What Is Corruption?

Dr. Justo L. González

Dr. Catherine G. González

Berry College
Rome, Georgia
October 31, 1991

What Is Corruption?

Justo: We have been asked to speak about the Reformation which took place in the XVIth century. And it is appropriate that we should do so today, for October 31, the day on which Martin Luther is said to have nailed his famous ninety-five theses to the Wittenberg door, is usually counted as the date on which the Reformation began. Today, almost five hundred years after the event, practically all are agreed that a reformation was needed in the church, even though some would have wished that it had taken another direction. History books tell us that there was corruption, that ecclesiastical positions were bought and sold, that the prestige of the leaders of the church had waned, and that therefore a reformation was very much in order.

Yet, if I had been living in Europe on October 30, 1517, the day before the Reformation is said to have begun, I probably would have felt no need for reformation. In fact, I would have said that things were going pretty well. Except for the Jews, just about everybody in Europe was a Christian. The papacy had gone through a turbulent period in which two or even three people at the same time had claimed to be the legitimate pope. It had also gone through a period of exile in Avignon, during which it had been a toy of French policy. But all that was left behind. The pope was again in Rome, and nobody disputed his legitimacy. Furthermore, the pope was a power to be reckoned in Italy, and there was even the possibility that eventually all of Italy would be unified under papal leadership. Meanwhile, Rome was a center of culture and the arts. The best artists of the time flocked to Rome, to work for the church. There was also an

extensive building program going on, which included plans to complete the beautiful and enormous Cathedral of St. Peter. Corruption there was, but it was hidden under a vast mantle of success.

Catherine: Often when we think of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, we view it as a matter of corruption in the church that obviously needed to be changed. Therefore, a reformation occurred. We may well realize that the Reformation was not simply an internal matter of the church. There were secular forces at the time that were critical helps or hindrances to this process of reformation. We know, therefore, that we need to go outside the church for at least part of the explanation for the success of the venture.

But tonight, we would like to look at the event a bit differently. Was it simply a matter of corruption, or could we look at the Western church in the late Middle Ages and say that the corruption occurred at least in part because the structures of the church that had worked for several centuries were unable to carry out their proper functions? Enormous changes in the social situation had affected the church itself even though, technically, it had remained the same. If one had written out an organizational chart of the church, it might appear that nothing had changed. Yet, in reality, the heart of the church's role in the society had been dramatically altered.

The church had a great deal invested in the structures that it had. They were successful. Money was coming in. People were requesting the services of the church. Why change what still worked?

Yet the structures were not doing what they were created to do. The mission of the church was hampered and had been for about two centuries. Political leaders were now quite independent of the church and in many ways controlled the church in their areas. The rise of a new money economy had brought into the heart of the church itself the buying and selling that were at home in the marketplace. People came to the church to obtain what the church offered in much the way they would go to a shopkeeper for the specialized services offered there. The structure remained the same, and yet it was, in reality, quite changed.

Perhaps it was precisely the unchanged structures and the apparent success that created an illusion of security in the midst of increasing irrelevance. The church seemed to stay the same as the culture shifted. But that is never the case. When there are dramatic shifts in the culture, any institution within it, including the church, may well find itself playing a new role, one that it does not wish to play, if it is not cognizant of what is happening. It may have to alter considerably in order really to play the same role in the new culture that it did in the old.

Furthermore, irrelevant institutional structures are probably far more open to corruption because they have no clear way to determine, and little interest in discovering, how well they

are functioning. If they are successful in the sense of providing prestige or income, there is even less reason to be critical of them. Such irrelevance may also open the door for people who have little concern for the mission of the institution to hold power within it. That readily sets the stage for corruption, for using the structures for one's own gain and not for the mission they originally had.

What we wish to do tonight is to sketch briefly some of the major shifts in the society that, in hindsight, we can see had really altered the situation of the church in the late medieval society, even though the church at the time might not have realized it. Then we would like to turn to the present. Are churches in our culture in the midst of dramatic shifts that we have not taken into account? Are we too blinded by the fact that the institutions of the churches are going on, and are apparently relatively successful? Have the churches become irrelevant to the society? Are church institutions readily corrupted for private interest and gain? Do we also need to take a hard look at the situation around us to see whether the church has really been altered without its awareness? Are we ripe for a new upheaval that could parallel the reformation of the sixteenth century? Are we in the midst of one that has indeed already begun?

Justo: What we would like to propose in essence is the following: Corruption does not just happen. Nor is it that people invent corrupt institutions. In the field of animal and plant life, corruption takes place when a living organism dies. Likewise, in the life of the church,

corruption takes place when institutions and practices that originally made sense become irrelevant. The institutions seek to preserve themselves even after their reason for existence is no longer there. They resist change even when changes in society-at-large make change mandatory—such is the nature of institutions. They particularly resist change when their irrelevance and even their failure can be hidden behind a smoke screen of apparent success. It is when that happens that corruption sets in, as it does in the case of a dead animal.

There are many aspects of church life that one could examine with these questions in mind. Let us begin with the matter of how the church was organized and how leadership was appointed. In the very early centuries of the church, leadership had been named by election. Christians in a city would elect, for instance, the person whom they wished to have as their bishop. The election was then confirmed by other bishops in neighboring areas. Thus, a balance was kept, so that the church in each place could elect its own leadership, and yet the church was not fragmented as a result.

Then, in the fourth century, partly through the conversion of the emperors and the higher classes in society, a mass conversion began so that soon practically everybody in a city was a Christian, and being a bishop was a rather prestigious matter. Eventually, elections for bishops became an occasion for riots. In the early Middle Ages, in Rome and also in other major cities, two or three powerful families fought each other to make certain that one of their members was elected bishop. At times a mob, either paid or stirred up by a political faction, would break

into the church when an election was taking place and force their own candidate on the rest of the city.

In response to that, a centralized system was developed for making ecclesiastical appointments. Some devout and zealous popes who saw the manner in which the old system was corrupted developed a new system for the appointment of bishops, and even a system for electing popes through a college of cardinals. This was indeed a reformation in structure, and it worked fairly well for a time.

But then other forces came into play. As Catherine has already mentioned, the monetary economy made its way first into the society at large and then into the church. Clearly, if everything in society works on the basis of money, the church also needs money in order to function. Thus, a very efficient system was developed to raise funds and to pay for the expenses of the clergy. This system included having people pay for the services of the church and then having parishes contribute to the expenses of the diocese.

For a long time it had been customary that those who wished to expiate for their sins, thus avoiding a long stay in purgatory, do so by making an offering to the church. Now, it made sense to ask those who wished to hold a position in the church to show their commitment by means of a similar donation. Eventually, a system was developed, so that ecclesiastical positions were sold very much in the way that Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises are sold today. The value of a

position depended on how much income it could produce. And part of that income was produced by selling sub-franchises and other services. Those who saw how the system of ecclesiastical appointments had been corrupted called this "simony," after Simon Magus, the character who appears in Acts 8 and who tried to buy the power to confer the Holy Spirit.

But in truth most did not see the corruption until it was grossly abused. For the longest time, most Christians simply took for granted that this was the way the church had always functioned; and if they saw any problem with it, they figured others knew better. Even John Calvin, the great reformer of Geneva, was able to finance his studies on the basis of what was then called a "benefice," that is, an ecclesiastical position whose income he collected and then paid somebody else to go do the work he was not doing. And Calvin was well on the way to reformation before he realized the corruption that this implied and gave up his benefice.

Are there parallels today? One comes immediately to mind. In my own United Methodist Church, there is a thing called the "itinerant system." What this means is that ministers are assigned to churches, rather than being called by churches, and that they usually remain in a particular church for a limited time and are then appointed elsewhere. When the system began, it was a means of making certain that each minister was appointed to the church that most needed him—I say "him" because at that time all ministers were men. Also, the nation was expanding westward—it was doing so at the expense of the native inhabitants of these lands, but that is a subject for another day. In that westward expansion, new churches were being founded constantly, and the itinerant system made it possible for Methodist ministers to

be always at the very frontier, responding to new needs as they arose. The system was harsh. Every year ministers had to pack all their belongings and their families and go to Annual Conference not knowing where they would be appointed next. But it worked, and that was one of the reasons why Methodism was so successful in its expansion during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The system worked, among other things, because all ministers made approximately the same salary—which in any case wasn't much. It also worked because there were few extremely large and prestigious churches, so that a minister's prestige was not inordinately involved in whatever appointment he received.

To this day, the itinerant system is one of the foundational elements in United Methodist polity. In theory, the system has changed little. It has become more humane, so that ministers and their families know where they are to be appointed before they go to Annual Conference, and churches and ministers are consulted before appointments are made.

But in fact, the system has changed drastically, not so much because of these adjustments, but because the society has changed. For two centuries, the church has existed in a society in which a person's worth is increasingly measured by how much money he or she makes, and by how much responsibility is involved with the job. A successful career in the society at large is one in which a person makes more money each year and moves upward along the organizational

ladder. Partly due to the influence of the society, churches began paying their pastors different salaries, according to how much they could afford and how much seemed to be required by the law of supply and demand for the kind of pastor they wished, so that today there are very substantial differences in salary from church to church. And this in turn has brought about significant changes in how the itinerant system works. Normally, pastors are no longer appointed solely on the basis of what church needs them most. It is necessary to take into account whether an appointment will imply a cut or an increase in salary and how much. A pastor's career becomes very similar to that of a business executive, moving to ever-higher paying and bigger jobs. A move that is not in that direction is considered a failure. As a consequence, the ablest pastors tend to end up in the larger and richer churches, which probably need them least, while the small, struggling churches, those that probably need the best pastors, are often left with those the larger churches don't want.

In theory, the system has not changed. It is still an itinerant system, with pastors being appointed by the bishop and moving periodically from one church to another. But I suspect that three or four centuries from now an historian writing about the life of the church in the United States in the late twentieth century will find it difficult to understand why we become so scandalized by the buying and selling of ecclesiastical positions in the late Middle Ages and are not equally scandalized by the manner in which the itinerant system has been corrupted.

There is not much difference between pastors buying churches and churches buying the pastors they want.

Catherine: Justo has spoken of the United Methodist Church. Even without the tradition of itinerancy, my own church, the Presbyterian, could point to very similar situations in terms of pastors' salaries and the parallel between the career path of pastors and of business executives in general. I expect every denomination could say the same.

There is another issue. One of the strong elements of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century was the development of strong education among the laity as to the character of the Christian faith and the Christian life. The movable type printing press had been invented some seventy-five years before, and universities had been in existence for more than two centuries. But both the press and the university had served those few who read Latin. It was one of Luther's great contributions that he began using the press for the production of materials in the vernacular—catechisms, Bibles, hymnbooks, and other works—for the education of the common laity, both adults and children.

We cannot fault the church in the Middle Ages for not educating Christians clearly as to the content and significance of their faith, leaving the door open to simplistic and superstitious forms. In the fourth century the church had gone from a relatively small percentage of the population to the vast majority. This dramatic change occurred within about a century. In

addition, in the West, the various Germanic and other tribes that invaded and conquered the western part of the Empire became Christians rapidly and in large numbers. Whereas in its earliest centuries the church had required several years of study and examination of lifestyle before people could come into the church, such preparation was no longer possible. There were not enough teachers; there were enormous language barriers so that teachers could not be sent easily from one area to another. Latin had been a necessity both in education and in much of worship in a situation in which after the invasions, local languages were so diverse that they had to be transcended in order for universities to function or for the church to be unified beyond an extremely small area. In this same period, there were few structures for the training of clergy, so that the need greatly exceeded the supply of well-educated pastors.

By the centuries immediately before the Reformation, vernacular languages had coalesced into sizable groups. It would have been possible to improve the level of education, both for the clergy and for the laity. However, the corruption that has already been mentioned meant that education was generally used to get ahead in the church, not to serve the congregations. The least educated clergy were left there. There was no move to alter the old structures to move into a very new setting or take advantage of new opportunities to solve old problems.

For Protestants, the worship service itself became a means of education. Education for clergy was stressed. On the Roman Catholic side, after the Protestants began, great changes were made in the education of clergy as well. Catechisms were also employed for educating the laity.

New structures had to be created by churches on both sides of the Protestant divide in order to deal with the critical issue of Christian education that could have been tackled a century or more earlier.

We might assume that things are far different now. No one uses Latin. Churches stress Christian education. But all is not well. And now it is the Roman Catholics rather than the Protestants who are taking the lead in finding new structures to deal with the problem.

The level of clear understanding of what the church teaches, the content of Scripture, the character of the Christian life is really quite low, not only in our increasingly secular society but also in many Protestant churches. Perhaps it is because we have for generations assumed that almost everyone in the society was a Christian and therefore did not need any education. Perhaps it is because the overwhelming individualism of our society has made us think that the nature of the Christian faith is a private, personal matter. Whatever we think it is, is fine. We are as able to combine our own cultural superstitions with Christian faith as any peasant in the Middle Ages. We have the technological means to do better education, but churches evidently have not done it, judging from all the surveys of actual knowledge of the faith and of the Bible that have been made. It may again be a matter of old structures that simply keep on going, in spite of the fact that they are not doing the task.

The major reason they are not doing the task is because the churches in the West have not really had to do all of their own education since the fourth century. When the whole society was assumed to be Christian, then one could expect that the schools, the media, the culture generally to be part of the educational structure that would reinforce Christian values and teachings. That was generally true until quite recently. But we have moved into a far different time. In Europe and North America, the culture is clearly quite secular. For the first time since the early centuries, the church must find ways to do all of the education of its members and without a supporting culture. One or two hours each week will not do. Many denominations are aware of the problem but have not figured out a way to deal with it, perhaps because they fear alienating members who do not care to be told they need to be educated.

There are exciting experiments going on. Many of these have been created by the Catholic Church, particularly in Latin America. One is the small groups that meet for Bible study and discussion of the meaning of the faith in their daily lives. A second is the return to the early church practice of requiring some solid time of study and preparation before admitting people to the church. Latin has also ended as the uniform language of worship, and now there are services of worship that are quite contemporary in their form and language. Meanwhile, many Protestant churches—especially those that came out of the sixteenth century reformation—seem to have settled down into nineteenth century patterns of education and worship and are having a difficult time getting out of them. The more recent Pentecostal groups, on the other hand, are often far more readily adaptable to the modern world.

Why are mainline Protestant groups so unable to change? Partly because they are trying to maintain the patterns and structures that made them successful. Partly because they still seem successful. They may not be growing too much—most are in fact losing members; but the machinery still works. Salaries and mortgages are still paid. People still come to church. But the situation has changed radically. The past patterns of education and worship will not work in the same way. The Roman Catholic Church has had to adapt to the new setting, for reasons we shall mention later. It has come to the conclusion that the church is really in a mission situation wherever it is, in Europe as well as in Africa, in North America as well as in Asia. Even where people assume they are Christians, as in Latin America, they need to be evangelized to see the full meaning and relevance of the faith. Protestants in our country, on the other hand, still assume that almost everyone grows up a Christian, and it would, therefore, be insulting to assume otherwise. No one needs education in the matter, except children. And children had best be in Sunday School, because worship is not geared for much participation and is essentially verbal in a way that children could not appreciate. Many Protestants do not realize the dramatic shift in the culture of North America and Europe—areas that once were strongly related to the church but are now increasingly secular. The structures and approaches to education and worship that were helpful in a time when the church was a dominant institution in the society will not work in a time of the marginalization of the church. Like the Roman Catholic Church, mainline Protestants will increasingly need to see the world they live in as a setting for mission.

Justo: Again, institutions that once worked, but that have been left behind by the times, are most subject to corruption and most in need of reformation.

Take another example. An element in medieval Christianity that Protestants have a hard time understanding is monasticism. Some of us have been taught to look at monasticism itself as a corruption of Christianity. But the truth is that throughout the history of the church, monasticism has played a very important role.

Some three centuries before the Protestant Reformation, monasticism itself had been reformed. This was the work of leaders such as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. It was precisely the time when the money economy was making its way into western Europe. Cities were growing. The old parish system, with a priest in charge of a certain geographic area, no longer worked as well in a society in which people were concentrating in the cities. So, the Franciscans and Dominicans developed a different sort of monasticism. It was not monasticism to be lived out in a monastery, but monasticism to be used in preaching and service to the people wherever they went. Franciscans and Dominicans went from city to city, wherever they were needed, responding to the needs of the people. And, partly as a protest against the dehumanizing tendencies of the monetary economy, they stressed poverty, and living by alms.

In a few generations, there were thousands and thousands of Franciscans and Dominicans, working not only in every city and town of Western Europe, but also in the universities, and even in places as distant as Peking in China.

Then things changed. The borders to the east were closed by the Turks. The population in cities was decimated by the plague. The orders that had been founded in the thirteenth century began to lose their relevance. Franciscans and Dominicans began to spend more time in their monasteries. Those who were serving as professors in universities no longer discussed the burning issues of their time but tended to be concerned with obscure and subtle matters of little relevance. And corruption set in. By the time that Luther came around, monasteries and convents were places, not only for devout monks and nuns, but also for the illegitimate children of royalty and the nobility, who were placed there to get them out of the way, and who often led lives of scandalous luxury and comfort. Indeed, by the time Luther came about, the one place in all of Western Europe where monasticism was least in need of reformation was the Iberian Peninsula—Spain and Portugal. Why? Because they were the major colonizers of the New World, and here in the Western Hemisphere they had found a new, demanding, field for mission, which again made their initial stress on poverty and their ability to go wherever they were needed relevant to the situation.

Can we draw a parallel between this and the late twentieth century? We do not have monastic orders in Protestantism; and even among Roman Catholics in the United States, the monastic

orders play only a secondary role. But some two hundred years ago, late in the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth century, we began to develop missionary structures to respond to the challenges of the time. Remember that the nineteenth century was the time of the greatest colonial expansion the world has ever seen. British and French colonial interests practically carved up the world, with lesser portions falling to the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Italy. This is not the place to discuss the negative and the positive results of this development. In any case, the fact is that, joined to that colonial expansion, Western Christianity, and in particular Protestant Western Christianity, enjoyed a period of unprecedented missionary expansion.

To cope with the challenge of the times, the churches developed a host of missionary societies, agencies, boards, etc. Missionaries from Western Europe and the United States flooded the world. There was a time when there were more than 10,000 Protestant missionaries in China alone.

Today we may, and we should, criticize much that was done at the time. In particular, we must take a more critical stance towards the degree to which the churches allowed their missionary enterprises to be confused with colonial and neocolonial interests.

Yet, one thing is certain: The missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century succeeded. Today there is hardly a corner of the globe where there is not a Christian church. And that is mostly

the result of the missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century. The unexpected success of the missionary movement, and the new situation that has made the traditional forms of that movement obsolete, can be illustrated by the recent history of China. Indeed, when after several decades of very little communication with the outside world, a new openness developed, we were surprised that three decades after the expulsion of the last Western missionaries, there were more Christians in China than there had been at the height of the missionary presence. And the church has continued to grow rapidly.

The very success of the enterprise made many of its structures obsolete. One can no longer talk about sending missionaries to convert Uganda, for instance—where there is one of the fastest growing churches in the world—the same way one spoke a hundred years ago. And yet, most denominations still cling to the structures and agencies that were founded and organized at the heyday of Western colonial expansion. Oh, yes, we have renamed them. We have given each of them a dozen new functions. But we have also made certain that, to a large extent, they remain essentially the same. We cannot afford to change them radically because they are still the biggest fund-raisers, and many of them have enormous endowments. That is one of the reasons why in practically every denomination today one hears complaints about the missionary bureaucracy. There are many other reasons, most of them not justified. But this one at least is justified. The agency has become largely irrelevant, and we seek to make it relevant by an adjustment here and an adjustment there, or perhaps even with total reorganization, when what we in fact need is new structures to respond to new situations.

Catherine: One of the external factors that had a great influence on the development of the Protestant churches in the sixteenth century was the rise of nationalism. Not only did it allow the separation from the Roman Catholic Church to take place, but it also gave the pattern for Protestant church structures. Whereas the Roman Catholic Church had been formed in the midst of the Roman Empire and had developed a structure parallel to that imperial government, Protestant churches assumed that church structures ended at national borders. The same pattern continues today. For almost all Protestant churches in this country, there may be membership in associations at a world level, but the highest decision-making body is at the national level.

This difference in structure between Protestants and Catholics makes an enormous difference at the moment. If it is true that the traditional areas of the church's strength are now increasingly secular and the church has to learn how to live in this new situation, how better to learn than from those churches that were formed out of the missionary movement in areas that generally never had the social support that Western churches did. It is in such areas that the Christian churches are growing rapidly, even as they are shrinking in the traditional areas.

When the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church met in the 1960s, it met as a world-wide church, more than half of the bishops coming from the Third World. Their influence was profound. The understanding of how the church needs to carry out its mission, educate its

members, conduct its life changed radically, precisely because of the presence of these bishops. Worship did become a means of education and participation, as we have already mentioned.

Because they were limited by natural borders, Protestant churches in this country have far less contact with the reality of the church outside of this country. There is little pressure to see new possibilities, and, therefore, many denominations are paralyzed by fear of leaving the old ones.

In addition, without the direct connection of Christians here with Christians—even Protestant Christians—in other countries, it is far easier for Protestants to combine values and opinions that stem from our own nationalism with those of the Christian gospel, doing so without much critical thinking. If the highest decision-making body of our churches cut across national lines, that would be far less of a possibility. It would also be very frightening to many church members. A sample of that fear is the reaction of many church members here to the World Council of Churches that does represent that global reality.

When we speak of the Christian Church at the end of the twentieth century, it is this global reality of which we must speak—a church that is growing in absolute numbers and includes about one-third of the human race; a church that is usually poor, often struggling against some of the powers that be in order to carry on its life and mission, frequently producing leaders whose words carry weight far beyond the church because of the witness that has been made at serious personal risk; whose seminaries are often overflowing with young people who make

great sacrifices to attend and who will provide strong leadership for the next generation—often having been chosen to attend seminary from several times the number that could be accepted.

Worldwide there are missionaries being sent all over the world, but no longer mainly from North American and European churches. These younger churches send missionaries, even when there is no great money to support such missions. And these missions are part of the reason for the continued growth of the church in the Third World.

That is not the reality of the church here. In world terms, we are very rich churches, financially. Even in our dwindling state, we have great resources for personnel and programs. But our seminaries are barely holding their own, even though there are many new programs not geared to the traditional degree leading to ordination. Those who apply to seminary are not necessarily the strongest leaders in our society, as a whole, and recruitment for the ministry will increasingly become an issue as retirement age approaches for high numbers of present clergy, those who felt the call to ministry at the height of the growth of our churches in the 1950s.

The churches in North America and Europe are now a minority, and our problems are not the great problems of the church worldwide. But what the rest of the church worldwide has learned could benefit us greatly, if we saw our own situation clearly. If our churches remain nationally organized, we shall be unable to tap that resource readily.

And so things go on as before—but with a changed culture surrounding the church; they are not really "as before." Many of our structures are ripe for corruption.

Justo: If it is true that the growing irrelevance of church structures is making a new reformation necessary, there is one final question that must be asked: Where will that reformation come from? Here again, if one looks at the history of the church, it is clear that the church structure has always thought that reformation comes from the center out—or, as it was said in the Middle Ages, from the head to the body. But it is also clear that the most radical reformations usually move in the opposite direction: from the edge to the middle. In the book of Acts, what creates new openness in the church of Jerusalem is the mission to the Gentiles; the reformation does not come from the original twelve, much as we would like to think otherwise, but from others who are added later and who actually stand at the margin of the original community. And in the sixteenth century, the Reformation did not start, as many had hoped, in Rome, nor in the University of Paris. It started in what amounted to a hick town in semi-barbaric Germany.

The same is happening in our day. The great reformation of the twenty-first century has already begun. One can even see signs of it. But do not look for such signs in our national denominational headquarters nor in our large, high-steepled churches. Look for signs of Reformation in small groups of Christians, thousands upon thousands of those groups, which

gather periodically all-over Latin America to study the Bible, to pray, and to see what their faith has to do with their everyday life. Look for signs of the reformation of the twenty-first century in the store-front churches in the Bronx that, in spite of having been taught that the Gospel has nothing to do with political and social issues, are taking the lead in the struggle against drugs and against poverty. Look for the Reformation of the twenty-first century in the churches of China, coming out of a long experience of silence and persecution. Look for signs of the reformation of the twenty-first century in your own local church, if it really seeks to be relevant in its own situation. And above all, look for signs of the reformation of the twenty-first century in yourself, in those stirrings of faith within you, of faith that you have received from the church but which now makes you dissatisfied with the way the church is. For, if the reformation of the sixteenth century started in a small university town in Germany, who is to say that the reformation of the twenty-first century will not find its roots in a small college town amid the mountains of North Georgia?