

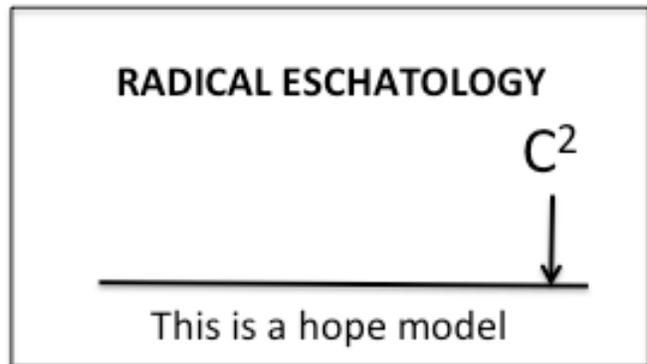
# ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology must incorporate several things. When is the second coming of Christ? When is the rapture? The tribulation? The millennium? These issues are treated differently in Europe than they are in America.

## WHAT IS THE *PAROUSIA*?

It is the presence, or the coming, of Christ.

Here are some models dealing with the presence of Christ for the second coming. You need to recognize these models by their description and by the drawings.



**Eschatology 1**

## EUROPEAN ESCHATOLOGY

The first four models are the European models of eschatology. They focus on the second coming ( $C^2$  on the charts). I will attempt to show you the fault with them, but these are current models that have been propagated for many years. They began in Europe, but for the most part they do not reflect our theological models here in America. I will also give you the American models later.

### 1. *Radical Eschatology*

Radical Eschatology<sup>1</sup> has no first coming (see Eschatology 1). The coming that is pictured is coming #2. The major proponent, one of whom practically everybody has heard, is Albert Schweitzer. Radical Eschatology has no first coming. This second coming is really a misnomer because it is an idealized kind of coming, and it is not based on His having come before. The nomenclature is based only on placement. Since it is at the end of the timeline, we call it the second coming when actually it would be the first coming.

In this model there is no real Christ that came at the beginning. There was somebody who came and claimed to be Christ, but that person was mistaken. He was not the Christ. That mistake cost Him His life. He thought that He was the Christ, and He threw Himself into history, but history ground Him up and killed Him. He was the false Messiah, and the coming of the ideal Messiah is actually in the future.

Radical Eschatology has somewhat of a Judaist Messianic flavor to it. Judaist Messianism is looking for the Christ in His first coming right now. This has that same kind of color to it, but it is not actually the same because it is not a Jewish model. This is a European Christian model.

This is an active theology today. So, let's analyze it. If Jesus did not come and die on the cross and pay for our sins, then we are not saved according to Biblical theology. But in the theology of this model, salvation is in the *kerygma*, i.e. preaching or sermon. The Christ of the

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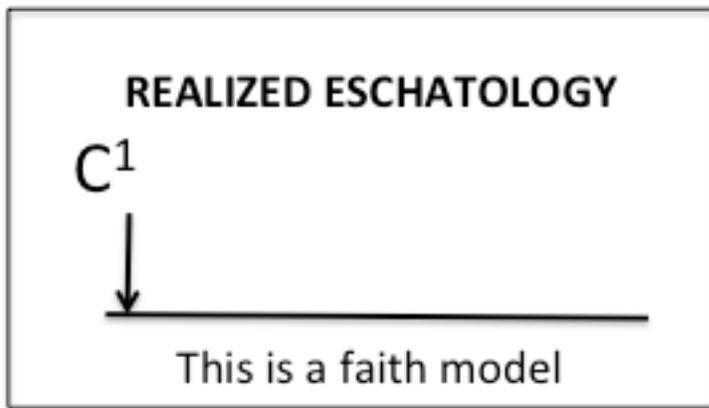
<sup>1</sup> The "C<sup>2</sup>" is C = Coming, the superscript "2" means second, and this technique will continue in the following models.

sermon is what saves you. Whether that Christ is historically anchored or not is not important. If you believe the message, whether or not there is a real Christ, then you will be saved.

There is a *kerygmatic* Christ in this theory, a Christ of the sermon, a Christ of the Gospel, but it is a mythological Christ in this eschatology. It is not a real Christ based on a historical first coming, an incarnation where somebody was actually put on the cross and died for our sins and then was raised. This eschatology produces invalid Christology and soteriology (doctrine of salvation).

## 2. Realized Eschatology

A second European eschatology is Realized Eschatology, and the way this one works is just backwards to Radical Eschatology. In a realized model you have a real incarnation (first coming), but there is to be no second coming (see Eschatology 2).



**Eschatology 2**

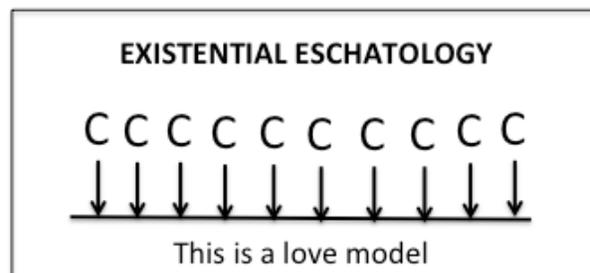
Realized Eschatology is a C. H. Dodd model. In this model there was a Christ Who was born in a manger, lived, died, and ascended into heaven. Here is a Christ Who is actually historically anchored, but there is no second coming. Instead of Christ coming down to earth to meet us, we are going to meet God in Christ. If we are in Christ, we are going to meet God in Him. When you depart this life you will meet God in Christ, and that is the *Parousia*. The *Parousia* where He comes to us does

not happen because there is no second coming. The consummation is when you meet God in Christ. You can begin to see that there are problems in European theology. Their pervasive philosophical Existentialism, which dominates their culture, eliminates what the objective Word of God says. What is believed is all subjective and not objectively real.

My warning to you is that the Church in the world is sliding into apostasy. If you compare commentaries and theologies that were written recently with one written two to three hundred years ago, the difference would be shocking. By knowing the false theology of these proponents, you will be protected when reading their popular commentaries. When we read a textbook or a theology book, we tend to believe it. However, we need to be more critical and be theologians and do our theology when we are reading these things.

## 3. Existential Eschatology

Existential Eschatology has a series of comings, and they are all in the now (see Eschatology 3). In Existential Theology there is a lightning bolt experience in which you meet the Lord in your feelings. He comes to you in your personal, subjective experience in your soul. You may hear a testimony, and wham! the



**Eschatology 3**

Lord confronts you with a call to change your life. See chart on the next page.

In Existentialism, decisions are required in order to become “authentic.” Existentialism is a decision-based system in which you have to make a decision, yes or no, for Christ or against Him in the encounter which is very subjective. You can be reading the Bible, and if you do not have the encounter, what you read is deemed not to be revelation. The Bible, the sermon, and the testimony are the “environments” in which revelatory encounter takes place. The Existentialist may have to get to one of his favorite places in the Bible in order to have the encounter.

What an Existentialist claims that God told him to do may be opposite to what the Scripture actually says. The Existentialist bases his interpretation on a subjective encounter, and it always fits what he wants to do. If you read something that you do not want to do, then that is not an encounter. You just turn the page.

Existentialism is a movement into subjectivity that is occurring throughout our country right now in which objective truth is yielding to personal subjectivity. Here we see how it affects Biblical eschatology, but Existentialism also affects all of our doctrines.

In this eschatological model there are no incarnation, no second coming, no crucifixion, and no resurrection. All you have is some kind of subjective experience, and that subjective experience is called an encounter with Christ. You cannot get saved with this kind of thing. If there is no real Jesus Who came, died, arose from the dead, and is coming again, then our salvation is void.

Everybody’s doctrine could be different to the extent that they do not defy natural science. Thus, there would be no resurrection. The supernatural is called mythology, and the Existentialist must de-mythologize the supernatural via his hermeneutic. The de-mythologizing by Rudolf Bultmann treats the Bible as a book of myth. All the supernatural parts have to be stripped away to reveal the kernel of truth that is embedded within the myth. For example: When Jesus walked on the water coming out to the boat where the disciples were, His walking on the water is considered a myth. When you strip the myth away, you have then the kernel of truth, which is that He wants to be close to His disciples. That is the kernel of truth embedded within the myth of His walking on the water and coming out to the boat where His disciples are.

Concerning Peter’s getting out of the boat, the Existentialist would declare that Peter’s walking on the water is a myth. So you strip the myth away to find the kernel of truth embedded in the passage to be that Jesus’ disciples want to be close to Him. All miracles have to be stripped away as myth in order to find the so-called embedded kernel of truth.

The whole Bible, then, becomes a book of myth in this model. You do not have a first coming, and you do not have an end-time second coming. You have present existential comings in the discovering of kernels of embedded truth (see Eschatology 3). That is the eschatology of Existential Christianity.

All three models that I have given up to now are from European Eschatology. However, eschatology overflows and impacts all the other doctrines. Before this lesson, we studied how Christology impacts the doctrine of salvation that in turn impacts ecclesiology. Now we have eschatology that impacts every doctrine. Class, every doctrine is connected to all the other doctrines. That is why we call this kind of study *systematic* theology.

Now I must warn you of our own present-day error. We tend to separate our doctrines from our lives. We build all of our systematic theology, we set it down and we say, “Now that I

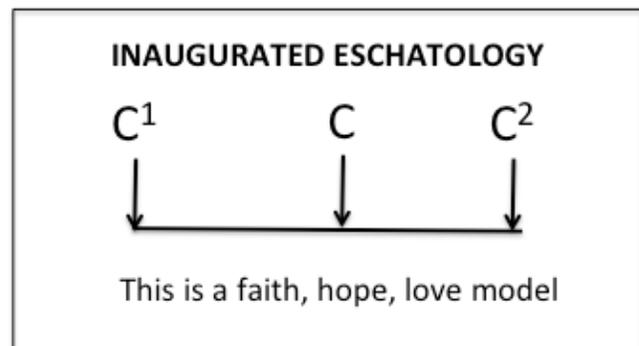
have that done, I can go on with my life.” We do our living separated from our doctrines. We compartmentalize because nothing is going to stop us from living our lives. Brethren, it is not supposed to be like that.

The doctrine of holiness, I repeat once again, is a surrender of yourself to God’s use. There is no such thing as living your own life and being holy. Will you allow God to live His life through you? He will spend you how He wants to. That is holiness. What we want to do is have our wonderful systematic theology, set it down as a mental construct, and live our lives just like the world. We want to have a career, have all the money, have all the status, indulge our flesh, and call that holiness because we are saved and go to church.

Compartmentalization is pervasive in our churches. We go to Sunday school, attend church, tithe, do all that is required of us, and then go on with living our lives just as the unsaved do.

#### 4. *Inaugurated Eschatology*

In Inaugurated Eschatology you have a first coming, a second coming, and a present encounter (see Eschatology 4). This is not too bad an eschatology. The proponent of this one is Oscar Cullmann. I want you to put a star by Cullmann because red flags ought to pop up when you are dealing with him. Just because he has a good eschatology does not mean he is good all across the theological board.



**Eschatology 4**

This is a faith, hope, and love model in which love is in the middle. For faith, one must look back at an established historical fact. Hope is in a future consummation, and love is in the present walk where the Lord lifts you up and gives you strength to be able to accomplish your pilgrimage.

The prior existential model would be a love model. What is love for the existential model? Feeling. It is a feelings-based model driven by emotions. There is no faith in the existential model because faith requires an object. Objective facts are taboo in Existentialism. Existential Theology is strictly about feeling. Do you feel it? If you feel it, it is real. If you do not feel it, it is not real.

In the Realized Eschatology model the emphasis is on the past, on the accomplished fact. It is a faith-based model. Knowing and believing are the focus.

The Radical Eschatology model is a hope-based model. The concept of hope is why Albert Schweitzer was considered the great missionary in the world. Because of his work in Africa, we hold him up today as a standard for foreign missions. Why? He was hope-based. What is hope? Hope is a Petrine model, and that is a work, work, work, trudge-on-through work kind of model. You should be able now to see how all of our doctrines are beginning to link up.

These are the four European models: the Radical, the Realized, the Existential, and the Inaugurated. You have theologians associated with them, and the only one that has any merit to it is the Cullmann model because it has all three comings. American theologians agree that there

are a first coming, a second coming and present spiritual comings or encounters. The first and second comings of Christ are physical comings. However, there are spiritual comings also.

In your Christian walk there are times when the Lord is going to meet with you. Part of our doctrine of revelation, if you remember, contained illumination. Illumination involved both understanding and conviction. That understanding means that your mind has been lifted up to understand the things of God. If you do not get lifted up, you are not going to understand because the things of God are beyond us, and we need some elevation or else we never get there.

There is a second part to illumination, and that is conviction. We are sinners, every one of us, and right now there is a need for repentance for all of us because none of us are without sin. That repentance comes when you are exposed to the Word of God. You need to make a change in your life, and the realization of this need is an inside job of the convicting Spirit of Christ. Christianity is an inside work of the Spirit. It has the same kind of sense as when the leaves on the trees start falling off after turning color during autumn. That transformation is not an externally driven thing. It is inside the tree. The trees' leaves begin to change, and the trees shed their leaves. The leaves are not pulled off. They are shedding because there is something changing inside of the tree.

The same thing happens to you. You might be a big, old, bad dude, and you end up in prison, and everybody is wondering if there is any hope for you. So then something happens to you. It is an inside job that happens to you. Then you begin to be nicer. You begin to change on the inside, and pretty soon you are doing things you would never have dreamed of doing, and people are saying, "There is something good going on in that guy." The work of the Spirit is on the inside making a difference in your life. The concept is that Christianity is first an ontological change (a change in your being) that works its way out into changed behavior. It is a transformation that results in a change in behavior.

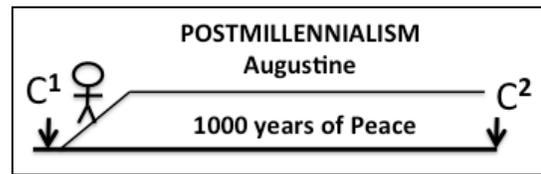
Illumination then has both understanding and the conviction within the encounter. Conviction comes when that change that is within you has not yet achieved perfection. What does perfection mean? Getting to the end. Perfection means you get all the way to the resulting behavior. The conviction is that God says that there is something that He wants you to do. That is when you start falling on your face. You think, "I will never get there. This is unreal. Every where I look I am dirty and filthy in my life, and I need to get that out of my life."

## **AMERICAN ESCHATOLOGY**

The issues change when you come to American Eschatology. Instead of Christ's comings being of first consideration, the question changes to when is the millennium? In our eschatology, we confess right up front that there is a first coming and a second coming. We are looking forward to the second coming right now. But the question now changes in eschatology into, "When is the millennium in relation to His second coming?"

## 1. Postmillennialism

The first American eschatology is called Postmillennialism, which was originated by Augustine. In Postmillennialism you have a first coming as the beginning of the Church age. The Church age is progressive with society gradually getting better and better and better until it is good enough for peace to be on earth. Once peace has been on earth for 1000 years, then the Lord will consider the earth good enough to come back to. This is a Progressive model. We are somewhere on the incline line (where the stick man is on Eschatology 5). We are trying to get society to be better and better and better until we get up to a utopian kind of society, and then we are going to keep it in place for 1000 years.



**Eschatology 5**

Liberation Theology and Progressive Christianity follow this model. People in this model struggle to achieve utopia. We are the Church Militant while on the incline, and we are the Church Victorious on the plateau. The Church's job in this model is to bring militant force to bear on society to create utopia.

Liberation Theology connects with Postmillennialism by seeking to eliminate the have-nots by taking away from those who have and giving it to those who have-not. What that does is create another set of have-nots because the incentive for work is lost. Because greed is the basis of materialism there are always going to be some have not's that you have to rescue by oppressing the haves. Postmillennialism, Liberation Theology, and Progressivism fit together.<sup>2</sup>

Please notice that Postmillennialism has a flaw at its beginning—this upward line (the incline on Eschatology 5). Has anybody seen an upward line in society around here? We have been looking for an upward line, and I cannot find one. Political Correctness is taking society down in morality. Just look at the growing esteem for homosexuality.

We hear from many quarters that society is getting better. Look at your theology in our culture of today. Why do you need a brand-new copyright in your theology book? Because theology is considered to be progressive so that your best theology is what is current now. What is science doing? Many think that it is lifting us up so that we can bring in a perfect society.

There is a very big distinction between the liberation theology's desire for social uplifting and the experiencing God model of joining God where He is working. That distinction is that God is in charge of the "experiencing God" model.

Where the postmillennial model is a Church-driven model, it is institutional. In the *experiencing God* model, you get on board with God. You see where He is working and get on board with Him. That is a God-directed model.

Postmillennialism is a militant Church-directed model. Militancy means that the Church uses force. Under Augustine it was the sword of the king that was used in behalf of the Church.

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<sup>2</sup> Progressivism is an evil worldview that is destroying our country. It is unmasked in the semester-long course on philosophy.

Depending upon the model adopted by the congregant, he will hear sermons and lessons through that model. Wonderful sermons and lessons may get skewed results in the congregation because they heard it through a different mind-set than through the one delivering it.

Systematic theology is not just for you to know. It is for you to teach. If your people do not get it, they become food for the wolves because theology impacts everything else. If they do not have a good doctrine of revelation and at least a half-decent hermeneutic, they are sitting ducks. There is not a chance for them in this world because everything that they learn in high school and in college and in society and on the job is going to be Existentialism's "do your own thing! Follow your heart!"

An Existentialist's truth is whatever feels right for him. The new thought is that there is no absolute truth according to a recent survey. Why would they say that? because their feelings change from day to day to day, from situation to situation. When you leave the objective Word of God, you have lost your anchor. You will be floating around going with the tides and the wind.

It is important that you teach your people these theological foundations. Take them into the doctrine of salvation. Take them into the spiritual gifts for ministry; take them into all of the doctrines.

## 2. *Amillennialism*



### Eschatology 6

In the next American model, the 1000 years is figurative, and peace is figurative. In Amillennialism a figurative amount of time means simply that it is a long period of time. The thousand years is that amount of time, figuratively speaking, between the first coming and the second coming. In this model, we are in the millennium right now.

Look around. Where is the peace? It is individual peace; it is peace in your heart. Did the Lord come in and remove the sin out of your life so that you are no longer at enmity with Him? Then you are at peace with Him. There is no peace on earth

and good will toward men as found in the utopia of Postmillennialism. The utopia in Amillennialism is in the individual heart.

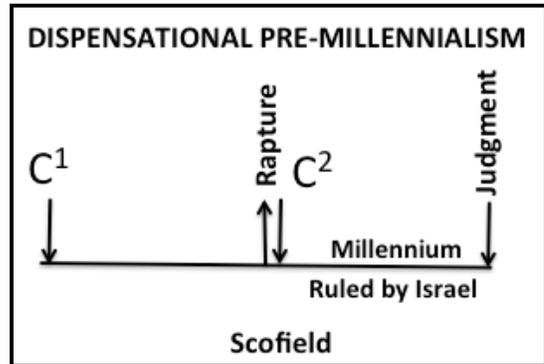
This "a" of Amillennialism is an "a" of privation which means there is no real millennium in this model. It is a figurative millennium, and it lasts from the first coming to the second coming. We connect John Calvin with this model.

## 3. *Dispensational Premillennialism*

The Dispensational Premillennialism model (Eschatology 7) has the first coming, and then that period looking forward to a rapture followed by a second coming to set up the kingdom on the earth. Following that there will be a thousand years of reign by Israel, and then the judgment. The short name is Dispensationalism.

When I came to this seminary this is what I believed, but I believe now that Dispensationalism contains an inaccuracy that I will show you later.

In Dispensational Pre-millennialism the Jews failed in their mission. They actually did, but they are still a people of God. Even the Israel that is so apostate today is a people of God. They are God's people, and we must treat them as such. America had better treat Israel right because there is going to be judgment, and how you treat Israel and the Church (God's people) is going to determine what happens to your nation. Our nation is vacillating on Israel, and we need to start treating them like God expects them to be treated.



**Eschatology 7**

This nation is also going to be judged as to how it treats you because you, too, are God's people. I will tell you something: "You do not touch God's anointed." When you mess with God's anointed, you are messing with God. There have been world empires that have been slapped down by God, *i.e.*, Roman, Greek, Persian, Babylonian, and the Assyrian Empires. All of those world empires were slapped down because they messed with God's people.

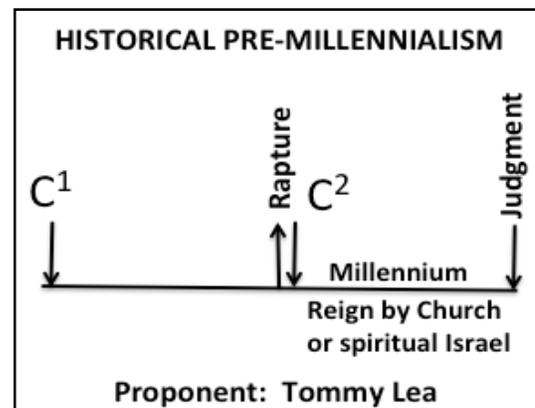
This world today is still looking to see who is going to treat God's anointed like they are supposed to be treated. That treatment is going to bring about the judgment of nations and how they treat God's anointed will determine how they fare in that judgment.

You have a re-instatement of Israel with the second coming under this dispensational model. The millennial reign will be by the nation of Israel. Christians are not really a part of that millennial reign. The distinction that you need to see in Dispensationalism is that there is a dichotomy between the nation of Israel and the Church. Thus there are three dispensations in eschatology: Israel-church-Israel. Israel was set-aside during the church age. But during the millennium, Israel will resume its chosen-of-God role in the world.

#### **4. Historical Premillennialism**

The model that I hold to is very much like the preceding model except that instead of Israel reigning in the millennium, it will be the Church or spiritual Israel.

Under the Historical Premillennialism model (Eschatology 8) the dichotomy is no longer there. There is a union between Israel and the Church. That means that the promises in the Old Testament apply to you and me. You see, Jesus completed the Old Testament, and I am in Him. The blessings of the Old Testament apply to Him, and if I am in Him they apply to me. The bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament is Jesus Christ. Jesus brings the Old Testament and the New Testament together. He is God's covenant with man, and when He brings us together, the millennial reign is by spiritual Israel (the men of God's covenant). The format of the



**Eschatology 8**

model stays the same. However the definition of the participants changes. Dean Tommy Lea of Southwestern Seminary held to this model, and I do too. I think it is a good model.

Concerning the pre-tribulation rapture, we do not know where the rapture is on this model. To be fair this is a millennial model, not a rapture model. You can hold to this model and put the tribulation and rapture in all manner of places. In American eschatology the question is when is the millennium, not when is the rapture?

The Church is going to reign with saved Israelis. All people in Jesus will reign with Jesus. Thus the Church and spiritual Israel will inherit the earth.

### **TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Okay, in order to help you assimilate this information, I want to ask you some questions that pertain to these models. You tell me what the answers are.

Which position has judgment at the second coming?

Answer: Amillennialist and Postmillennialist.

Which position would the Roman Catholic Church most likely take?

Answer: Postmillennialist.

Which position is optimistic of humanity?

Answer: Postmillennialist.

Which position is pessimistic of humanity?

Answer: Amillennialist is one of them, and pre-millennialist.

“Pre-millennialist” picks up both pre-millennial models, and so when somebody says, “I am a pre-millennialist,” they still haven’t told you which one they are in.

Which position uses a figurative 1000 years?

Answer: Amillennialist.

Which position has a rapture?

Answer: All models

Which position has an Antichrist?

Answer: All four.

Which position has a resurrection way prior to judgment?

Answer: Both pre-millennialist’s.

Which position has a literal rule of the world by Israel?

Answer: Dispensational.

Which position has a literal rule of the world by the church and spiritual Israel, i.e. all the saved?

Answer: Historical.

When is the tribulation for each position?

Answer: At various times.

Which position would Liberation Theology most likely take?

Answer: Postmillennialist.

In Postmillennialism, Christianity has to get better, and the way you do it is by liberating the oppressed. The liberation could be economic, racial, gender, or any kind, but it is for the purpose of making all equal so that there will be peace. As long as there is an unequal somewhere, the theory is that the unequal is going to be fighting to get equal; those who are better than equal will be fighting to maintain any lead that they have.

A current theologian, Gutierrez, is a Liberation Theologian who has written a great deal of history. I have outlined his three volumes of history to use as a stack pole because I minored in history. He is great in history, but his theology is not good because it is liberation theology.

Many times, Liberation Theology supports a new world order. It blends Marxism and Christianity into a system that is part of the Progressive Movement. Communism, Islam, Roman Catholicism, materialism, humanism, and atheism mix together in various ways to produce Progressivism.<sup>3</sup>

Which position would Marxists take?

Answer: Postmillennialist.

Which position would a utopian take?

Answer: Postmillennialist.

A utopian seeks to achieve utopia in history. Many people, even some in the churches today, think things are getting better. How can people think that we are getting better? I hear it all over the place that we are getting better. Like the Titanic, our economy is sinking, but the band is on deck playing songs about how we are improving. Since our culture's morality is accepting of every evil under the sun as a good, we think that we are getting better on that, too.

Concerning the tribulation, the intense tribulation is located somewhere close to the rapture—pre-trib, post-trib, or mid-trib. However for many around the world the tribulation is present and growing in intensity towards the great tribulation.