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Dear Dr. Ryrie,

I graduated from Dallas Seminary in 1987 and serve as the Spanish pastor for Southwest Community Church in Miami. Before attending DTS I studied at Miami Christian College under one of your former students, Dr. C. Norman Sellers. He introduced us to Dispensational theology (In fact, I think I heard more about dispensationalism and premillennialism from him than I ever did at Dallas!) and we read *Dispensationalism Today* as part of our course work. Through that book, your Study Bible, and through Norm Sellers I became acquainted with Dallas Seminary and with your work. I anticipated sitting under your teaching at Dallas but I think I missed you by a year.

I'm writing to you because I recently finished translating your *Basic Theology* into Spanish for a company called Unilit. I know that *Dispensationalism Today*, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, and *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* as well as others have already been translated. I also know that *Basis of the Premillennial Faith* has had some revision done in the Spanish version and I'm particularly concerned about one section of *Basic Theology* which I believe needs revision. My concern stems from a desire for precision in theology (which I know you share), and a concern for the clear presentation of the Gospel (which I know you also share). *Basic Theology* will in all probability become a standard text

for Hispanic theology students. In other words we can almost guarantee that it will see widespread use in the Spanish community. So, I'm particularly concerned that the text communicates precisely and I respectfully submit the following to you.

My problem concerns the illustration under the heading "The Proof of Justification" on page 300 about the "two-coupon ticket to heaven." Either one needs works to go to heaven or one does not. The illustration clearly communicates that faith alone will not suffice for an entrance into heaven. In other words if my "works stub" does not accompany my "faith stub" God will deny my entrance to heaven (keeping in mind that the illustration does qualify the ticket as a "two-coupon ticket to heaven".) Now, I know you don't believe that you need works for heaven. And, I understand that the section in question deals with "proof," but the end result comes out the same (in the framework of the illustration) namely, no works no heaven! Personally, I believe that an inward change does occur in every regenerate person. However, the Bible does not guarantee how long any outward change will last, neither does it specify how long it will take to show up in the convert's life nor does it standardize a particular visible result. (Does it show that I sat under Prof. Hodges at Seminary!?)

I don't think you would have any difficulty agreeing with these things. I had conscience trouble translating the coupon illustration into a work that promises to influence much in Spanish theological training. And yet, I cannot just change the text at will! So, I'm writing to you to see if you would consider a revision (and while we're at it see if you would like to modify

anything else before it goes into Spanish publication.)

I do not want to put words in your mouth (or in this case in your text!) but I came up with a possible reconstruction that reads like this:

"D. The Demonstration of Justification

We should demonstrate our justification by personal purity. "He who has died is freed [lit., justified] from sin" (Rom. 6:7). We stand acquitted from sin so that it no longer has dominion over us, thus making a holy life possible. We should then demonstrate before the bar of men the justification we received before the bar of God. This was the perspective of James when he wrote that works justify us (2:24). The reader's unproductive faith, though genuine (see 1:2, 18-19), is not an active faith and consequently does not justify them in the sight of men. By their works, believers must show before men what they are in Christ. This justifies them before men and grants them a mature Christian experience. Faith alone justifies us before God and allows us into heaven. But only works will justify us in the sight of men"

Whether or not we take this particular view of James (although your rendering in *So Great Salvation* closely if not identically reflects it) does not really concern me as much does as the clear communication of the Gospel.

What do you think? I would greatly appreciate your response to this. Thank you and may God bless you and your ministry.

Yours in Christ

Alberto Valdía