

(Reformers and Their Stepchildren) Winckler! - Part 2

by Leonard Verduin

The conflict between the Waldensians and the Reformers centered around the issue of the public cult, with the Waldensians opposing it as a compromise with the State and the Reformers seeing it as a way to establish their authority.

Scripture: John 18:20, Acts 5:29, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Galatians 1:10, Ephesians 2:20, 1 Timothy 2:1, James 4:4, 1 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Persecution", "Religious Freedom"

Description

Leonard Verduin delves into the historical struggles faced by early Christians, 'heretics,' Waldensians, and Reformers in maintaining their faith and gatherings amidst opposition from the Church and authorities. The sermon highlights the challenges of secrecy, persecution, and the clash between different religious ideologies, particularly regarding the establishment of public cults and the role of civil rulers in religious matters. Verduin emphasizes the importance of staying true to one's beliefs, even in the face of adversity and the temptation to conform to societal norms, drawing parallels between past struggles and the ongoing quest for religious freedom and authenticity.

Transcript

Just as in pre-Constantinian times the Christians were taunted for holding meetings in private, so were the "heretics" reproached for their conventicles. Quoting the Scriptural passage about "Their sound is gone out through all the earth," their foes contended that the very secrecy of these gatherings proved that these Winckler were not the good shepherds of which Jesus spoke when he said "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

When the Waldensian pastors fled for their lives, the inquisitors chided them for leaving: "Why didst thou not persist with thy sheep in Thuringia, the Mark, Bohemia, and Moravia Why comest thou not into Austria and Hungary ... ? Thou appearest nowhere, thou fleest ever, and leavest the simple poor in their tribulation. I say boldly that if thy doctrine were true, it would be easy for thee to spread it in every place. Now, forger, thou must hide thy false coin with greater caution!"¹¹ We shall hear very similar charges leveled against the believers of the Second Front.

In spite of the Church's efforts to stamp them out, the Winckler meetings went on unabated. After all, men in underground activity have ways of coming and going that baffle their enemies. They can meet, and come away, covering their tracks so adroitly that their pursuers are baffled. Frustrated and bewildered, the Church ascribed the elusiveness of the "heretic" to a league with the devil, inventing the most grotesque stories. In the words of a dignified cleric, the Dean of Notre Dame at Arras:

When the Waldensians wish to go to their conventicle they first rub an ointment on their palms . . . as well as on a stick, an ointment supplied to them by the devil. Then they straddle this stick and fly to whatever place they wish to go, over cities and forests and lakes They congregate about tables decked with wine and bread,^m Devils in the form of billy-goats, or dogs or apes are present; sometimes in the form of a man They worship these, kissing the billy-goat's derriere, with candles in their hands Then they tread on the cross, spitting on it in despite of Jesus Christ and the holy Trinity. Then they present their buttocks to the sky,ⁿ in derision of God¹²

[^m. The reference is of course to the communion table as spread by the "heretics." So much had an altar usurped the place of the Table of the Lord of authentic Christianity that when this cleric saw a table with bread and wine on it he didn't recognize it for what it was!]

[ⁿ. This item about "buttocks to the sky" may have had its origin in the fact that the "heretics" knelt when they prayed, with their cheeks pressed to the earth (we read the accusation: "praying according to their manner and rite, bowed on bent knees"; Coulton, *Inquisition. and Liberty*, p. 195). This posture of prayer, assumed in semi or total darkness, for reasons of safety, there being always the danger of a spying inquisitor looking on, looked to the uninitiated like a matter of "presenting their buttocks to the sky." The accusation seems to have been something of a cliché, a feature of the stereotyped image of the "heretic"; for we read in a medieval poem that "Twee bagynen, twee bogaerden, drie susteren ende twee lollaerden, dese dienen God al met den aerse." (Cf. *Nederlandsch Kluchtspel*, 2, 51, 51 in *Verwys en Verdam*.)]

Since the Reformers became enmeshed in the toils of a new "Christian sacralism" a collision with the Waldensians for their Wincklerism and Nicodemitism was inevitable in their day. There was no reason for conflict concerning conduct -- for the Waldensians' conduct was exemplary; but conflict touching Wincklerism was inevitable, not so much because of the duplicity involved as because of the fact that Wincklerism was an obstacle to the creation of a sacral order in the Protestant signature. To the Waldensians of Austria, the Reformers wrote:

"Your purity of doctrine and of life pleases us greatly;^o What displeases us however is the hiding of the truth and your failure to confess openly, and, that in order to escape persecution you frequent the papist temples."

[^o. Some writers, especially those of Lutheran orientation, with whom to be evangelical is to follow Luther's one-sided emphasis on the forensic item of justification by faith, have contended that the pre-Reformation "heretics" lacked an evangelical quality. On their premises this is no doubt true; but, as Professor Ebrard has it, "if one recognizes it as evangelical Christianity when salvation is said to depend on a man's personal attitude of heart toward Christ and not on some relationship to a priesthood, and where the Scriptures are taken to be the highest and only ultimate authority, then he will ascribe the evangelical quality to such . . . , in the fullest possible sense." (Cf. Ebrard, *Dogmengeschichte*, II, 323.) The present quotation indicates that the Reformers did not hesitate to ascribe to the Waldensians an orthodox evangelical quality, both as to doctrine and as to the conduct or practice.]

William Farel expressed displeasure likewise with the Waldensians' Wicklerism. Although he went on preaching tours to these "brethren of the Piedmont," as he affectionately called them, he began to rebuke them for failing to try for a public cult. In 1537 a letter of such rebuke was put in print. This material was at once translated into English and German, so that all might know what is the duty of those who have embraced the evangelical faith but live in a papist society. Six years later Viret addressed himself to the same fault. He too urged that a better way must be found than to meet in Winckler fashion; specifically, a public cult in the signature of the Reformed theology must be initiated.

John Calvin took up the matter of the evangelical and the Winckler type of gathering, in a tract written in 1543. He too lectured the Winckler for their failure to agitate for a public cult. When those for whom this was intended said he was asking too much, Calvin came back with a second tract, written in 1544. Both these tracts were printed in Latin translations in 1549. Appended to Calvin's two tracts were excerpts from the writings of Melancthon, Bucer, Peter Martyr, and two supplementary letters by Calvin himself. A Dutch translation of this anti-Winckler material seems to have been prepared early. Valerand Poullain concerned himself with the matter, writing from Strasbourg on November 28, 1544. All told, it is quite apparent that the argument for the creation of a Reformed public cult to take the place of the Catholic public cult was very much in men's minds in the early decades of the Reformation. No doubt all this writing served to steer the Reformation into the neo-Constantinian way into which it went.

The heart of Calvin's rebuke of the Wincklerpredigten addressed itself quite apparently to the fact that as long as men were satisfied with them there would never be a public cult in the signature of the Reform. For him the real issue had not been joined unless and until the sacralism of the medieval order had been replaced by a sacralism in the signature of the Reform. He wrote: "If all those whom our Lord has enlightened would with one accord have the fortitude to die and leave all behind rather than to profane themselves with the wicked superstitions then He would help them with a means not recognized now." And what is that means, one that will really put the Reform across? Calvin spells it out: "Then he will convert the hearts of Princes and their lieutenants, to the casting down of idolatries and the restoration of the true service and worship of God."¹³ What he is saying is that if the evangelicals will on the one hand remain away from the erstwhile public cult and on the other hand initiate a rival public cult, then the hand of the rulers will be forced, as it were, to make the Reform their business. That this is the direction into which the Reform. Did actually go, in all the lands into which Calvin's writings went, needs hardly be said.p

[p. Calvin's agitation for the initiation of a public cult in the Reformed signature was not without effect. In the Low Countries, where the influence of Calvin begins around the year 1550, the first bid for the establishment of a public cult came with the so-called Chanteries, nighttime singings of the Genevan Psalms in Tournay and Valenciennes (then a part of the Pays-bas) in the fall of 1561, by a procession of many hundreds of people. Against these demonstrations, the nature of which -the Regent understood only too well, very severe measures were taken. The next effort to bring into being a public cult of Protestant stamp were the hagepreken of 1566. They were the prelude to the Eighty Years' War.]

The identity of Calvin's neo-Nicodemites has never been settled among the historians. We venture to suggest that they were Restitutionists in general and Waldensians in particular. It is significant that in a letter dated. 1532 (before all the polemical writings aimed at the Nicodemites therefore) we are informed that certain Waldensians were attracted to the reform in Geneva (the first French Bible published there was paid for by the Waldensians of the Piedmont). In the letter mentioned, they refer to themselves as "Lovers of the Gospel in Payeme," and say that they are glad that in Geneva "men have left the doctrines of men and have accepted the Word of God" and they, calling themselves "the little flock of Jesus Christ"

(typically Restitutionist language), express the hope that "many nycodemysans may declare and manifest themselves."¹⁴

By no means were all in the Waldensian camp ready to go along with Geneva, however. The younger barbes[q] who had come under the spell of Geneva, were ready to do Geneva's bidding; but the idea ran into resistance from the side of the older barbes. To resolve matters a Synod was held at Chianforan, near Angrogne, in the Piedmont. William Farel was on hand to see that things went the Reformers' way. The amalgamation of the two groups was made contingent upon capitulation to Geneva in the matter of the public cult. This was to ask quite a little, for the sacralist ideology was altogether foreign to the Waldensian tradition. Other points discussed dealt with "the right of the sword," the permissibility of the oath, exclusion of false brethren by the ban -- all of them well-known items in the Restitutionist vision. The Waldensians confessed that "many Waldensians motivated by weakness or fear of persecution present their children to the priests of the Catholic Church and go to mass even though their hearts condemn these things."

[q. The Waldensians referred to their spiritual leaders as barbes, a word that means uncle in Proencal, the language in which most of the Waldensian tracts were written. The word was chosen, so it would seem, in order to contrast with the Roman Catholic custom of calling the spiritual leaders fathers. It is significant that, in some areas at least, the Anabaptists, who in so many ways fell heir to Waldensian teachings, referred to their leaders as Ohm, uncle!]

To the older barbes integration with the civil government was treason, a compromise at the point where their ancestors had fought so long and so hard. They walked out in protest when the younger leaders gave evidence of a readiness to comply. A delegation of the old guard went to the various centers of Waldensianism to lick their wounds, first to Strasbourg and then to Bohemia and Moravia.

The concessions wrung from the Waldensians at Chianforan did not yield much fruit. That part of the Waldensian camp that was not absorbed into the Reformed camp continued as heretofore. The Waldensian Church which did not amalgamate with the Reform never sought or accepted the hand of any prince or ruler. It continues to this day in the Restitutionist tradition, a free church that has never tried to be anything but "a church based on personal faith." It has never sponsored a public cult.

[r. It has been suggested that the amalgamation of French-speaking Restitutionism and the French-speaking Reform movement headed off the development of a French-speaking Anabaptism. It is a noteworthy fact that although Waldensianism was prevalent, perhaps equally prevalent, in French-speaking and German-speaking areas, Anabaptism erupted only in the latter -- where Waldensianism seems to have become extinct at about the time of the opening of the Second Front. Chianforan would then explain what became of the Waldensian heritage in French-speaking areas.]

Prior to 1545, the year Calvin's tracts were written, the Reform in Flanders had been sustained by Churches "under the Cross," that is, without government sanction. By 1560 neo-Constantinianism was making its bid for the Flemish soul. The year 1545 marks the beginning of the defeat of Restitutionism in these parts; at about this time it was becoming apparent that the future was to be in the signature of neo-Constantinianism rather than in that of Restitutionism. The Years of Wonders, as 1566 came to be known, saw the neo-sacralism, for which the writings of Calvin had cleared the way, firmly in control, with nobles and consistories in league with each other. In that year -- there is some reason to think that it was in 1565 -- there was an occult Synod held, at which a prominent issue was the matter of the public cult. The hagepreken of 1566 were the implementation of the decision to try for a public cult in the signature of

Calvinism. At this point begins the Eighty Years' War, a war in which the ancient sacralism was challenged by the new -- with final victory for the new in the year 1648.

When the Reformation crystallized in a Constantinian pattern, it left a sizable residual of Restitutionism -- which we have come to know as the Second Front. It need hardly be said that here the Winckler way of doing things remained in vogue. Wincklerism was an integral part of the Anabaptist conviction; and the slur of "Winckler" was heard repeatedly at the Second Front.

Sometimes the sole charge was that of having had part in a Wincklerpredigt. Rudolph Forster and Ulrich Bold were expelled from Basel "for having preached in Winckels ... which is contrary to the Christian Church and the ordinances." Sometimes the sole measures taken to eliminate the opposition offered by the Second Front was to forbid their Winckelpredigten. The Kirchenrat of the Palatinate, an area that was officially Reformed, advised its constituents "to obstruct with all diligence every unauthorized conventicle in houses and forests; for no matter how sound the preaching may be and the reading, such unauthorized conventicles have not only the quality of schism on the ecclesiastical level but also of sedition on the civil level and give occasion to every manner of disobedience and vice. They are in no case to be tolerated."¹⁵

One of the proof-texts which the men of the Reformed camp used, to put the Anabaptist Winckler in a bad light, was John 18:20, "I spake boldly unto the world ... in secret have I said nothing," and they obligingly translated this latter phrase with "in winckeln hette er nut geleret."¹⁶

Few matters contributed as much to the tension that developed between the two camps as did the matter of the call. The Reformers continued in the ancient tradition that one is not lawfully in office as a minister of the Gospel unless he has been commissioned by the magistrate[s] -- which of course implies that he who "runs" without being so sent is a Winckler. As a matter of fact, the definition officially given of the Winckler is as follows: "Winckler are people who without call or commission by the magistracy put themselves forward to preach, likewise those who preach in unusual and improper places."¹⁷ This was written in 1528, when the Second Front was just shaping up, and reflects the thinking of everyone of the Reformers.

[s. At the Disputation held at Emden in 1578 the Reformed clergymen who had been commissioned to refute the Anabaptists argued mightily that "Wy hebben gheene macht om Predickers te beroepen ofte aen te nemen; maer dat coemt toe der Overicheyt." The deposition of a minister was said to be the prerogative of the magistrate likewise: "Die afsettinghe en is niet by my, noch by den Dienaren, maer by der Overicheit ende by der Ghemeynte die hem aenghenomen ende inden Dienst bevesticht hebben." (Cf. the Protocol, fol. 233.) Needless to say, the Anabaptist leaders would have nothing to do with the curious tenet of "Christian sacralism" that to be legally called one must have been called by the magistrate.]

Nor was this mere theory. Any man who engaged in the activity of a "Winckler, so defined, was subject to arrest. Many an Anabaptist was put in jail for no other reason than that he had preached without such a call or authorization. We shall quote a few examples. On November 12, 1531, the mayor of a little place called Bacha informed his superior, Landgrave Philip, that on the previous night "as the gates of the city were being closed we conducted a search at places that were suspect and we found Melchior Rink (whom they call 'The Greek')t with twelve others ... gathered together; we learned that they had preached, specifically on the passage at the end of Mark,u where Jesus Christ our Savior instituted baptism, explaining it in the way customary with their sect."¹⁸ Similarly we find some Anabaptists in jail on March 15, 1537; no other reason is specified for their detention than this: "We apprehended them in the house of a citizen named Herman Cuel, and found that they had preached The Constable arrested them and

took them prisoner. We are herewith delivering them into your hands."¹⁹

[t. Melchior Rinck was known as "The Greek" because of his great proficiency in the Greek language and literature.]

[u. Mark 16:15f. was a favorite passage with the Stepchildren because in it believing goes before baptizing.]

The reader will recall that the notorious Groninger Edict, drawn up by the Reformed clergymen of that city in 1601, provides heavy fines for any and all who conduct or attend Winckelpredigten. It provides heavy fines for any who allow their premises to be used for Winckler-gatherings.

Here was a head-on collision. On the one hand were the Reformers who insisted that a man must have a commission from the magistrate and is a Winckler if he preaches without such a commission; on the other hand were their Stepchildren who were just as insistent that the magistrate has nothing to do with these matters and that he who so kowtows to the civil ruler is by that token a hireling. Among the "errors" of the Anabaptists were therefore listed the following points:

- 1) that anyone who has a true faith may preach, even if no one has commissioned him; for Christ has empowered any and every man to preach when He said 'Go, teach all nations' Mth. 28;
- 2) a call issuing from men has no valor and he who is called that way is the flunky of a ruler and a men-pleaser;
- 3) Luther, Oecolampadius, and all who teach as they do, are false prophets, men who lead people astray, devil-servers;
- 4) all who go to hear them, believe what they teach, believe and do improperly, and are not in God's but in Satan's congregation.²⁰

In this the Anabaptists were in dead earnest. The Church that had allowed itself to become identified with the State was to them a fallen Church, and all who made their peace with this fallenness were serving under the Hag of the enemy. They therefore refused to listen to any preaching except that of the Winckler -- or, as they were also called, the Leufer.^v

[v. At the trial of certain Anabaptists, held in 1533, it was reported that "Sie horen auch keine unterweisung dan wie sie von den leufern underrichtet sein" (Quellen Hesse, p. 71).]

Philip of Hesse, although he was one of the most liberal and progressive men of his day, a 'man far ahead of his times also in the matter of policy in regard to the Anabaptists, nevertheless shared with the Reformers the view that Winckler are intolerable. He gave orders, in 1531, that "whoever violates the preaching office . . . by assuming it uncalled, shall be banished forever upon pain of capital punishment if ever he returns."²¹

In the very next sentence Philip reveals the deeper reason for such rigor as well as the reason why banishment seemed to be the appropriate punishment. He put it this way: "Since such a man places himself outside the Christian community [dweil er sich der christlichen gemeine enteussert] he can not be tolerated any longer in the secular community [soll er auch under der zeitlichen gemeine nicht geduldet]." This was only consistent sacralism; if the religious community and the secular community coincide, then a

man's exodus from the former implies his expulsion from the latter. "His house, his homestead, his fields and his meadows and property appertaining thereto, are to be sold and shall be put in the same category as those of a Jew with whom also there is no inheritance right."

Not only did the neo-Constantinianism of the Reformers in their final phase dictate such rigor against the Winckler; it also resorted to compulsory attendance at the public cult. Nineteen persons, we read, ". . . have been ordered, singly and corporately, on the Saturday before, to be in Church on Sunday morning, at Herde, to listen to Christian instruction in the points in which they err, propounded by the pastor of Hersfelt as His Royal Highness' legate." Manifestly the men were just a bit too grown-up for such measures, for not one of them appeared. "Not one of them has obediently put in his appearance however; they afterwards gave as their reasons, that God does not dwell in temples made with hands."²²

The Winckler, who constituted the Second Front, pointed with considerable glee to the passage which Luther had written (in the days before the Restitutionists had consolidated their forces), in which he stated his ambition to assemble the true believers "behind closed doors." When interviewed about "gathering in fields and forests, unoccupied terrain or private homes," they shot back, "One of your own prophets, Martin Luther, wrote about that kind of meeting (in a booklet entitled *Deutsche Messe*), saying that men ought to gather behind closed doors [in einem versperten haus] to treat of the Word and ordinances of God -- but added 'I am not courageous enough to make a beginning [Ich bin noch net kun solches anzufangen] lest it be looked upon as a faction-fomenting business.' "²³

Luther's extreme dislike of the Restitutionists' Winckelpredigten may have been in part due to the fact that, in speaking thus of him, the Stepchildren were unpleasantly right. He had indeed advocated meetings behind closed doors, in groups in which only true believers were acceptable. He had been careful not to suggest that these non-public gatherings were to replace the public cult -- a thing that would be considered intolerably radical. No, he had intended these meetings to supplement the pattern dictated by sacralism. That nothing came of his fine plan is, of course, not surprising -- the combination of a Church of believers with a Church "embracing all in a given locality" is intrinsically impossible. And he had indeed said that he was not ready to organize such gatherings because he realized that it would be interpreted to be seditious. There was not much he could say to those who now threw his own earlier words in his teeth. Perhaps, as we have said, this was in part the cause for his bitterness toward the Winckler.

In any event, Luther wrote, in 1530, that:

Winckelpredigten are in no case to be tolerated These are the thieves and murderers of whom Christ spoke in John 7, persons who invade another man's parish and who usurp another man's office, a matter not bidden them but rather forbidden. And a citizen is obliged, if and when such a Winckelschleicher[w] comes to him, before he listens to him or lets him teach, to inform his civil magistrate as well as the pastor whose parishioner he is. If he fails to do this then let him know that he behaves like one unfaithful to his magistrate and that he acts contrary to his oath, and, as a despiser of the pastor whom he is supposed to respect, acts against God. Moreover he is thereby himself guilty and has become a thief and a rogue along with the Schleicher They must neither be tolerated nor listened to, even though they seek to teach the pure Gospel, yes, even if they are angelic and simon-pure Gabriels from heaven[x] Therefore let everyone ponder this, that if he wants to preach or teach let him exhibit the call or the commission that drives him to it or else let him keep his mouth shut. If he refuses this then let the magistrate consign the scamp into the hands of his proper master -- whose name is Meister Hans.²⁴ -- "Meister Hans" is a euphemism for the hangman!

[w. The German word Schleicher designates one who enters surreptitiously; a Winckelschleicher is then a person who slips into the parish of a publicly-appointed clergyman with the intention of holding a Winckelpredigt there.]

[x. Here we have, as so frequently, a left-handed testimony to the theological correctness of the content of the Winckler's message.]

All told, it would seem to be quite apparent that when the Reformers called their Stepchildren Winckler, they were throwing after them an already old name, because an old practice was being looked at from an old point of view, that of "Christian sacralism." We therefore find ourselves agreeing with T. W. Rohrich as he writes: "The sects that in Reformation times delineated themselves so sharply had their historical basis in the earlier parties, such as the Friends of God, ... the Winckler." There is a deep, if half-hidden, truth in the confession made by an imprisoned Anabaptist who said, "We have lain hidden in the bosom of the catholics."²⁵ This they had done as Nicodemites, of course. Anabaptism had been cryptic before it moved out into the open in response to the Reformers' swing to the right. Even after it had moved out into the open, Nicodemite practices continued. Menno Simons had to rebuke the practice in his day.²⁶ Nicodemite practices were part of the legacy of Restitutionism, and the Anabaptists resorted to them almost spontaneously.^y

[y. The Anabaptist, Hans Cluber, when asked why he participated in the mass, even though he did not believe in the so-called miracle of the mass, replied: "Etzlich nemens irer guter halben, das sie davon nit verjagt werden" (Quellen Hesse, p. 87f.).]

Wherever the neo-Constantinianism of the Reformers went, there the Wincklerpredigt was assailed;^z and wherever the influence of the Stepchildren was felt, there it was defended as right and proper and as the only right and proper kind of cult. The argument was even carried to the shores of the New World.

[z. We find the words "loopers" and "sluipers" used in the minutes of the Classes of the Reformed Churches of Flanders, around 1580, as derogatory appellations for persons who preached without due ordination. Especially one Michiel de Klerck seems to have given the authorities some trouble in this matter. The Classis sent Philippus de Witte, the burgomaster (who was also an elder) to confer with de Klerck. The upshot was that he was categorically forbidden to continue in his evangelistic efforts. (See H. Q. Janssen, *De Kerkhervorming in Vlaanderen*, I, 378f.)]

Roger Williams complained that "Prelatists, Presbyterians, Independents, have all struggled to 'sit down under the shadow of that arm of flesh' [the civil ruler] but that the Separatists alone could make a fair plea for the purity of Christ, in whose cause Barrow, Greenwood and Penry had been hanged." These men had ostensibly done battle for the old Second Front insight that "the true Church of Christ cannot exist where it is intertwined with the secular power." And for this doctrine they had been liquidated. For these martyrs, the Church consisted of believing men and women and of them only, whereas in the minds of those who put them to death the Church contained all in a given political unit. It was a matter of the composite society versus the non-composite society. It was a difference of conviction as to whether the Church of Christ is *Corpus Christianum* or *Corpus Christi*. It was ever the question of the rightness or the wrongness of "Christian sacralism."

Such a man as John Wesley was caught on the horns of the same dilemma on which the Reformers had been caught; only he chose the other alternative. When he was under fire for holding gatherings of the Winckler type he replied vigorously:

You ask how it is that I assemble Christians who are none of my charge, to sing psalms, and hear the Scriptures expounded? And you think it hard to justify doing this in other men's parishes, upon catholic principles I think it not hard to justify God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in an other man's parish; that is, in effect to do it at all, seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom then shall I hear, God or man? If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge ye. A dispensation is committed to me and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.²⁷

John Robinson, whose parishioners were to have much to do with the transfer of the ideas of the Second Front to the shores of the New World, had also addressed himself to the question as to how the Church of Christ is to be delineated. And he had identified himself with the view of the Second Front. Consequently the usual hardships had devolved upon him. Wrote he, for the benefit of the Constantinians who opposed him:

As for the gathering of a church . . . I tell you that in what place soever, by what means soever, whether by preaching the Gospell . . . or by reading, conference, or any other means of publishing it, two or three faithful people do arise, separate themselves from the world into fellowship of the gospell ...they are a true Church truly gathered, though never so weak, a house and temple of God, rightly founded upon the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ himself being the corner stone, against which the gates of hell shall not prevayl, nor your disgracefull invectives neyther.²⁸

As the result of the pioneering by men who shared the vision of the Second Front, it has come about that not only has the Wincklerpredigt been made legitimate in these United States, but the public cult has been ruled illegitimate. The First Amendment sees to that, with its "Congress shall make no law establishing religion, nor prohibit the free exercise thereof." The intention of this oft-misinterpreted Amendment is not to enforce a-religion or irreligion; it is to enforce impartiality in religious matters. The First Amendment does not intend to say that the State is not to "aid religion"; it intends to say that the State shall not aid a religion above other religions; it intends to say that there is to be no establishment of religion (which would be to aid a religion) nor the converse of establishment (which would be to prevent the free exercise of the rest of the religions on the scene). The First Amendment is not so much the fruitage of the French Revolution as it is the legacy of Restitutionism.

All religious gatherings in these United States are Winckler gatherings; they are all of them held off the streets and in nonpublic locales. Even the Catholic gatherings are Winckel-gatherings. We say "even the Catholic gatherings" because the Catholic Church has never officially made its peace with the American version of things; wherever it is able to do so it demands for its services the status of the public cult; it continues to be less than satisfied with the idea of a composite society.

And yet, even Catholics in America are prepared to say that the American experiment in Church-State relationships works, works to the advantage of all parties, the Catholic Church included. We point, for example, to the words of John Cogley who wrote:

We have no Church-State problem in the classic sense. Our system of separation, it seems to me, is as close as any people can come to resolving the inescapable difficulties in trying to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and God what is God's It works. The rights of the Church are scrupulously observed in the American courts; the needs of the State are recognized and honored by the Church. I cannot think of any place on earth where it is easier for a man to fulfill his religious duties than in the United States -- to give

God what is His. Nor can I think of a place where the State asks so little of what the religious man cannot give. When it does, the religious man can make a conscientious appeal and the State will listen. I said . . . it works. Where is the Church in a healthier condition?29

The benefits that accrue from the repudiation of "Christian sacralism" may be observed on every hand. Protestants share in them quite as much as Catholics do. If such repudiation works, works to the genuine welfare of the Church, then this is strong proof that it is right in principle. A candid examination of the New Testament also enforces the conviction that it is right in the Biblical light.

Which is to say that history has endorsed the views set forth in the New Testament, views for the defence of which the Stepchildren of the Reformation were pejoratively styled Winckler.

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