

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IN AN APOCALYPTIC WORLD

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"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."
(Matthew 24:32-35 ESV)

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

If you have been paying attention to current events, especially to economic news and news related to asymmetrical military preparedness (i.e., cyber warfare and financial warfare), you may have become aware that we live in quite perilous times. Indeed, if you've been keeping up with the news in these areas you've heard some of the financial figures so many times, they've probably lost some of their impact on you.

Just to refresh your memory and to set the stage for the rest of this paper here are a few economic facts that should be kept in mind:

- The national debt will be in excess of **\$20 trillion dollars** by the time President Obama leaves office in January of 2017.
- The 2015 interest paid on the national debt was **\$229 Billion dollars** which will continue to increase as the national debt grows. According to The Heritage Foundation a child born in 2016 will be burdened with his share of the debt to the tune of \$ 42,000 dollars. Interest on the debt is the fastest growing area of federal spending outstripping Medicare and Social Security. The Fed is already raising interest rates and this will result in further increases in the monies owed on the interest of the national debt. Forty cents of every dollar the federal government spends is obtained by additional borrowing with much of that debt being held by unfriendly nations like China and Russia.
- The unfunded liabilities (mostly for entitlement programs) is a staggering and terrifying **\$ 225 Trillion dollars.**

- Economies in Europe, China, and Japan have already instituted **negative interest rate policies** (NIRP) that essentially charge people (read tax) for keeping their money in the bank and the U.S. may well follow suit in the not too distant future.

If, for some inexplicable reason, you believe that this level of debt is in any way sustainable, well, I've got a bridge in Brooklyn I'd love to sell you! Politicians of both parties have been kicking the proverbial financial "can" down the road respecting the above listed issues for decades. No one has offered a real solution going forward to address these problems.

What could result from this negligent abuse of our national wealth? Many knowledgeable writers concur that the resulting crash of global financial markets could well make the Great Depression of the 1930's seem like a walk in the park, and could possibly result in nothing less than a global economic and possible societal collapse. Many such writers also insist that an economic collapse of the global economy is simply unavoidable at this point.

If the economy isn't sufficient to get your attention, then consider the work of Dr. Peter Vincent Pry, Executive Director, EMP Task Force on National and Homeland Security and the findings of the Congressional Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack, issued in 2004, on the same day that the Congressional 911 report was issued (This was the reason no one noticed the EMP report.). A second Commission Report affirmed and expanded its findings in a report in 2008.

Both Dr. Pry and the Congressional Commission concluded that a single nuclear device detonated between 200 - 300 miles above the earth's surface over the central United States would essentially destroy all electronic devices needed to maintain this nation's three power grids, render useless all post-1980 automobiles, destroy all cell phones, and virtually every unshielded computer and electronic device this society depends on to function as a modern society. The Congressional Commission estimated that **up to 90 percent of the U.S. population would die** from the resulting starvation, thirst, and violent collapse of our unaware and unprepared society. An economic collapse is a nightmare, but an EMP attack is a true horror show!

Dr. Pry writes:

"Yet the threat of a catastrophic blackout is not merely theoretical, but real:

On April 16, 2013, North Korea flew its KSM-3 satellite on the optimum trajectory and altitude to evade U.S. radars and missile defenses and apparently practiced a surprise nuclear EMP attack on the United States.

On the same day, parties unknown used AK-47s, the favorite assault rifle of rogue states and terrorists, to attack the Metcalf transformer substation that services San Francisco and the Silicon Valley. Jon Wellinghoff, the former chairman of the U.S. agency responsible for grid security, and the U.S. Navy SEALs warn that Metcalf is probably a dry run for a

future large-scale attack on the national electric grid.

In July 2013, a North Korean freighter that had transited the Gulf of Mexico was discovered, while undergoing inspection in the Panama Canal for smuggling illegal drugs, to have two nuclear capable SA-2 missiles, mounted on their launchers, hidden in the hold under bags of sugar. Although the missiles were not nuclear armed, the incident demonstrates North Korea's capability to use a freighter in U.S. coastal waters to launch a nuclear EMP attack anonymously, in order to escape U.S. retaliation.

On October 27, 2013, the Knights Templar, a criminal drug cartel, blacked-out Mexico's Michoacan state and its population of 420,000, so they could terrorize the people and paralyze the police. The Knights, cloaked by the blackout, entered towns and villages and publicly executed leaders opposed to the drug trade.

In July 2014, according to press reports, a Russian cyber-bug called Dragonfly infected 1,000 electric power plants in Western Europe and the United States for purposes unknown, possibly to plant logic bombs in power plant computers to disrupt operations in the future.

On January 25, 2015, terrorist attacked transmission towers and blacked-out 80 percent of Pakistan, a nuclear weapons state.

On March 31, 2015, a mysterious nationwide blackout temporarily plunged into chaos Turkey, a NATO member and important U.S. ally, reportedly from a cyber attack by Iran.

In 2015 the White House issued a draft executive order acknowledging that natural EMP from a geomagnetic super-storm is a potentially catastrophic threat to the nation. A NASA report (July 23, 2014) warns that on July 23, 2012, Earth narrowly missed experiencing a geomagnetic super-storm that could have collapsed electric grids worldwide, and put at risk the lives of billions. NASA estimates that the likelihood of a catastrophic geo-storm happening over the next decade is 12 percent." (*Blackout Wars: State Initiatives to Achieve Preparedness Against An Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Catastrophe*, Dr. Peter Vincent Pry, Task Force on National and Homeland Security, 2015, pp. 11-12).

Since Dr. Pry's book was published, North Korea launched and orbited another satellite on **February 7, 2016**, again in an orbit of optimal position to launch an EMP attack if a nuclear device is on-board. On **July 9, 2016**, North Korea launched a nuclear capable intermediate range missile from a submarine. The missile failed early in the flight, but clearly this rogue nation desires the capability of carrying out a nuclear strike on a mobile platform which will make the development of ICBM's unnecessary.

Hungry people (even your neighbors and fellow church members) do desperate things! The "Just-in-Time" inventory system virtually all grocery stores use to keep inventory low and availability of goods ready for purchase means that virtually all grocery markets only have about a three day supply of products on hand. If trucks cannot deliver the goods, supermarkets will be

stripped bare within a day or two of a national disaster and no replacements will be arriving. Electronic device dependent doctors offices and hospitals will be unable to care for patients.

Additionally, a nuclear EMP attack would disable every nuclear power plant in the nation and once the emergency generators which would operate their cooling equipment run out of fuel, they would all suffer melt-down much like the Chernobyl disaster in the former Soviet Union on April 26, 1986. Moreover, virtually all municipal water and sewer systems would cease to function. One can only imagine the hardship, terror and disease that such failures would bring to this nation.

Of course, the government keeps telling us everything is just fine with the economy and downplays the threat of an EMP while at the same time doing nothing to harden the grid from such an attack by rogue nations like North Korea, Iran or a terrorist organization. The failure of our government to act in the face of this existential clear and present danger is, perhaps, the greatest failure to "provide for the common defense" in the history of the world! A Power grid failure lasting at least a year is a virtual certainty with respect to an EMP and it is also possible (although less likely) with a severe economic collapse.

WHAT WOULD THIS MEAN FOR CHRIST'S BRIDE, THE CHURCH?

While all of this is frightening and should give us pause respecting the fragility of our civilization, what would such potential events mean for the Bride of Christ, the Church?

While Scripture tells us that even the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church of Christ Jesus, that does not mean that His Bride will not suffer in this world. The genocide we see of Christians and their culture in the Muslim world should prove the point. It should be remembered that we still live in the Church Militant, not the Church Triumphant.

What follows is, of course, speculative, but should provide a basis for pondering what our Lord's Church might look like and act like in such dire circumstances as those described above. More importantly, it might give some impetus for congregations to prepare their members for the potential coming catastrophe whatever its form.

Some likely possibilities for the Church:

1. Synods and denominations would likely cease to function as institutions.

For starters, in the event of an EMP attack, there would be no means of either communication or transportation beyond that of walking or riding horseback unless you have a very old car without an electronic ignition and then you wouldn't be able to obtain gasoline because the gas pumps would not be functioning. Second, since all electronic communications devices would fail (TV, radio, internet, and Postal Service), there would be no means by which church body institutions could communicate with their members. Every individual congregation that could still function would be

completely on their own as no districts or national church institutions would be able to assist them. Ecclesiastical supervision by church bodies would cease to exist.

2. Most congregations would likely be unable to serve most of their members.

If congregants only have the ability to walk, traveling to worship services would become virtually impossible for most members and dangerous for all. Gone are the days when church's were located about 5-6 miles apart to enable their members to attend on horseback. Many church facilities will simply become impractical to maintain.

3. Home churches would multiply with heads of households and collections of neighbors gathering for worship following the initial on-set of troubles.

Those who survive the initial terrors of the on-set of societal collapse would eventually gather with friends and family members who live close by for worship. Early on, even this gathering of local groups might prove too dangerous and worship would be confined to the home. Such emerging "Mini-congregations" would need to deal with pastoral issues, doctrinal issues, communion issues, and worship issues that are inherent in being thrown together with others of varying beliefs and practices. The temptation to downplay doctrine to a lowest common denominator would be very difficult to resist.

4. While many faithful pastors would remain to serve their congregations, some would not and many could not. Additionally, pastors - like all others - would be preoccupied with helping their own families survive.

Both for the clergy and the laity, this would be a time of separating the proverbial wheat from the chaff. Those who are truly faithful will do all in their power to continue some form of congregational life, but others will abandon their calls or laymen their participation in the congregation. In some cases, the congregation will abandon the parish leaving the pastor without a congregation to serve. In other cases where the clergy abandon their call, whatever form of congregation remains will need to understand that they need to call a pastor to serve as their shepherd even if it is from the men of the congregation. Congregations need a rightly called pastor to be the Church. Surviving retired pastors in a community might become sought after resources.

5. As time passes after the collapse, congregations in local regions will need to find ways to provide a theological education to those men desiring to serve as pastors.

Just as the German Lutheran settlers of Perry County, Missouri, in the 19th century founded a log cabin seminary, so too would the Bride of Christ in local areas need to find a way to train pastors for the feeding of God's sheep by qualified men. Theological libraries would need to be established as best as possible utilizing pastor's libraries as a primary source for texts, and pastors as the primary instructors. Rather than succumb to the temptation to take shortcuts in theological education, strict standards of preparation need to be kept for the sake of God's people.

HOW CAN CONGREGATIONS PREPARE FOR THESE COMING EVENTS?

St. Paul writes in Romans 8:28, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (ESV) Even in the event of a societal collapse, God will use the terrible things that happen to draw His people closer to His Word and Sacraments thus giving spiritual strengthening and nourishment to His potential flock. Perhaps the first thing that a pastor and his congregation can do to prepare for the coming catastrophe is to understand that God is still God no matter the circumstances in which His people find themselves.

It should be obvious, that a good under shepherd of Christ would help his congregation prepare for disaster, especially since it is clear that the current economic trajectory of this nation simply cannot be sustained much longer, and the risk of a nuclear EMP attack grows with every news cycle. It is also true that our world has become immeasurably more dangerous with acts of terrorism driven by Satan's Muslim followers occurring even in our own country and perhaps even in our own communities. Additionally, rogue international bad actors like Iran and North Korea have plainly told us of their intentions to destroy America and Christianity, and have made it clear that they will do whatever they need to do to keep their word. We really ought to believe them!

What steps can be taken by local pastors and congregations to prepare for a possible societal collapse?

First, realize that among your own congregations are a few (perhaps many) of your members are already "Preppers". A Prepper is a person who has intentionally begun to lay aside food and supplies in order to help their families survive a possible societal collapse. For the most part such folks are not "crazy" nor do they wear "tin foil hats". They are rational men and women who have simply chosen to see what's headed their way and are taking actions for their families to survive it.

In a congregation already existing Preppers are an invaluable resource for others who have decided that events are likely coming that require preparation. Preppers have been there and done that. Most Preppers want to live in a community in which most people are Preppers because if they are not, then, when the worst comes, even fellow neighbors and church members can become deadly enemies as they seek to provide the necessities of life for their families. Hungry people will kill one another to keep themselves and their children fed.

In many ways, congregations of God's people are the perfect Prepper communities! They already share the Christian faith which enables them to see one another as true brothers and sisters in Christ. They already care about one another and want to help those in need. They are, or should be, a "family" unto themselves. Congregational Prepping will only help to deepen that God-given bond.

As is always the case, the congregation's pastor must take the lead.

Prepping can't be the pastor's primary goal in the congregation. The pastor's call is to teach the Word of God in all its purity and to administer the Sacraments in accord with Christ's institution. That always comes first! The pastor is the chief catechist of the congregation and the chief thing he is to teach is the Christian faith. But Christian life is also a topic on a pastor's plate. It will require some courage on the pastor's part to actually bridge the prepping topic of conversation. He has to risk being seen as something of a "nut-case" by those members who simply will not see the dangers that are at our door and are subject to something called "normalcy bias". Wikipedia defines **normalcy bias** as:

"...a mental state people enter when facing a disaster. It causes people to underestimate both the possibility of a disaster and its possible effects. This may result in situations where people fail to adequately prepare and, on a larger scale, the failure of governments to include the populace in its disaster preparations. The assumption that is made in the case of the normalcy bias is that since a disaster never has occurred, it never will occur. It can result in the inability of people to cope with a disaster once it occurs. People with a normalcy bias have difficulties reacting to something they have not experienced before. People also tend to interpret warnings in the most optimistic way possible, seizing on any ambiguities to infer a less serious situation."

It seems fair to conclude that the United States federal government has a very bad case of normalcy bias since it has chosen to ignore the clear warnings of it's own EMP Commission and has done absolutely nothing to harden the public grid infrastructure of this nation which the Commission estimated could be done for the relatively small amount of \$20 billion dollars. At the same time, however, the U.S. military listened to the findings of the Congressional EMP reports and has taken some precautions to harden some of its electronic assets. Likewise normalcy bias has prompted the continued downward spiral of our economy to be seen as a "new normal" and nothing to be concerned about. The erroneous conclusion by many in government is that continued deficit spending can continue indefinitely and that no day of reckoning need be contemplated.

As a pastor you have likely proven that you are a Godly man of rational mind and of good heart. You've earned a hearing even on this subject. But if you are to have a congregation to serve, then the topic of societal collapse must become a secondary priority for you, even at some personal risk. The alternative is to watch your congregation literally kill each other off for food and then come after their prepping pastor's family. Lutherans need to understand the true nature of original sin in order to adequately assess what can happen in such a national calamity, and Lutherans need to be taught again about the fundamental corporate nature of the Church. We are many parts, but one body.

Pastors know how to approach their own congregations best. Perhaps you could approach your Board of Elders with this article and get their reaction to it as a first step. Another possibility would be to put this article in your church newsletter as a way of opening the conversation. You might consider using the topic of the Church Militant as a Bible study for

your adult class and bring the subject up. While I have no idea if the coming possible and likely catastrophe is part of the events leading up to the Second Coming of our Lord, I also don't know that they wouldn't be. I do know that we are now 2,000 years closer to our Lord's return than we used to be and that Scripture tells us that things will be very difficult at the end - especially for His Bride, the Church. Whatever you have to do, do it! There's simply too much at stake.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

There are numerous books available to assist people who have begun to prepare themselves for the coming catastrophe. Indeed, prepping has become an "industry" in some respects as many have come to the realization that the government will not be able to step in and solve everyone's problems in the face of a true national disaster. Just ask the folks in New Orleans who suffered through the comparatively short-term disaster of Hurricane Katrina. At the end of this article I will provide a brief and rather incomplete bibliography of some of the publications that I have found most helpful.

What follows is a brief outline of things that pastors and congregations can do to help each other prepare for the likely coming disaster.

1. Every individual family in the congregation needs to prepare for their own survival:

This is not the time to become a Lutheran "commune" in which all resources are pooled together and commonly used. Such an approach might work if all your members lived on a common plot of land, but to my knowledge no congregation does! Distance between members and distance from the church facilities normally dictates acting independently as families. However, for those who do not have the means to prepare, the community/family of the congregation need to assist while letting each family also take responsibility for themselves to the greatest extent possible.

2. Prepping for families focuses on basic needs for survival:

1. Obtaining an available supply of safe drinking water.
2. Advance obtaining of food suitable for long-term storage.
3. Cultivating the ability to raise various kinds of food on an on-going basis.
4. Obtaining of specific tools that do not require electricity to operate.
5. Obtaining of extensive first aid training and equipment.
6. Ability to defend one's self and family against looting raiders.

3. Prepping as a congregation will be very different for urban and rural congregations.

Perhaps the last place anyone would want to be in the event of a catastrophic event such as those discussed above is in a large metropolitan area or anywhere near an Interstate Highway. Within 24 to 72 hours following an EMP, for example, most grocery stores will

be completely stripped of their products and no more will be coming in. Within two weeks, most people will use up whatever food they normally have in the house and serious looting and scavenging will begin. Large urban areas already experience high crime rates, gang violence, and random shootings. Well armed, organized gangs already exist in the cities and when disaster strikes, they will be the ones most equipped to survive - but at the expense of others.

By the end of two weeks, most law enforcement will be totally overwhelmed and unable to respond to calls for help especially in the cities. Moreover, there will be no telephone service to make that call. For the same reasons there will be no health services available for the victims of such crimes or for injuries incurred for any other reason. Virtually everyone will be on their own. The government will not be coming to your rescue.

Once the cities have been looted of goods, the Interstate Highways will become what many preparedness writers have described as "Highways of Death". As gangs of looters range out of the cities, any home or community adjacent to any Interstate or other major Highway will become the next targets of choice. The longer such gangs exist, the more experienced and ruthless they will become. It would behoove any town adjacent to a large metropolitan area or near any major highway to take extraordinary measures to protect their community.

This is precisely why many preppers have gone to the extreme measure of relocating their families to more rural areas. Obviously, it's not likely that entire congregations can do that so they must become self-sustaining, self-defending, extended families within urban and rural areas to the greatest extent possible. Families may need to double up and combine resources for both subsistence and self-defense. This will be true for both rural and urban congregations. It might be well for families living in more exposed and vulnerable housing to make plans in advance with willing congregational families living in more isolated and less vulnerable housing to double up together when a crisis begins. Prepping supplies might well be pre-positioned at the retreat setting for those families willing and able to double up. Plans within urban and rural congregations need to be well thought out and executed in such fashion that when disaster strikes, they are prepared to act as one to help one another through it. Special attention should be given to single parent families, widows, and others with special needs to arrange for alternative housing with other congregational members.

4. Extraordinary measures to ensure that God's people are served with Word and Sacrament ministry by a properly called pastor may need to be taken:

For more rural congregations and communities the possibilities are much improved. Rural areas are already filled with folks to see their communities as a kind of extended family to which loyalty and responsibility is owed. Such congregations and communities can work together much easier in the face of calamity to help each other out, defend their communities from outside looters, arrange for local law and order, and do what

needs to be done to retain the fabric and character of civilization to the greatest extent possible.

For congregations in any location whose members live at distances from the church facilities that are simply too far to walk, plans will need to be made for the establishment of home churches in the parish. It is suggested that pastors work with heads of households to prepare themselves for conducting worship for their families for at least the first year of the crisis. This will require the pre-crisis congregation to offer training, materials, and guidance on the best way to accomplish this goal. If possible, the original called pastor of the local pre-crisis congregation could act as a "circuit rider" traveling from home church to home church, if this can be done safely and without risking the well-being of his own family.

Should the crisis exceed one year (which is very likely in the event of an EMP or any other societal collapse scenario), or if the pre-crisis congregational pastor does not survive or abandons his post, the possibility will exist that each home church may need to establish itself as its own congregation. Lutheran theology respecting the nature of the Church and the Office of the Pastor can serve as a great help in such extreme circumstances.

If separate small home churches need to be established, it would be helpful if pre-crisis pastors and congregations could identify and train those laymen in advance, who would then be called as pastors by the constituency they would serve if such measures are needed. Calling procedures in such circumstances should be prepared in advance by the pre-crisis pastor and congregation. It is strongly recommended that during the first year of the crisis (or until the pre-crisis pastor is no longer available), that home churches refrain from celebrating the Lord's Supper until a properly called pastor may be installed.

It may be possible that some hybrid version of this arrangement might be worked out in which laymen provide readings from Scripture, sing hymns and do a Bible study and on a given schedule, the called pastor could travel to each home church for a celebration of the Lord's Supper. The original pre-crisis called pastor could serve as "bishop" exercising ecclesiastical supervision for the newly "minted" pastors and provide continuing education for them as circumstances permit.

Even the provision of the elements for the Lord's Supper will require some attention. Sufficient supplies of wine will need to be acquired to last for perhaps three years unless someone in the parish is talented in that regard and has his own vineyard. (Note: Dandelion, Elderberry, or Blackberry wine are NOT acceptable!) Unleavened bread can be made easily - styrofoam-like wafers not required!) Fortunately, properly stored wine only gets better with storage! (Note: be sure to store wine in a cool place or it will spoil!)

5. It should go without saying that pastors must catechize their people especially for a

time when "normal" church life might become impossible. Special attention needs to be paid to all articles of doctrine but especially:

- a. the doctrine of the Church
- b. the doctrine of the Office of the Ministry
- c. the doctrine of the Lord's Supper & Closed Communion
- d. the doctrine of Holy Baptism

6. Selected books for a small theological library will need to be acquired for each potential home church.

- a. Five - ten copies of the Bible for each home church in the same translation.
- b. Five - ten copies of *Luther's Small Catechism With Explanation*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO., 1986.
- c. At least one set of Francis Pieper's, *Christian Dogmatics*.vol. 1-4, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 1950.
- d. Five - ten copies of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, Second Ed., Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO., 2006.
- e. One concordance for the translation of Holy Scripture selected.
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- h. A copy of the two volume set of *The Lutheran Bible Companion*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO., 2014.
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Pre-crisis pastors will need to impress upon all their people (but especially those who will serve as the leaders/pastors of each home church), that fellowship at the Lord's Table requires agreement in every article of Christian doctrine and that crisis or no crisis, the standard for admittance to the Lord's Table must not be compromised. Fellowship at the Lord's Table IS Church fellowship. Unity at the altar includes doctrinal unity. It is simply adequate instruction and agreement that is required for fellowship. Friends and neighbors can be instructed and confirmed prior to participation at the Lord's Table.

Without doubt there will be many unforeseen circumstances that this writer cannot anticipate and thus part of a congregation's preparation needs to be a forum for those topics as they come up.

Ironically, this kind of preparation will benefit the congregation by helping them to understand themselves as a "family", helping them to see and provide for the critical need for the Word and Sacraments, and helping them to understand the pastoral office and it's critical part in the life of a congregation - whatever its size. The Bride of Christ will weather whatever storm

comes its way. She survived the persecution of Roman Emperors, the persecution as religious minorities in Muslim and other non-Christian societies; she will survive whatever rigors may come with a modern day societal collapse, and whatever trials may accompany the events leading up to our Lord's return. Ultimately our hope is in Christ alone in who's hand history rests and in who's hand our ultimate victory is assured.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **3** No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. **4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5** And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. - **Revelation 22:1-5** (ESV)

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The Bride of Christ - Free download as PDF File (.pdf), Text File (.txt) or view presentation slides online. The Bride of Christ. Uploaded by. My Job Is Not To Advocate Falsehood But Merely To Introduce To The World The Facts. If That's What You Base Your Life On, The Truth, Then I Am No Problem To You. All. The Word of Christ took possession of him, and he, led by it, followed after it till that blessed moment when, in the upper chamber, he lay upon the Master's breast. All through the life that followed he looked back that he might look before; his eyes turned to what had been, that his hope might reach up unto what was to be; and lo! he found that the issue was greater than his utmost expectation. The old man found a meaning in Christ the young man never discerned. Age is greater than youth. See how youth now ripened into perfect fruition in age. In that ancient John there lay the apocalyptic visions; visions of the world, the wonders that were to be. Whether would you have God dealing with you in a way that became God, or in a way that became man? The world was dark in the beginning, certainly, but the Spirit of God moved over her and she became alive with weather, biosphere, consciousness and culture. The world has been a Black Bride ever since she came into being. We do not have a Biblical report that the two actually engage in a marital relationship, but many Ethiopian people today maintain that they are the descendants of a son of Solomon by their Queen. Jesus says that this same Queen of Sheba will rise in the end and judge the people of His generation and condemn it. Paul writes that the saints will judge the world, and so the Queen of Sheba is either just one of the saints, but most likely the whole of them, a foreshadow of the Bride.