

"Present your bodies [as] a living sacrifice . . . which is your reasonable service" (page 8)

The White Box



The
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Call

APRIL 2010

REFLECTIONS ON A REASONABLE FAITH

by DAVE HUNT

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THE BEREAN CALL

"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so."—Acts 17:11

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Reflections on a Reasonable Faith

Dave Hunt

A false idea exists in both the world and in the church that faith and reason do not go together when, in fact, one cannot exist without the other. When God called out, "Adam, where art thou?" it was not Adam's physical location He was asking about but his moral and spiritual relationship with his Creator. "What happened to that relationship we once had, Adam? I miss it and am grieved." As a bumper sticker says, "When you feel far from God, guess who moved?"

We move on to the prodigal son, who demanded to receive his inheritance before the designated time, which would have been after the death of his parents. Instead of investing his inheritance wisely, he spent it all on harlots and wild living. When those he thought were his friends saw that he had exhausted his resources, they deserted him, leaving him destitute, thus showing what kind of "friends" he had accumulated on his downward path to poverty and shame.

God wants to get our attention. "Come now, and let us reason together," says God to His wayward children. His Word has much to say to us in regard to this exhortation. He wants us to meditate upon it day and night. My earliest memories of my father were of seeing him on his knees with his open Bible. I never had to try to memorize the Bible. I had heard it so many times in our family devotions and had read it so often in my personal study that it became a part of me.

A wedding is coming. It will take place in heaven. As the hymn says, "What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see. When He takes me by the hand and leads me through the Promised Land...what a glorious day that will be!" This should be our eager anticipation.

When someone asks, "How soon do you think the Rapture will be?" I often respond, "How soon do you want it to be?" The story is told of a preacher asking his audience, "How many of you want to go to heaven?" All the children raised their hands except one small boy sitting in the front row. When the meeting ended, the preacher sat beside the lad and asked,

"Don't you want to go to heaven?"

"Oh, yes, sir," he replied.

"But when I asked all those who wanted to go to heaven to raise their hands, you didn't raise yours."

"Oh, sir, I thought you meant right now."

Of course we want to go to heaven, but there is so much we want to do on earth first that we lose our sense of urgency. We are the Bride of Christ. How tragic if we lack the eagerness of anticipation that the bride ought to have as the day of her wedding draws near! On the one hand, we desire to be with Christ. We know that the Lord loves us, but to think of standing before the I AM is awesome beyond belief. May we all look with renewed longing for His promised coming.

SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART: TRY ME, AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS: AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.

—Psalm 139:23-24

It is amazing that God wants to reason with us, His creatures. The Word speaks much of *understanding*. What does this mean? God may explain why He has done certain things, but He will not consult with us about anything nor debate issues. He does not look to us for advice but delights in our obedience. We are to love God with our whole heart and love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus said this was the essence of the law and the prophets.

God has no obligation to explain Himself to us. Even so, God says, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Is 1:18). I think this is His way of trying to share His heart with us. I often think of how great God is and marvel that He would desire our fellowship, but such is His heart. With salvation, all things are become new, and that includes the beginning of an intimate relationship as between father and child.

Scripture says, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prv 4:7). God is not trying to force anything upon us, but he wants us to understand and to delight in the relationship that He desires to have with His children.

Of course, faith is not a leap in the dark

and the hope of a soft landing. We must seek to know where God wants us to go and what His will is for our lives. He *wants* us to know. He wants us to understand. He does not wish to treat us as slaves but as dearest friends. How astonishing! How glorious! Abraham was called "the friend of God." Jesus said to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants...but friends" (Jn 15:15). This is hard to fathom—that we could be God's friends, and not only His friends but the dearest objects of His heart's affection.

How well George Matheson expressed this truth, which came, as he said, "like a dayspring on high":

Oh, Love that will not let me go!
I rest my weary soul on thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flick-'ring torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there
 blossoms red
Life that shall endless be. Amen.

We are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. This is not a suggestion from God but a command. Jesus said, "When you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, or your heavenly Father will not forgive you." That's hard for us to face, but the language is clear. Jesus goes on to explain that "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mt 6:15). This is part of what we know as the "Sermon on the Mount." It pierces our hearts. I remember a long cab ride when I was trying to explain

the gospel to the driver. He claimed that he had never sinned. I quoted the same scripture to him and asked him if he had followed this admonition: “Do you love your neighbor as yourself?”

With a short laugh, he said, “I haven’t done that for one second.”

“Well,” I replied, “the words of Christ are clear: if you hold anything against anyone, you must not expect God to forgive you any of your sins.” Of course, without the new life that Christ’s death imparts, such forgiveness was beyond his ability. What was impossible for the cab driver is incumbent upon us as followers of Christ.

This is difficult to face. What we call “The Lord’s Prayer” is really the prayer that Christ gave to His disciples and to us as well. We can address the Almighty God:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Mt 6:9-13)

I often think how amazing it is that we could have a *personal* relationship with God and that He should call us His friends. This is awesome! I often tell God, “We are such pitiful creatures. You are so great. How can we even dare talk to You? You are without beginning or end; You are infinite in power and wisdom, yet You call us Your friends. What gracious condescension! O give me the ability to respond in like manner!”

The Psalmist said,

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. (Ps 8:3-6)

Why should God want us to love Him? What could our love mean to Him? He really doesn’t need anything from us. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwelt in perfect harmony, complete in fellowship with one another for all eternity past. There is no question that man was made not only in the image of God but for a unique companionship with Him. That’s too much for

us to even begin to understand!

Surely God didn’t *need* a companion in man. It was a special relationship that He desired. That relationship was lost when man sinned and God could no longer have fellowship with him. We don’t understand this loss, but I believe that every human being feels it. How deeply God himself must have felt that loss!

There is an emptiness in every human heart that only God can fill. God and man were meant to dwell in fellowship—in companionship. The angelic beings who did not follow Lucifer in his fall could never have this relationship with God, for as sinless beings, they could never experience the redeemed sinner’s debt of gratitude. Only man could (Lk 7:47).

The breach between God and man affected the entire universe. Romans 8 says that the whole creation groans in travail, waiting “for the manifestation of the sons of God.” I believe every human being knows that something is wrong with this universe that goes deeper than the headlines about war, murder, rape, robbery, and all of the evils in human society. There is something else behind all of this.

BUT KNOW THAT THE LORD HATH SET APART HIM THAT IS GODLY FOR HIMSELF; THE LORD WILL HEAR WHEN I CALL UNTO HIM.

— Psalm 4:3

The old writers knew this and tried to express it. Dickens put it into his writings, as did Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and many others. In contrast, the vast majority of films that Hollywood turns out today are not only repulsively immoral but generally shallow in their expression of what humanness is all about, and fail to reveal the emptiness in man’s heart. Many of our older writers presented the evil of man’s heart and, although they were not Christians, their writings were filled with examples pitting good against evil. That does not come out in the popular novels and movies of today, where God is not honored but often derided. They reflect God’s sad commentary: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps 14:1; 53:1).

When we present the gospel, we must be prepared to reason. We know that the Word of God is living and powerful, the sword of the Spirit, yet we are given the privilege of sharing it with others. We must share the *reasons* for believing in God: “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope

that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt 3:15). This raises a question. Why would anyone ask us for a “reason”? It presumes that we must have given some occasion to arouse the question—hopefully, the personal witness of our godly life.

We often hesitate to share the gospel because we don’t know how to begin. I think of the illustration my father used. He told of the barber who was shaving a man and raised the open blade above his head and said, “Are you prepared to die?” The man ran out of the barbershop in terror. Obviously, this is not a good opening in presenting the gospel!

I remember a well-dressed, well-coiffed, and obviously wealthy woman sitting next to me on a plane. I tried a couple of times to open a conversation, but she remained aloof. I prayed to the Lord, “I have tried twice to find a way to talk with this woman so that I could present the gospel to her. If anything is going to happen, this woman is going to have to open the door.” I was reading Richard Dawkins’s book, *The Selfish Gene*, and had it in the pocket of the seat in front of me. I pulled it out to read it and my seat companion looked at it and said, “Who would write a book like that?” That was the opening I was waiting for, and we had a wonderful conversation. She turned out to be a seeking soul.

There are those all around us who are waiting for someone to present the gospel to them. I once sat next to a man who was contemplating suicide. He was certainly ripe for the gospel. If we want to share the Good News with someone, the Lord will open the door. I do not advise trying to force the gospel on anyone. Let the Holy Spirit do His work. We must seek God’s direction if we are to be about His business effectively.

Modern man has no time for God. An old hymn asks, “What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be. One day your heart will be asking, ‘What will He do with me?’” For all eternity, lost souls will be haunted by the realization that heaven’s door could have been opened to them by the Savior they rejected.

Happily, we can still proclaim that the door remains open and whosoever will may enter in. How much longer this may be the case we cannot tell. While there is still time, every true Christian ought to be alert to eagerly seize every opportunity that presents itself to share the good news of the gospel. It is our Lord’s “reasonable” expectation.

Quotable

Murmuring not only repudiates God's work in us, but it also tarnishes God's work through us.

Jerry Benjamin, Little Nuggets Series

Q&A

QUESTION: Our church has recently introduced an Easter service called Tenebrae. It began as a solemn service that included worship songs and scripture that led into a contemplation of the sufferings of Christ during his crucifixion. This year they are having "stations that show the 'Way of the Cross'" (quoted from service outline). A table as you walk in represents the Passover Supper; at the doors, the essence of wintergreen will be offered to mask the smell of death; the four stations: Humility—foot washing (reenactment of disciples feet being washed by Jesus); Fellowship with the Father—prayer station; Apathy—Pilate washing his hands/allow people to do the same; Suffering—table with crown of thorns and bloody shroud, bowl of nails for everyone to pickup. There will be a recreated tomb [with] soldiers rolling a stone over [the entrance]. There will be 30-40 minutes given for everyone to go through the stations and then the service begins. As an ex-Catholic, I would really like your input on this. We are told to remember the Lord in communion; is there any value in this kind of service? This is confusing!

RESPONSE: What your church is doing, while sincere, is rife with potential problems, in our opinion. Although your fellowship is putting together all kinds of things that it hopes will increase a person's interest (some may even believe that these will increase one's spirituality and knowledge) in the Lord and in what He has done for them, the program may have the opposite effect. Here are a few things to consider.

The New Testament gives no such examples of remembrance productions or ceremonies for the edification of believers. Although baptism and communion have become "efficacious" rituals and ceremonies in much of the church today, that's not what we find in the Scriptures. Baptism and communion are simply personal ordinances to be followed. Baptism is a public declaration of one's commitment to Christ; communion is an act of remembering Christ's sacrifice for humanity.

Most of what you described from the service outline has been taken originally from Catholic and Orthodox traditions and

rituals. Since they were created to support their works-oriented way of salvation, they have little if any value in leading a person to the biblical gospel or biblical truth.

Nearly all church productions are of poor quality, even embarrassing. Yet even if they were magnificent, they would still be greatly inferior to the preaching and teaching of the Word. Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." It is God's Word that sets a person free, not man's ceremonies and productions.

The Scriptures give us the most direct way of knowing and believing what Christ has accomplished for humanity on the Cross. They are *God's* words given to the writers of the Old and New Testaments. As a person reads or hears God's words, the Holy Spirit brings conviction and enables one to understand the words of God.

The subjective nature of presentations such as you describe cannot teach *objective* truth—only the Word can do this. People respond to the imagery presented in the productions experientially. It would be like you and me describing a painting that we had both seen. Our evaluations would be different because they would be based upon our impressions, feelings, and other subjective criteria. If, however, we saw a sign next to the painting that said, "For sale," we would both know exactly what the sign was communicating because of the objective meaning of words.

When Moses went up to Mount Sinai, he was given objective instructions in words that he was told to write down. On the other hand, the Israelites, with Aaron's help, were involved in a production. They opted for the subjective way of paganism and idolatry. Sadly, at the very least, the church is unwittingly moving in that direction.

Another problem with so-called sacred ceremonies is that most people "feel" they are being spiritually edified or that they have had a legitimate spiritual experience; thus, they have pleased (or have drawn closer to) God in some way. No. These are experiential acts of the flesh, which the Word says, "profits nothing" ("It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"—John 6:63).

Anything that attempts to supplement the Word through productions, ceremonies, processions, rituals, etc., in order to encourage people to believe in what it says, is at best adding a secondhand, fleshly representation of what the Bible teaches. At worst, such productions mislead people into thinking that the activity itself has some efficacious spiritual value, thus preventing them from worshiping the Lord "in spirit and in

truth," which believers are commanded to do (John 4:23).

QUESTION: After suffering with congestion and a sinus infection, I decided to try using a neti pot...a system of nasal irrigation using warm water and a saline solution. I found instant relief that lasted several hours. However, this morning...I discovered its ties to yoga. Apparently, neti is one of six purification techniques performed prior to practicing yoga as a way of preparing the body for the yoga practice. My intent is strictly medicinal, but do its ties to yoga serve as warning that this is a practice that should be avoided?

RESPONSE: The neti pot is just one method of "irrigating" the nasal passages. Another includes using a bulb syringe to introduce a therapeutic liquid solution into the nasal cavities. Some believe this may cleanse and remove infectious microorganisms from the nasal passageways, reduce the frequency and duration of colds, and alleviate the effects of allergies. Although "yogis" place a spiritual emphasis upon this procedure, it remains a natural process using elements of God's creation. Similarly, yoga involves stretching exercises. It is not the "stretching" that is in question but the occult meaning behind the stretches that should concern us. Yet no one need use any element of yoga (such as a mantra) in order to stretch one's muscles, a healthful exercise that may benefit the body.

There are many procedures that might be used by those practicing yoga. Just as yoga teaches meditation, so the Scriptures also teach "meditation." There is a vast difference, however, between what the Bible teaches regarding meditation (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 104:34, etc.) and the teachings of yoga. Medicinal techniques (such as the neti pot) may be used in yoga and other unbiblical practices. Those who practice yoga may also drive automobiles. Their use of a natural process created by God (i.e., internal combustion) doesn't preclude usage by a Christian. There is much in this world that is neutral but that may be used in a corrupt manner.

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:20, "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor." Some people mistakenly think the vessels of gold and silver are to honor, while those of wood and earth are to dishonor. Not so. There are vessels of gold and silver that are also to dishonor and those of wood and earth that are to honor. The key is in the usage. In a similar manner, irrigation of the nasal passage is a simple medical preventive procedure, and we don't believe the corrupt use by those

practicing yoga precludes us from using the technique, but for a far different reason. If the neti pot itself, due to the fact that it was introduced through Ayurvedic medicine, remains an issue, why not simply use a bulb syringe? The potential benefit would be the same and there certainly wouldn't be any connotation of using a device developed by practitioners of yoga.

QUESTION: I think it is stunning that... the most influential Christians of the past 2,000 years have been Augustinians. Which Arminian writers can you name of the stature of Augustine, Aquinas, Edwards, Calvin, Luther, Warfield, MacArthur, Sproul, Spurgeon, John Piper, John Murray, Hodge, Whitefield, Tyndale, the Puritans, J. I. Packer, Zwingli, Knox, almost every single missionary from the modern missions movement, etc.? I can think of precious few Arminians who come anywhere near the theological insight of these people. [Furthermore] however you understand Romans 9, why does Paul insert the following phrase right after he says that "God has mercy on whom He wills and He hardens whom He wills": "You will say to me then, Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" (Romans 9:19). Could this be any more clear, brothers? Explain why Paul would say this if he weren't responding to the Arminian idea that God should give everyone a chance?

RESPONSE: Your statement that "the most influential Christians of the past 2,000 years have been Augustinians" does injustice to history. "Almost every single missionary?" The Moravians, under the leadership of Nicholas Von Zinzendorf, are viewed as the founders of modern missions. The Moravians were under suspicion because they were not Calvinists. It was the saintly behavior of Moravian missionaries that impressed John Wesley by their peace (which he lacked) during the ferocious storm that threatened to sink the ship in which they traveled. It was from John and Charles Wesley, who were so "methodical" in their service to God, that "Methodist" became the name of those congregations that sprang from their ministry.

Dwight L. Moody served the Lord faithfully, and his ministry was instrumental in the salvation of many. It was Moody whose preaching was the catalyst for the conversion of the father of C. T. Studd and subsequently his sons. C. T. Studd founded Heart of Africa Mission, now known as Worldwide Evangelization for Christ.

A. B. Simpson was the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Paul Rader influenced Paul Fleming to eventually found New Tribes Mission, which is now

sending forth multitudes of native missionaries who show promise of surpassing the tally of Western missionaries who preceded them. What about Jack Wyrzten and Harry Bollback, who founded Word of Life, which has planted hundreds of churches, has sent many missionaries, and has established Bible training centers in many nations? There were quite a few Puritan writers who wrote of their disagreements with Augustine, particularly concerning prophecy.

Regarding Romans 9:19, we know that it is not wise to single out one verse apart from full context. The issue of Jacob and Esau and their being loved or hated by God before their birth has occupied more than one discussion throughout history. If one confines the argument to portions of Romans 9, it does sound like God arbitrarily selects some for salvation and others for damnation, but Romans 9 does not occur in a vacuum, and the rest of Scripture furnishes the balance. God's foreknowledge enters into the equation at this point. Some theologians have stated that it would be accurate to translate the passage, "Jacob have I chosen, but Esau have I rejected." Specifically, in the case of Esau, the implication of "rejected" is a judgment based upon knowledge of his actions. God, who declares "the end from the beginning," (Isaiah 46:10) knew, before they were born, the course each child would take.

The example is also given of Israelis, who are currently "blinded" (Romans 11:7). Yet they, too, have the possibility of repenting and returning to God "if they abide not still in unbelief" (11:23). It doesn't sound as though God arbitrarily relegates individuals to perform a role no matter what. Otherwise, there would be no "if." As we have pointed out before, if there were no moral response possible on man's part, "choose you this day" (Joshua 24:15) would be impossible.

Romans 9:19 in context gives the example of Pharaoh. Verses 32-33 furnish more information. Within the confines of Romans 9 we clearly see both the sovereignty of God and the accountability of man: "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but... by the works of the law.... They stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and *whosoever believeth* on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 9:32-33). We see that the promise is to "whosoever" believes on him. We see a "seeking" but also a rejection of that seeking because "they sought it not by faith."

Look also at John 3:14-15. The Lord Jesus utters this amazing promise with the historical example of Moses lifting "up the serpent in the wilderness...." In Numbers 21:4-9 we find that *anyone* bitten by the serpent was simply to look at the serpent on the pole to

save his life. Nothing a person could do, no antivenom he could concoct, no tourniquet he could apply, would otherwise save him. Yet, *all* could look. The Lord Jesus identifies Himself with the serpent on the pole and says, "whosoever" believes will be saved. The natural, logical, and biblical conclusion is that the invitation is open to all.

News Alert.....

Frontpagemag.com, 2/16/2010: The Pathology of Jewish Anti-Semitism [EXCERPTS]—Jewish anti-Semitism. It sounds like...an oxymoron or a Jackie Mason joke. If only this were the case.

Jewish anti-Semitism is all around us.... In the twenty-first century the world is experiencing an explosion of it.... Among the most malicious and venomous of all bigots, the Jewish anti-Semites are at the forefront of every smear campaign against Israel and every attempt to cow Jews of America and the West into guilty support for those in the Middle East who would like to annihilate them. Jews today are leaders in the campaigns to boycott and "divest from" Israel, and in the leadership of the "Solidarity with Terrorists" groups. They make pilgrimage to the camps of Hamas and the Hezb'Allah, cheering on terrorists and their atrocities against Jews. They pioneered the smear campaigns to paint Israel as an apartheid regime and to stigmatize it as the moral equivalent to Nazi Germany.

Western campuses are crawling with Jewish anti-Semites [of whom] many..are tenured professors. An anti-Semitic Jewish judge (Richard Goldstone) chaired a UN commission demonizing Israel. A Jewish member of Britain's Parliament (Gerald Kaufman) compared Hamas terrorists to Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto and denounced Israel as a Nazi entity. A shockingly large number of Jewish anti-Semites are Israelis or ex-Israelis. Among the most open Israeli promoters of anti-Semitic mythology today is Professor Shlomo Sand, a hardcore communist on the history faculty of Tel Aviv University [who] published a book with a far-left anti-Israel publisher claiming to prove that Jews are not and never have been a "people." Recycling myths popularized by Neo-Nazi web sites, Sand's entire book is a sort of *Protocols of the Elders of Anti-Zion*...that claims that most Jews today are frauds, converts from the Khazar Turkic tribe, impersonators of Jews. All real Jews, according to the learned professor, became Palestinian Arabs centuries ago. Hence Israeli "Jews" are not Jews at all, certainly none that have a right to their own state. Sand travels the globe with Tel Aviv University funding to tout his book and advocate the extermination of Israel.

Speaking Schedule

Apr 16-17 (TA)	Calvary Chapel of Lima Lima, OH (419) 222-6100
Jun 6 (TA)	Candlelight Fellowship Coeur d'Alene, ID (208) 772-7755
Jul 9-11	TBC Conference Bend, OR (800) 937-6638
Aug 13- Sep 2 (TA)	Ireland/UK Tour More details to follow
Sep 8-11 (TA)	Great Lakes Prophecy Conference Appleton, WI (920) 735-1242

Letters

Dear Dave Hunt,

I appreciate your penchant for being true to God's Word and for preaching the truth fearlessly!...In my collection of books I have many...from The Berean Call. They are as helpful to me today as they were years ago. The ministry [has] helped me to grow in the knowledge of God's truth and [given] me the desire to stand unequivocally on the Word of God rather than on the doctrines of men....Next year I will be 80 years old.... Fifteen years ago I suffered kidney failure...followed by a kidney transplant...I thank and praise God in these circumstances because I have been in places where there are people who need to hear the Good News of the Gospel. Thanks be to the sound instruction of The Berean Call, instruction always based on the truth of God's Word. I have been enabled to share with others how we can know right now that we have Eternal Life! MP (MN)

Dear Mr. Dave Hunt,

About 10 years ago or so, a friend of mine introduced your newsletter to me...I read a few but they never truly grasped my attention, until recently....Thank you, Mr. Hunt, for preaching the Word of God and for saying to me...that the Holy Bible is our final authority to turn to for doctrine and reproof, and correction in the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour....I know, from what I have read and seen that you have suffered much hatred against you and not only you, but our Lord Jesus Christ in you, the Word of Truth, the Way, the Life....I pray for the church of our Lord Jesus Christ that we all [may] continue in the Word of TruthThank you, brother David Hunt, for

your love in our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray the Lord bless you and your family in His grace and in His love. PO (UK)

Dear Dave and Tom,

I have been receiving your newsletter for a few months now and your teachings are blowing my mind! I can't agree more with you that evolution is nonsense. I am an inmate in a Federal prison, and I have a friend who is so into evolution that he sees nothing else. He had me read his copy of Richard Dawkins's *The Greatest Show on Earth*. As I read some of it, I became more convinced in Creation than ever before. Dawkins pointed to certain orchids that are pollinated by only certain types of insects and, in some cases, only one type of insect. These relationships between plants and insects point more to design than ever. They were designed for each other, but my friend doesn't see it. GN (prisoner, TX)

Dear Dave,

I just wanted to commend you for a great job defending and standing for Israel. This world is getting darker and more anti-Semitic everyday. It does my heart and soul good to see another brother standing strong for the apple of God's eye in the face of opposition that is based on arrogance and spiritual wickedness. God bless you Dave. DT (email)

Dear Dave Hunt and The Berean Call,

I have so enjoyed reading your books. I've only had opportunity to read about six [but] it is so refreshing to know there are still godly people spreading the true gospel!...I especially enjoyed and was refreshed by *The Nonnegotiable Gospel*. Basic Bible doctrine is hard to come by in "watered down Christianity." MS (ID)

Dear Brothers,

In your February 2010 issue...I was struck by two things...because they are so dynamically related.... "We've lost the culture war" on page 8 describes the current "Christian" culture to a "T," but an angry letter on page 7 tells us exactly how it happened. Although I was amazed that this person after reading the Bible for sixty years could not find anything that you write about in the Bible...that is not what caught my attention. It is the first paragraph of his letter, where he lists his credentials. Here we see the progression. Twelve years in public schools marinating in an atmosphere of secularism. Then four years of intensive indoctrination into secularism in college.... Now we move on to two years of "Pastoral training" learning how to infuse secularism into a Christian audience.... Then thirty-seven years of practicing what he learned.

Multiply this man's ministry logarithmically for the past century, and you have the clearest explanation of how our current culture developed. AB (WY)

Dear TBC,

I just got your latest newsletter today and I want to compliment Brother McMahon for his "Avatar" article. That's quite an article...well written. I was quite gripped by it. The old ladies in my senior group liked [the movie] a lot. I knew there was something wrong with it [and] Brother McMahon certainly gave us the low-down on what that was....You covered it thoroughly and very well....Thank you for bringing this to light and exposing the works of darkness. EH (CA)

TBC Notes

Circle the Wagons!

One of the very obvious characteristics of the first-century church was the fellowship of believers. They were drawn to each other primarily because of their new life in Christ. They continued together, growing steadfast in doctrine, in the Lord's Supper, and in praying together. Furthermore, they met one another's physical needs. That was a witness of their changed life and the strengthening of their faith for witnessing. Their obedience to the Word in fellowship produced much fruit, giving them favor with those who saw their changed lives, and the Lord added new believers to the church daily (Acts 2:42-47).

If we are not experiencing fellowship with other believers, besides being disobedient to the Word, we are missing out on what God has provided for our growth, encouragement, edification, consolation, and spiritual welfare and protection. All of this is especially critical as apostasy increases and the world steps up its attacks against Christ and His followers.

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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THE WHITE BOX

BARBARA ROMINE, TBC MANAGING EDITOR

“WHAT YOU HAVE is called invasive ductal carcinoma.” The rest of the doctor’s visit was a bit of a blur. I remember his kindness as he discussed possible lymph node involvement and surgeries and treatment plans. He told me the size of the tumor and my options. My daughter Melissa sat there faithfully taking notes for me, knowing that I wasn’t absorbing much. Fighting tears and panic, I made it through the remainder of the appointment. Then the breast care coordinator came in, holding a white box tied with a pink ribbon that she handed to me along with instructions and a list of appointments that she had already set up with an oncologist and other doctors.

When I got home, I carefully opened the white box. Inside the pink tissue was a DVD, a scented candle, a lavender sachet, some chocolates, a package of tissues, a small booklet, and a list of local resources for cancer patients, including where to get special undergarments and wigs. Drawing in my breath, I quickly shut the box. Tears came again. It was too much to think about.

A few days later and following some other appointments, I sat on the bed and ventured into the box again. This time I removed the booklet that described what a mastectomy was like and the at-home follow-up care. The booklet explained that I would need help for a little while with some things, including care of a drain tube that would be inserted during the surgery to rid the chest area of excess fluid. The booklet included line illustrations of a woman demonstrating the emptying of the tube. Simply drawn, the picture was not offensive, yet the impact was tremendous. There she stood, with one breast and a straight line where the other one used to be. It looked for all the world to me like the “forbidden” symbol: NO smoking! NO dogs! NO breast! Fighting nausea, I closed the booklet, put it back into the pink tissue in the box, and wept. “Lord, I don’t want to be that woman! I *cannot* be her! I can’t go through this!”

Sobbing, I sought for comfort from the Lord. I had been through so many things in the past and had always found Him faithful. I knew that He had permitted this, but it didn’t make any sense to me. What was I supposed to learn? Why now? He seemed to be so silent. I put the box with the pink tissue under the bed, hating even the sight of it.

When I had first begun having pain in my breast, I had ignored it for several weeks. I had had a normal mammogram just months earlier. Besides, I had just been helping my little sister, who is going through chemotherapy for breast cancer, and I was certain that I was having “sympathy pains” or heightened awareness or something. But then I discovered the lump—very noticeable. How had I not found it before? I made an appointment with my doctor and tried not to think the worst. “Casting down imaginations...” Wasn’t that what 2 Corinthians 10:5 said? But my doctor was concerned. His assistant gave me a hug and scheduled another mammogram. Still not too worried (what were the “chances” that my sister, who is ten years younger, and I would both have this thing at the same time?), I went for the test. It didn’t look good. Afterward, I was told, “We’re getting a room ready to do an ultrasound.” That being done, the radiologist told me the lump was “worrisome” and explained why. But I was trying *not* to worry, “casting down imaginations...” and all. That had become my watchword. She scheduled me for a biopsy that very afternoon and an MRI the following day. I went home to wait—and to pray.

And then I was thrust quickly into the whirl of doctor’s appointments and decisions and preparations. Some days after I had put the box away, I ventured onto the internet, boldly viewing post-mastectomy images. I pulled out the white box from under the bed and watched the DVD, with its stories of other women who had cancer. Again, the nausea overwhelmed me and the feeling that this was not real.

Shaken and afraid, I called my friend. I told her what I had seen and of my fear and unwillingness to go through with any of this. She gently reminded me that the Lord gives us strength for *this* day (Mt 6:34), and that along with casting down imaginations and taking every thought captive (2 Cor 10:5), we are to “Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).

I knew all of this. I had been trying to incorporate these things all along, but for some reason I had been unable to grasp the real meaning as it applied to *my* circumstances. Didn’t I already *have* cancer? It was no longer a vain imagination but a reality. The upcoming surgery and all that I had seen of what would follow were imminent. But suddenly, with her words, my friend had reminded me of something that I had forgotten. I couldn’t just apply Scripture as a formula, denying what I knew to be true. These events were coming up, but they were *not here yet*. I couldn’t grab onto the grace of God that would be poured out for those moments until I was *in those moments*. I needed to remember to live in the “now” with the Lord. And suddenly, I had peace. I could rest in the place where the Lord had me right then, not looking to what lay ahead. God had finally gotten through to me.

On the morning of my surgery, the Lord directed me to Romans 12:1: “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” I had always taken that verse to mean “present your life, your works, your goods.” On that particular morning, the words struck a different chord: “Present your body...” Could I do that? Could I go into this operation as not being taken there by force or circumstance but trusting that God was leading me in this? Could I willingly give my body to Him, no matter what might lie ahead?

Sitting in the preparation room before surgery, my two daughters and I made small talk as various nurses and attendants came in and out, performing different tasks. We prayed together, and then the anesthesiologist escorted me to the operating room. I had to walk, dragging my IV pole, and as I did I pictured Abraham and Isaac, trudging up the hill to an unimaginable event, yet full of confidence in God’s goodness. In the surgery room, I climbed up on the table and lay down. For a brief moment, before all my perception dissolved in drug-induced darkness, I pictured myself lying on an altar before my Father, whom I trusted and loved beyond measure at that very moment.

Afterward, I was amazed to discover how deep and wide is God’s grace. The panic I had felt beforehand, looking at images and thinking ahead to this very moment, was nowhere to be found. Discomfort? Yes. An unsightly scar? It goes without saying. But on top of these “light afflictions” was a peace so unbelievable that I am still in awe of it. The gentleness of the Lord in His care for me, in His provision of the perfect doctors for each situation, in the offer of my friend (an RN) to come and stay with me for several days after the surgery, through the love of my children as they called and visited, in the prayers and meals of my friends, and above all, in the realization that I knew with all of my heart that I belonged to Jesus, body and soul. I had found that His grace is sufficient for every need and that He provides it moment by moment. His purposes are His own—I need not question what He is doing.

Am I cured? I don’t know. The prognosis is good, but the oncologist said that the disease can return at any time somewhere else. So I take the medicine that’s supposed to help prevent that, but I don’t trust in medicine or in doctors or in myself. I trust the Lord that no matter what lies ahead, His grace and strength will be there for me at exactly the moment that I need it! And beyond all of that, this “light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor 4:17). Who could ask for better than that? I’m going to add that Scripture verse to the white box under my bed.

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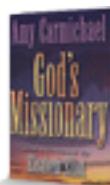





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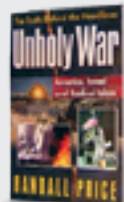


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APRIL 2010

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