

Who Jesus Is: A C&MA Distinctive

Jesus Christ—The person and work of Jesus Christ is summed up in a name given to Him before birth: “Immanuel which means “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). As God, He has “life in himself,” with neither beginning nor ending, eternally the same, with all power and authority over heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). Revealed to us as God’s Son, He is eternally everything the Father is, without exception or limitation.

It is written of Him: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1). As “God with us,” He became the full revelation of God expressed fully in human form, while losing none of His characteristics as God. In the words of Scripture: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

While there are many ways to describe how Immanuel relates to people of all generations, Dr. Albert B. Simpson, founder of the C&MA, summarized “God with us” as Christ, our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.

Savior—Jesus said of Himself: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). This testimony concerning Himself was verified by the miracles He did, the absolutely impeccable life He lived, and by the historically accurate record of His resurrection. His challenge: “Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves” (John 14:11).

He is not just one way, but the only way to know God and eternal life. Once doubting, His disciples became totally committed to this: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

This biblical absolute is one of the driving forces of Alliance missions worldwide. He does not simply possess some truth, He is total truth personified: “The Word became flesh” (John 1:1). All teachings, philosophies, assertions of human source must be measured by who He is and what He says in Scripture, thereby being found true or false. He is the Lord of life and therefore can give life eternal to all who believe in Him: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This offer is open to anyone regardless of age, sex, nationality or background willing to receive Him.

Sanctifier—Sanctification is a one-two step. It means being separated

from that which is contrary to God's holy will, and separated to that which pleases Him. This quality of spiritual life is provided for as fully in salvation by Christ as is the forgiveness of sins: "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified," was Christ's prayer to the Father before going to the cross (John 17:19).

Sanctification is both a crisis and a process. While it may be part of the initial experience of salvation, the sanctified life usually begins when the believer, struggling to meet God's expectations, realizes there is no way he can do so in his own strength: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord"! (Romans 7:24).

Sanctification becomes a quality of life through a two-way relationship: the believer in Christ, and Christ in the believer: "It is because of [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30). This progress toward spiritual maturity is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, who is given by the Father so that Christ will be glorified in the believer: "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. . . . He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16: 13,14). This quality of being opens the way for God to equip the believer with power to serve Him effectively, turning others to Jesus Christ.

Healer—Salvation in Christ impacts every part of the person, including physical health and bodily well-being. Disease is a result of sin and therefore must be dealt with in the sacrifice of Christ to free the believer from sin and all its consequences: "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Christ as our Healer personifies one of the "I am's" characterizing God in the Old Testament: "I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26). This aspect of His ministry was exercised repeatedly during His life on earth, when ". . . all who touched him were healed" (Matthew 14:36).

The power to heal in His name was passed on to His followers. The first recorded miracle after Pentecost was the healing of a paralytic by Peter, when he said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6). Christ continues to heal the sick because He is the same ". . . yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

But divine healing is a blessing not to be taken for granted or automatically assumed. While His healing is available to all, His Divine will and purpose may not include healing in particular circumstances. Like all other aspects of God's perfect salvation, it is a mystery wrapped in the loving ways of a wise and good God, who does not always give when

asked, because His ways are as high above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Coming King—Christ is coming again. It is an irrefutable fact supported repeatedly in the Bible. His life on earth concluded with an event His disciples witnessed: “He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight” (Acts 1:9). It was neither the end nor the beginning of the end of His relation to earth. As the disciples stared at the sky, “suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:10-11).

Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father, waiting for that moment in time when He will come again. When will that happen? No one knows the day or hour, but one indication is: “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).