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Why I am a Christian No. 2

John Allen Chalk

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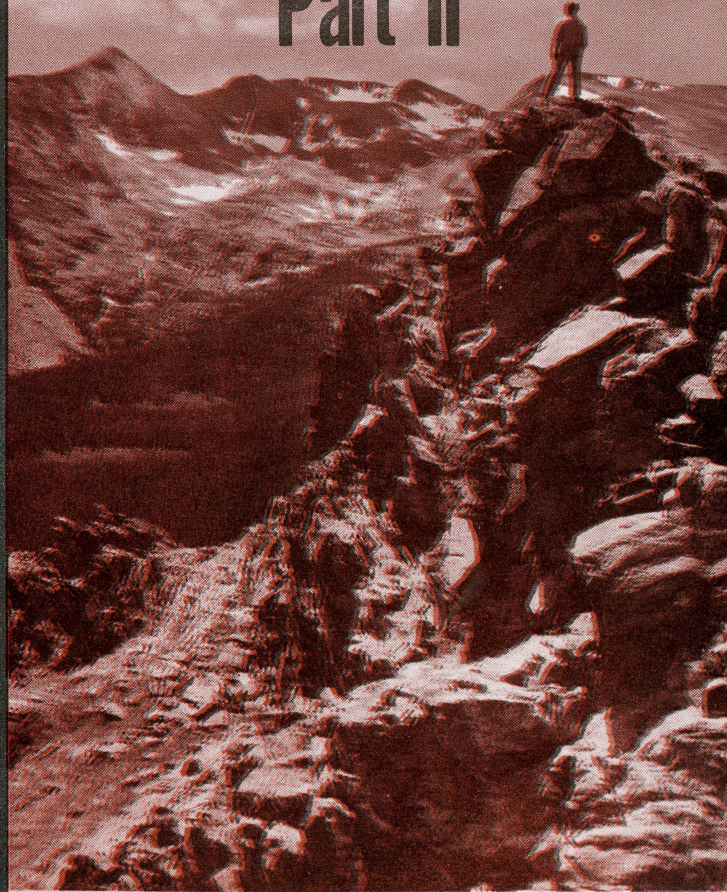
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Why I Am A Christian

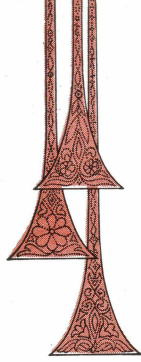
Part II



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TRANSCRIPT OF THE

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..... *radio programs*



HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Why I Am A Christian

Part II

You may be one of many listening to this program who does not consider himself or herself a Christian. Have you honestly considered His claims on your life? Have you carefully studied the New Testament evidence of Him? Or are you guilty of just not thinking about a matter of this importance? You may be one of those whose life has not yet been touched by tragedy or emptiness. But when it comes, when the inevitable humiliations of proud man arise, what will your present life really mean? Whatever the reason that you are not a Christian, I want you to know of my genuine concern that you see and accept Jesus Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life."

Last week on this broadcast three reasons were advanced for "why I am a Christian." First, "because I believe in a personal, living God." Second, "because I know God in Jesus Christ." Third, "because of Christ's complete identification with me and my life." Today, if you will listen for the next few minutes, I would like to discuss further with you "why I am a Christian."

This is a vital area that requires frank, open, adult discussion. Many people in our time are realizing the emptiness of our "gadgets" and the so-called "security" of our materialistic culture. One university graduate, after a full year's employment with a growing successful corporation, said, "I've learned the techniques of achieving security. But there is an issue I cannot dodge much longer. I'm worried about achieving a genuine Christian style of living." It is an issue that must be faced. I hope you will do that as we spend this short time together.

I'm a Christian because I have accepted the Biblical testimony to Christ. One does not make a groundless decision about Jesus, when he comes to believe in Him. John, the writer of the fourth New Testament Gospel, reveals the intent of these inspired men who wrote the four biographies of Christ. "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30, 31). Of course they selected only certain events in His life and certain things that He said. John freely admits in the next chapter of his Gospel, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

The important thing here is that the men who wrote these books were inspired men. Peter assures us in the first chapter of his Second Epistle that God "hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). Later in the same chapter Peter explains how God did this. "Knowing this first," he says, "that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation." This "private interpretation" sometimes confuses people who allow themselves to be convinced that one can't understand the Bible for himself. But Peter explains the phrase "private interpretation" in the next verse. "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:20, 21).

As God revealed His will, the Holy Spirit directed the New Testament authors in providing the evidence on which we come to faith in Jesus as the Christ. The New Testament books give the unique and full testimony to Jesus and therefore actually prompt one's faith. In Paul's words, "So belief cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Not only do I turn to the New Testament for an historically accurate and a divinely inspired account of Christ and His teachings — which brings me to my decision of faith — but here within the pages of these twenty-seven inspired records are all necessary directions for my life as a Christian. Peter said that God “hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). Either we have a reliable record of who He was, what He did, and how we may follow Him, or the whole thing becomes questionable. So Paul says, “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

In the full expression of “the faith” that is Christian and in the manner of our acceptance and expression of that faith, the New Testament is our complete, infallible guide (Jude 3; Acts 16:30-34). I am a Christian because I have accepted the Biblical testimony to Christ and through New Testament teachings have believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

I am a Christian because of what Christ does for my life. Of Jesus we read, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Something about Him, the way He taught and lived, made life valuable, and made others want that same kind of life. The life Christ gives is an illuminated life that knows no darkness of confusion and meaninglessness.

Christ gives my life purpose that it cannot otherwise have. Regardless of how much effort I expend, how hard I try, Paul captured my real plight when he said, “For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself” (Romans 14:7). I became a Christian by allowing Jesus to become the sovereign ruler of my life, or in other words, my Lord. This means, using Paul’s words again, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:8). He claims my devotion and allegiance because “to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living” (Romans 14:9). When anyone else does what Jesus did for me in the crucifixion and resurrection, I will consider his claim.

Christ teaches me life’s deeper and more permanent meaning. He said, without embarrassment, “I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This “abundant life” repudiates my petty and selfish concerns. Jesus says, “Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or,

Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:31-33). I know the man in famine-stricken India and other parts of the world has a genuine concern for “food, clothing, and shelter.” But I also know a fat, slick, over-fed, greedy, people who could alleviate the crying needs of today’s world if they sought first the kingdom of God. Jesus says look at the real issues of life, the deeper concerns than the superficial flesh. In the words of the Old Testament prophet Amos, “Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live” (Amos 5:6).

Christ answers my most vital questions about life. Who am I? The incarnation says, “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). God allowed His Son to assume the fleshly form because this was the form He gave man from the beginning. “God made man upright,” Ecclesiastes 7:29 declares. “I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” the Psalmist gratefully says (Psalm 139:14). Who am I? I am God’s creature, the result of divine handiwork, a sensitive, rational, social, spiritual being, made in a form that even God’s Son could inhabit.

As a Christian I can also face the question, “Why am I here?” Jesus said that man’s great purpose in life is love, of God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39). His entire life was a commentary of this difficult, life-long occupation. Everything I do, everywhere I go, every word I speak, occurs under the direction that James describes in his General Epistle. After chastening those who flipantly make decisions about their lives, he says, “For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil” (James 4:15, 16).

A further vital question of life is answered for me in Christ: “Where am I going?” The God who “is not far from each one of us,” especially in Christ, is the God in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:27, 28). I live as His word directs. My destiny is shaped by His power and purpose. The author of Ecclesiastes helps me answer this question. He encourages young people to enjoy their youth and then warns, “but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment” (Ecclesiastes 11:19-11). I go to the judgment with a life totally committed to God through Christ. A judgment which faces all of us (Acts 17:30, 31).

The Christian life provides me the strength and wisdom to properly view sorrow and suffering. It is here that many reject Christianity because of their faulty understanding of what Christ says about life’s adversities. Listen to the following New Testament insight into how Christians view tribulation. “We also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us” (Romans 5:3-5). Suffering, adversity, and tribulation create greater strength, make one re-examine his life looking for better sources of wisdom than himself. The Christian does not passively accept his lot, but actively seeks the meaning for better life.

Finally, I am a Christian because of the victory Christ gives me! In the great statements we call the beatitudes Jesus counters every major evil attitude in our world. He teaches a way of life that will successfully counter materialism, selfishness, greed, immorality, dishonesty, and other wicked elements so apparent in modern society (Matthew 5:3-12). This is victory over all perverted forms of human conduct. Christians for nineteen hundred years, real Christians after the New Testament order, have demonstrated the validity of Jesus’ teaching in the beatitudes.

In Christ there is victory over my own mortality. The “death burden” is upon us all. We use weird and grotesque means to escape it but the inevitability of physical death relentlessly expresses itself. But “our Saviour Christ Jesus, abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Timothy 1:10). It’s all right there, “life, immortality, revealed in the gospel.” As a Christian I have an assured victory over death, physically and spiritually, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 15:55-57).

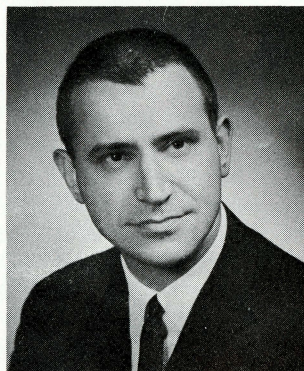
Christ today provides the only effective, possible way for worldwide harmony and unity among men. Get your Bibles and read Ephesians 2:11-22. If your Bible is not convenient, make a note of this passage, Ephesians 2:11-22. The most diverse two peoples of the ancient world, the Jew and the Gentile, are shown to be reconciled and united as one man in Christ Jesus! I know that same unity with Christians today of every race, of every nation, and of every language. Such a worldwide fellowship in Christ can bring peace, brotherhood, harmony, and new life to our warring world, but remember, it occurs only in Christ.

The New Testament book of Revelation is a book of victory. In chapter 19 Christ is graphically presented as the conqueror of all evil forces, of Satan himself (Revelation 19:11-16). In the last chapter of this majestic book, life with God in heaven is pictured. Among other things, John says, "And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:3-5). Finally, through the power of God and by the redemptive fulfillment of Christ's ministry, the night of inhumanity is overwhelmed by the day of ultimate triumph! I am a Christian because of that victory.

Jesus challenged His contemporaries to a practical test of God's influence in their lives. Christians in succeeding ages have willingly said, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15). When you sense life's helplessness, loneliness, and confusion without Christ, remember another confused human being who cried, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). His answer, and yours and mine, comes in the next verse, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25).

You have to start somewhere, if you will today become a Christian. The New Testament teaches, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Jesus says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3). He also promises, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). Heed His final command before ascending to God's right hand: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

Your decision to become a Christian involves three vital principles for a new life: (1) a new relationship with God; (2) a new regard for others; (3) and a new reason for living. May God bless you with wisdom and strength to come to Christ.



John Allen Chalk, dynamic evangelist and long-time radio speaker, is the first full-time speaker on the Herald of Truth radio program.

He began his work with the Herald of Truth on January 1, 1966. Previously, Chalk was the featured personality in a 13 week Herald of Truth television series.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, he began preaching at 15. Chalk and his wife and two children now live in Abilene, Texas where he spends full time working with the Herald of Truth.

He is a graduate of Tennessee Tech and has written a book, "The Praying Christ and Other Sermons" and two tracts. Chalk was nominated for the Outstanding Young Man of Tennessee in 1964 and was named Cookeville's Young Man of the Year in 1963.