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Two Major Trends: The Church in the Twenty-first Century 廿一世紀 教會兩大趨勢

Richard J. Foster 傅士德 ■
劉榮林、陸惠珠譯

We are, most likely, in the beginning stages of a third great reformation . . . a reformation that will intensify throughout the twenty-first century. The first great reformation came in the early centuries of the church under the leadership of church fathers like Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, and it hammered out our understanding of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The second great reformation occurred in the sixteenth century under Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others and it clarified our understanding of saving faith: by grace through faith alone.

我們很可能正處於教會第三次大改革的萌芽階段，而這次改革將在整個廿一世紀日益蓬勃。教會第一次大改革發生在初期世紀，由教父們，包括伊格那丟 (Ignatius)、坡旅甲 (Polycarp)、殉道者游斯丁 (Justin Martyr)、愛任紐 (Irenaeus) 及特士良 (Tertullian) 等帶領，確立了我們對聖父、聖子和聖靈「三位一體」的認識。第二次大改革發生在十六世紀，由路德 (Luther)、加爾文 (Calvin) 及慈運理 (Zwingli) 等先驅領導的改教運動，澄清了對得救信心的理解，就是惟靠恩典因信稱義。



Desire for Sanctification

This third reformation is focusing upon sanctification. It is taking with utmost seriousness how the soul grows in grace. The love of Jesus is the magnet that is drawing people together — a love that transforms the human personality by the power of God.

Changed lives are the hallmark of this reformation. The potentialities of change as well as its limits are all being explored extensively. How we are formed in God, conformed to Jesus, and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit is being studied and experienced carefully . . . prayerfully. Its growing theological rigor will increasingly interact with the complementary disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and medical research. I expect this reformation to become vastly deeper and broader as the century progresses.

Harvest of Christian Mission

The twenty-first century will witness one of the greatest harvests of Christian mission ever. I concur with John Paul II that, in the new century, we will see a “new springtime” for the gospel message. Much of the energy for this will be centered outside the West. Africa, south of the Sahara, will become *the* Christian continent — that is if they can successfully overcome the triple threat of Muslim suppression, the AIDS epidemic, and internal tribal wars. The Americas south of the U.S. border will show the world how evangelism is really done. Both Africa and Latin America will intensify and expand their evangelistic efforts in the West.

The really pivotal continent is Asia. Throughout the twenty-first century Asia will be the rising culture, no doubt about that. The real question is whether the Christian witness in Asia is strong enough to ride the rise of Asian culture, or whether Buddhism — which is also a missionary religion — will win the day. I believe the Christian witness *is* strong enough. Chinese Christians have suffered tremendously and are deeper and stronger for it. They will teach the rest of us how to live for God. Korea (south and north, although the north has yet to experience its day of divine visitation) will teach the entire Christian world how to pray. And the signs of spiritual vitality in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, India, and numerous other places are so encouraging that I believe the twenty-first century will be viewed as “the great century” of advance for Christ and his kingdom. Let us pray that it may be so. ☪

渴慕成聖

教會面臨第三次大改革的重點是成聖。靈命如何在恩典中長進，成為首要關注的問題。主耶穌的愛就是吸引人的力量，這愛藉著神的大能轉化人的個性。

生命得改變是這次改革的標記。生命可被改變的程度和限度，成為備受廣泛探討的課題。我們以審慎的態度和禱告尋求的心來研究和經歷，如何在父神手中被塑造，如何效法耶穌和如何被聖靈的能力更新轉化。這種日趨嚴謹的神學探索，將逐漸促進與各門相關學科（包括心理學、社會學、人類學和醫學研究等）相互交流的機會。隨著本世紀的前進，我預期這次改革將出現更深更廣的發展。

宣教豐收

廿一世紀將見證宣教史上其中一個最大的豐收。我同意現任教宗若望保祿二世的看法：在這個新世紀我們將會看見福音信息有如春臨大地。這新一波的福音廣傳主要發生在西方世界以外的地方。非洲，尤其是撒哈拉沙漠以南地區，將成為基督教領域；當然，先決條件是克服當地的三重威脅：來自回教勢力的壓制、愛滋病蔓延及部族戰爭。至於美洲方面，在美國邊境以南各地的佈道工作，將可成為全球福音事工的典範。此外，非洲和拉丁美洲將加強和擴展他們在西方的佈道工作。

然而，關鍵地區還是亞洲。毫無疑問，在整個廿一世紀，亞洲文化將會日趨興旺。問題是基督徒在亞洲的見證，是否足以在振興的亞洲文化中乘風破浪，抑或讓同樣熱衷於傳教的佛教佔上風。我相信基督徒的見證是夠強的。中國大陸的基督徒經歷過極大的苦難，他們的生命因而更深化和剛強，可以教導活在安逸中的我們怎樣為主而活。韓國（包括南韓和北韓，儘管北韓至今尚未體驗神的臨在）將教導普世基督徒學習禱告的功課。此外，菲律賓、星加坡、馬來西亞、印度及其他亞洲地區的信徒所彰顯的活潑靈命，也是令人振奮不已。因此，我相信廿一世紀將被視為傳揚基督和擴展神國的偉大世紀。讓我們為此切切祈求。 ☪

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Adapted and reprinted with permission from “Heart-to-Heart: A Pastoral Letter from Richard J. Foster,” November, 1999.