

*February 10, 2013*

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## TIME OF REFLECTION

“Why is it that Christianity won? Why, among all the many cults and philosophies which competed in the Graeco-Roman world and in spite of more severe opposition than was encountered by any other, did this faith outstrip them all?”

“The more one examines...the various factors which seem to account for the extraordinary victory of Christianity the more one is driven to search for a cause which underlies them. It is clear that at the very beginning of Christianity there must have occurred a vast release of energy... That burst of energy was ascribed by the early disciples to the founder of their faith. Something happened to the men who associated with Jesus...[in] his contact with them, in his crucifixion and in their assurance of his resurrection...It is the uniqueness of Jesus which seems the one tenable explanation...Here, too, is the main source of Christianity’s inclusiveness. Members of both sexes and of all races, the learned and the ignorant, so Christians held, might share in the salvation made possible by Christ.”

~Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1968), professor of history at Yale University

“Because the Christian God is not a lonely God, but rather a communion of three persons, faith leads human beings into the divine *communio*. One cannot, however, have a self-enclosed communion with the Triune God—a ‘foursome,’ as it were—for the Christian God is not a private deity. Communion with this God is at once also communion with those others who have entrusted themselves in faith to the same God. Hence one and the same act of faith places a person into a new relationship both with God and with all others who stand in communion with God.”

~Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*

The “community of Christians springs solely from the Biblical and Reformation message of the justification of man through grace alone; this alone is the basis of the longing of Christians for one another.”

~Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), German pastor-theologian executed at Flossenbürg concentration camp for his opposition to the Nazis

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## *Worship through the Word*

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**SERMON** – “The Glory of Love”–*Pastor Don Willeman*

**SERMON PASSAGE** –1 John 4:7-21(ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus

is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup> By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.