, enlighten, keep, Dost comfort and uphold.

Our sufficiency is from God.

John Schierenbeck