

# THE BEREAN CALL

P.O. Box 7019 Bend, Oregon 97708

www.thebereancall.org

February 2004

## The Vanishing Gospel

Dave Hunt

One of the greatest sorrows for lovers of God is the fact that the vast majority of mankind selfishly and ungratefully live day after day without even thinking of the Creator to whom they owe their existence and who holds their eternal destiny in His hands. So it is even with many who claim to know Him. How often do *you* tell God you love Him, and thank Him for His love and grace and the salvation He has given you in Christ? When was the last time?

The miracle of our bodies, with their trillions of unfathomable cells and chance-defying organs such as the eye and brain, the ingenious design displayed in nature, and the mystery of soul and spirit loudly declare: “[I]n the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gn 1:1) and He made man “in his image” (1:26-28). Yet most people embrace the outrageous fraud of evolution.

This world’s contemptuous disregard of its Creator makes me weep for His sake; and, as the old song says, “causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble” for the judgment that is coming upon mankind! “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Ps 9:17). And *forget God* they surely have.

Paul declared: “even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind [to] all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness...[They are] haters of God...inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...without natural affection...who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death...do the same, [and] have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom 1:28-32). The connection is undeniable between the evil foretold for “the last days” (2 Tm 3:1-7) and the godless “lifestyles” popularized on trendy TV shows.

Hollywood has long glorified and exported all manner of ungodliness. The marketing of evil provides billions of dollars in profits through promoting youth rebellion; sexual “freedom” and wanton perversion; mutilation of the body; obscene, suicidal, and murderous lyrics; and gangland and satanic clothing. Could Sodom and Gomorrah have been much worse?

Homes are invaded and families destroyed by immoral, corrupting media, leaving consciences “seared with a hot iron” (1 Tm 4:2). Many Christians enjoy what would have shamed and embarrassed them a few years ago. An estimated 50 percent of professing Christians have been attracted to internet pornography.

And to attract those thus corrupted, many of the largest and fastest-growing churches mimic the world in “seeker-friendly” and “youth-oriented” services that exploit sensuality and compromise the truth. *The Christian Science Monitor* (12/30/03) reported that “megachurches are good at reaching young people raised in an entertainment-saturated culture....Many have...a rock-concert feel to them...[At the] largest congregation in the United States, with more than 25,000 attendants each weekend...Victoria Osteen steps to the podium in front of 16,000 cheering Sunday worshipers and proclaims: ‘We’re

**For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.**

*Matthew 16:25*

going to rock today!’” *Worship Leader* (Nov-Dec ’03) reported, “...the Jesus People erected [a] worship ritual...from the preeminent communal ceremony of their generation—the rock concert.”

Through “contemporary Christian music” and “contemporary worship,” the church has been converted to the “religion” of the world! Some of the largest presumably evangelical churches have designed their Sunday morning services based upon what the ungodly want. Missing are the fear of a holy God’s wrath against sin, trembling repentance, and grateful faith in Christ, the eternal God who became man through the virgin birth to suffer the full penalty of God’s judgment in our place. Seeker-friendly churches must not “offend” with the Truth, but pamper with the flattering “gospel” of self-esteem, self-love, and positive thinking—a “gospel” that cannot save. As Paul foretold, “they will not endure sound doctrine...” (2 Tm 4:3).

Creating large, rich churches is not new. In *A Woman Rides the Beast* (see offering list), we show that the Roman Catholic Church—the world’s largest and wealthiest—grew out of a marriage

between the Roman world and the church, making “Christianity” the state religion. Historian Will Durant explains, “...the world converted Christianity...[Paganism] passed like maternal blood into the new religion, and captive Rome captured her conqueror” (*Caesar and Christ*, 657, 672).

Roman Catholicism grew by wedding itself to the dominant pagan religion in Italy, Spain, Latin America, Africa, the Philippines, etc. Haiti is said to be 85 percent Catholic and 110 percent Vodoun. New Orleans, “the most Catholic city in America,” (*Our Sunday Visitor*, 10/15/95) is its voodoo capital.

And now, “Protestantism” is creating megachurches by merging with the “new paganism” in today’s culture—a culture that is becoming ever more anti-Christian and anti-Israel.

In blatant defiance of God and His Word, the nations have robbed Israel of most of the land God gave His chosen people as “an everlasting possession” (Gn 17:8). In further insolence, and sadly under the leadership of America’s Christian president, the world is determined to give more of Israel’s land to Arabs/Muslims as a reward for their hatred of Christ and religious vows to exterminate the Jews.

And Islam intends to take all.

Today’s world doesn’t need more entertainment and “positive” messages assuring the “hurting” that God loves, forgives, “accepts them as they are,” heals their “inner child,” and has an exciting plan for their lives. Mankind needs the changeless convicting truth that leads sinners to repentance and salvation. God’s holy character has not changed; the separation between man and God caused by sin—and the judgment to come—have not changed; nor has God’s remedy in Christ been outdated and revised. On these basic facts the Bible is clear and uncompromising.

Like the father with the “prodigal son” (Lk 15:11-32), a gracious God is ever eager to embrace repentant sinners. But His holiness and justice allow pardon only for those who accept the blood of Christ poured out upon the Cross on their behalf.

We must preach the gospel *everywhere* to *everyone* (Mk 16:15). It must be believed for *anyone* to be saved from eternal separation from God: “the gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom 1:16); “there is none other name...whereby we *must* be saved

(Acts 4:12); “what *must* I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...” (Acts 16:30,31). The warning is solemn and clear: “he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn 3:36).

Yet Robert Schuller (whose *Hour of Power* reaches 20 million viewers weekly) declares, “We have to find God in our own way...” (*Larry King Live*, 12/19/98).

Rewriting the Bible, Schuller turns God’s solemn warning, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” into *Believe in the God Who Believes in You* (Thomas Nelson Publishers). Paul had “no confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3)—but God believes in us?

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tm 1:15). Yet Schuller, self-proclaimed “founder of the church growth movement” (his annual Institute for Successful Church Leadership has attracted tens of thousands of pastors from around the world), claims that “attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition” is an “unchristian strategy” which is “destructive [and] counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise...” (*Christianity Today*, 10/5/84)!

David F. Wells writes, “In another age, Robert Schuller’s ministry...might well have been viewed...as comedy....Sin, he says with a cherubic smile, is not what shatters our relationship to God [but] that we do not esteem ourselves enough. In the Crystal Cathedral, therefore, let the word *sin* be banished....Christ was not drawing a profound moral compass in the Sermon on the Mount; he was just giving us a set of ‘be (happy) attitudes’...” (*No Place for Truth*, p. 175).

We are commanded to “preach the word...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tm 4:2). God’s Word is the foundation of our faith—yet that foundation is being undermined. “Christian psychology” takes the theories of atheists such as Freud, Jung, Rogers, Maslow, et al., and repackages their lies as truth that improves God’s holy and perfect Word.

Bruce Narramore, following in his uncle Clyde’s footsteps, admits, “Under the influence of humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, many of us Christians have begun to see our need for self-love and self-esteem. This is a good and necessary focus” (*You’re Someone Special*, Zondervan, p. 22). Yet Paul warned against thinking too highly of oneself (Rom 12:3) and urged, “let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil 2:3). But that was before today’s church surrendered to the surrounding culture.

Attempting to build large and successful churches, many of today’s pastors draw upon secular motivational speakers’

advice designed to foster worldly success. Tragically, this is the basis of much that is offered by Rick Warren (a graduate of Schuller’s Institute), the most popular and influential “church growth” guru today, whose methods and example are being followed by literally tens of thousands of fellow pastors worldwide—and by millions of lay readers of his books.

Warren does offer much sound advice in *The Purpose Driven Church* and *The Purpose Driven Life*. Commendably, he attempts to support most points with “nearly a thousand quotations from Scripture” (*Life*, p. 325). But the “scriptures” he quotes are speculative paraphrases such as *The Message* (see TBC Q&A Oct. ’95) by Eugene H. Peterson (NavPress).

“Every word of God is pure” (Prv 30:5), we “live...by every word of God” (Lk 4:4), and are “born again...by the word of God...which by the gospel is preached...” (1 Pt 1:23-25). Yet *The Message*, like other paraphrases, substitutes man’s words for God’s words! Peterson says that *The Message* is “not...a word-for-word conversion” of God’s Holy Word into modern language but *what he thinks God’s Word means*—not

**Self-realization is anti-Christian. All this is vigorous paganism, it is not Christianity. Jesus Christ’s attitude is always that of anti-self-realization. His purpose is not the development of man at all; His purpose is to make man exactly like Himself, and the characteristic of the Son of God is not self-realization but self-expenditure.**

*Oswald Chambers*

a translation but an *interpretation* (Introduction). What audacity to rewrite the Bible! Yet such shameless perversions of God’s Word are Warren’s major support for his thesis.

Paraphrases based upon “dynamic equivalency” partake of two destructive errors: 1) instead of translating the *words* of Scripture, they interpret in modern language what they believe are the *ideas* presented; and 2) they dumb down the language to make it “understandable.”

*Interpretation* is proper in sermons and commentaries, which listeners/readers can compare to the Word of God. *The Message*, however, is offered as “This *version* of the New Testament...” (p. 7), misleading readers into thinking they have the *Scriptures* in their hands. Even J.I. Packer and Warren W. Wiersbe praise *The Message* as Scripture (back cover)—which it is not.

John 3:17, for example, “that the world through him might be saved,” reads, “He came to help, to put the world right again.” “Saved” means redeemed from the judg-

ment we deserve for our sins, and fitted for heaven—but “to help” merely assists our efforts. And “to put the world right again” sounds like social or political reform! Such flagrant perversion of God’s Word permeates *The Message*—and Warren turns to it for support.

Such paraphrases rewrite Scripture in simple language to make the *ideas* understandable. But there is much depth in God’s Word that even the most mature Christian finds difficult. The “deep things of God” are revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10), not by simplifying God’s words. Peter said that in Paul’s epistles were “some things hard to be understood...” (2 Pt 3:16). Obviously the depth of Scripture is lost in *simplifying* it.

*The Purpose Driven Life* never presents the biblical gospel, which alone saves. Readers are told to “learn to love and trust God’s Son, Jesus” (p. 37); that if they “have a relationship with God through Jesus,” they needn’t fear death (p. 40); that “your identity is in eternity, and your homeland is heaven” (p. 48); and that “Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ. If you are not sure you have done this, all you need to do is *receive* and *believe*” (p. 58).

None of the essential elements of the gospel—that man is a sinner under God’s judgment, that Christ is God and man through a virgin birth, that He paid the penalty for our sins, that He resurrected the third day—is given (1 Cor 15:1-4). Readers are offered “friendship” with God through believing in a “Christ” who went to the cross because He “would rather die than live without us” (p. 79)! That is *not* the gospel!

The reader is told that his genetic makeup, physical features, talents, personality, the details of his daily life, etc., are exactly what God has foreordained: “God prescribed every single detail of your body....He planned it all for *his* purpose...” (pp. 22, 23). “You’re just what he wanted to make” (p. 25). Not so. The cumulative effects of man’s rebellion have created a pool of genetic distortions in humanity resulting in a deformed world with distorted beings that God never intended.

Warren justifies this fatalistic view from *The Living Bible*: “You [God]...scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe” (Ps 139:16)—not even close to what that verse actually says! Is every *sinful* thought and deed exactly what God has planned?! Men are not sinners but puppets if everything is exactly what God has decreed.

Let us be careful to “preach the word” and “obey the word” and allow Christ the “living word” to live through us as we offer sinners the biblical “gospel of God” (Rom 1:1) that truly saves. And let us “earnestly contend” for this unchangeable faith (Jude 3). TBC

## Quotable

We are living in days when standing for the truth is considered an act of intolerance. Being willing to compromise is considered an act of graciousness. Being loose with the truth is [considered] better than standing for the truth.

G. Christopher Willis, quoted in *Milk & Honey*, October 2003

"[Tomorrow, as my guest on the *Hour of Power*] in the Crystal Cathedral, you will offer your first public prayer."

Robert Schuller to agnostic Larry King, on *Larry King Live*, Dec. 19, 1998

I found many volumes of business management and pop-psychology on [Hybels' Willow Creek] staff members' bookshelves, but I never found a volume of classical theology....More than five hundred individuals met at the church each week in various [12-step] self-help groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, Sexual Anonymous)....The steps suggest a belief in a Power greater than ourselves, "God as we understand Him"...whatever we choose...human love, a force for good, the group itself, nature, the universe, or the traditional God...individuals could not evangelize or otherwise teach other participants about God. [Hybels'] weekend messages drew heavily on psychological principles....

G.A. Pritchard, Willow Creek Seeker Services [a thorough 1-year study], pp. 273-74

## Q&A

**Question: Do you think Judge Roy Moore was right in his actions to resist the removal of the Ten Commandments from his courtroom? If so, why?**

**Answer:** Yes. The Ten Commandments belong in every courtroom in every country as the foundation of mankind's entire legal system. Of course, the courts are supposed to enforce the innumerable legislated regulations known as "the law of the land" in each country. But those who make and enforce such laws are "ordained of God" to uphold "the ordinance of God [as] minister[s] of God...to execute [God's] wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom 13:1-4). There is no other basis for law.

If there were not one true God who created the universe and made man in His image, then "right and wrong" would be as

meaningless for man as for animals. But "right" and "wrong" are eternal absolutes, independent of majority opinions, legislated regulations, or court decisions. They reflect the very character of God and are written by Him in each heart and mind. Every conscience bears witness to that fact—a fact that proves beyond question the validity of the Ten Commandments and that they belong in every courtroom. This is the standard by which every person, regardless of religion or culture (unless his conscience is perverted), judges his own and his fellows' conduct, and all human laws and court decisions as well.

It was in obedience to this law of God written in his conscience that Judge Moore rightly disobeyed the decision of a human court. He followed the apostles' example: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and God will reward him.

The only possible complaint would be that Moore included the fourth commandment: "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex 20:8). This is the one exception to the fact that every human conscience bears witness to "the law written in [every] heart" (Rom 2:14,15). No one has a conscience to keep the Sabbath. That was for Israel only, and its inclusion is the only basis for any complaint of "religious bias." On the other hand, it *is* part of the Ten Commandments as a historic document.

Tragically, the removal of the Ten Commandments and Judge Moore is just one more step in denying the Creator and attempting to take over His universe, bringing His righteous judgment upon this increasingly wicked world. Yet, the Qur'an is displayed in the lobby of the New York City Police Department headquarters.

**Question: A Calvinist gave me six verses not dealt with in *What Love Is This?* How do you respond? I am not a Calvinist and am looking for more insight. The verses are: Acts 3:16; 11:18; 18:27; 1 Corinthians 12:9, 13; 2 Peter 1:1.**

**Answer:** In 1 Corinthians 12:13 ("all made to drink"), there is nothing to support Calvinism. Paul is referring to Christians: those "baptized into one body." The subject is the working and gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church, *not* salvation, much less predestination or election. Nor does "made" mean "forced." If we were *made* to drink of the Holy Spirit in the sense of being forced, then *all* Christians would live perfect Spirit-filled lives, and there would be no purpose for the judgment seat of Christ with "fire [to] try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor 3:13) or for rewards. This verse doesn't teach Calvinism.

The metaphor "to drink" defines "made." Drinking requires faith, effort, and cooperation on the part of those through whom the Holy Spirit works. If grace is "irresistible," bending the will of "totally depraved" sinners and *causing* them to believe the gospel, why doesn't it *cause* them after they are saved to live perfect lives? If all is of God and nothing of man, then the human experience is just a giant puppet show—which every conscience knows is not the case.

In fact, Calvinists ought to avoid this verse because of the word "all" and its clear connection as well as contrast to what Paul said about Israel: they were "*all* baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did *all* eat the same spiritual meat; and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:2-4). Yet many of them "were overthrown in the wilderness" (v. 5).

What can the Calvinist say? Were some never saved in the first place? Then how is it that *all* were baptized and partook of Christ? Were some once saved but lost their salvation? Neither scenario fits Calvinism. Surely *some* were true believers, most were not. Yet *all* were delivered from Egypt, *all* partook of the Passover lamb, *all* partook of the same spiritual food and drink, etc.

James White avoids 1 Corinthians 10:2-4, as does Boettner. None of the 13 contributors to *Still Sovereign* touches it, and both MacArthur's Study Bible and Sproul's Geneva Study Bible ignore the obvious problem for Calvinism. Admitting that it is "an embarrassment to those of the Reformed persuasion," Dillow attempts to face the problem in *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (pp. 54-59), but is ambivalent. R.T. Kendall declares that *all* of those who came out of Egypt were saved and are in heaven—clearly not true. God was going to wipe them all out for their sin (Ex 32:10), many were executed for their rebellion, and many were swallowed by the earth and went "down quick into the pit" (Nm 16:30)—surely into hell.

Clearly, there were no "elect" within Israel who alone were chosen for salvation. Salvation was offered to *every* Israelite without exception. That is why Calvinists avoid the Old Testament pictures of Christ's coming sacrifice (as James White does in my debate with him in book form: *Debating Calvinism: Five Points, Two Views* – see offering list). *None* of the Old Testament examples fits any of the five points of Calvinism. Furthermore, many who were delivered at the Passover from Egypt were slain by God; and many who were healed through looking in faith to the

serpent lifted up were lost eternally.

Books by Calvinists avoid the Old Testament when it comes to God's dealings with Israel, the Passover, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, and the Levitical sacrificial system. Why? Because they were for *all* of Israel, thus refuting "limited atonement," i.e., that Christ died only for the elect. There is no hint of an elect within Israel who alone were the recipients of God's grace. To the Calvinist, the word "made," fits irresistible grace. But *all* Israel were made to drink of that Rock; yet *all* were certainly not believers, most perished in the wilderness, and many were judged instantly for their sin.

As for the other verses, Acts 3:16 says "the faith which is by him" and 11:18 says "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life...." Of course, faith and repentance *are* from God, as is everything we enjoy. This does not say, however, that repentance or faith are given to only a select group, much less that either is irresistibly imposed upon anyone. Every breath that anyone draws is a gift from the One who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25)—but man must do the breathing.

The same applies to the other three verses, "them that have obtained...faith" (2 Pt 1:1); "which had believed through grace" (Acts 18:27), and "faith by the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:9). The Calvinist tries to make faith a special gift of God given to only the elect, and only after they have been sovereignly regenerated by God. On the contrary, *never* does the Bible say that faith is sovereignly given by God; *always* faith is credited to the individual (Mt 9:22; 15:28; Mk 10:52; Lk 7:50; 17:18, etc.). Eleven times Scripture refers to "thy faith," 24 times to "your faith" as well as to "our faith...my faith...their faith...his faith," etc.—but Calvinists avoid these scriptures in their books.

**Question: Was there any other way for God to forgive our sins besides the Cross? If there was, why didn't He use it—or did He?**

**Answer:** No, there was not. You know the scriptures: "I [Jesus] am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn 14:6); "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12); "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation..." (Heb 2:3); "the gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom 1:16), etc.

In the Garden, Christ pleaded with His Father: "If it be possible [for man to be saved any other way], let this cup [i.e.,

the Cross] pass from me" (Mt 26:39). The answer was "No, there is no other way."

We have broken the law of our infinitely holy Creator. The penalty for sin is separation from Him in eternal torment. He cannot compromise His justice without condoning our sin, thereby breaking His own law and becoming as guilty as we are.

There was only one way that God "might be just" and yet justify sinners (Rom 3:26): the penalty must be paid in full. Only Christ, who is both infinite God and man, could pay that penalty for mankind. And He did. Salvation is a gift of God's grace to all who believe on and by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. There is no other way—nor could there be.

**Question: While Jesus was in the womb of His mother, who was sustaining all of creation?**

**Answer:** Jesus, of course. He is God, One with the Father, unchangeable, eternal, and could never cease to be God, the Creator and sustainer of all (Jn 1:3; Col 1:17; Heb 1:2, etc.). He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8). This is a great mystery beyond human comprehension.

So as a fetus in Mary's womb, Jesus was still the infinite God. No wonder Paul wrote, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tm 3:16). We don't understand it, but we know it is true. There is no other way to account for creation and redemption.

**Question: We know that the biblical God's proper name is Yahweh, a Hebrew word. How can one who speaks only Arabic know the biblical God's proper name? What is God's proper name in Arabic, or Chinese, etc.?**

**Answer:** Just as our English Bible gives the meaning of the Hebrew, Yahweh (God's name), as "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex 3:14), so that phrase would be found in the language of every Bible translation. The reader would learn the Hebrew name Yahweh by looking this verse up in a concordance.

There is no word-for-word equivalent of Yahweh in other languages. Therefore, just as we who speak English refer to God's name as Yahweh, so would those who speak other languages. Of course, if the translation of the Bible into some language were inaccurate, there would be a problem. Such is the case in the Arabic Bible, which uses "Allah" on the pretext that it is the only word for God in Arabic, when *ilah* is the generic word for God.

## News Alert

**The Christian Science Monitor 12/30/03**  
[Excerpts from "The rise of the American megachurch" by Kris Axtman]: After a rousing live performance of "Jesus is better than life," broadcast over three Jumbotrons in the Compaq Center, Victoria Osteen steps to the podium in front of 16,000 cheering Sunday worshipers and proclaims: "We're going to rock today. This place has been rocked a lot of times, but it's never been rocked for Jesus."

It has been home to two Houston Rockets championships and plenty of other memorable games and events. But earlier this month, the Compaq Center took on a new role as city leaders officially turned the keys over to Lakewood Church—the largest congregation in the United States, with more than 25,000 attendants each weekend, according to Church Growth Today.

In an era when small and medium-sized churches of almost every faith are losing members, megachurches continue to grow—last year by four percent. Their success is due in part to the ushering in of a new business-savvy approach to religion. But more important, experts say, these churches are thriving because of what's being ushered out.

Gone are traditional religious dogma, rituals, and symbols, replaced by uplifting songs and sermons. Congregants are taught that—through God—they are victors, not victims. The messages are encouraging and easy to swallow, and no one is called a sinner. It's "Jesus meets the power of positive thinking."

"There's none of that old-time religion; none of that hell-and-damnation, fire-and-brimstone preaching," says Alan Wolfe, director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. "The message tends to be more upbeat, one of empowerment. And it seems to be working. These churches are packed."

"We tried other churches closer to home," says Angela DeSelle, waiting in line to buy Lakewood T-shirts at a former Compaq concession stand. "But we kept coming back. Our teenagers love it here." Back in his seat amid the sea of people, Joshua, their 14-year-old son, mutters in typical teen fashion: "It's different. It feels a lot more comfortable here."

In 1970, there were 10 megachurches nationwide (defined as non-Catholic churches with at least 2,000 weekly attendants). Today there are 740, according to Church Growth Today, a Bolivar, Mo., organization.

## Dave & TA's Itinerary

Mar 12-14	Fairhaven Bible Chapel San Leandro CA (510) 568-2488
Mar 15	Calvary Chapel San Jose CA (408) 269-8331
Mar 26-28	Apex Baptist Church Apex NC (919) 362-6176
Apr 3-4	Bear Lake Conference Apopka FL (407) 869-0198
Apr 16-18	Calvary Church of Port Orchard Port Orchard WA (360) 876-7288
Apr 23-25 Dave & TA	Prophecy Conference Heritage Bible Church Gretna LA (504) 392-4900
Apr 29- May 9	Albania 355-68-223-1763

## Letters

Dear Brother Dave,

I have just read your book *When Will Jesus Come?* and I wanted to write and tell you how much I have enjoyed your masterpiece on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It should be used in classes on the doctrine of last things—it would clear up a lot of the false teaching that is going around nowadays. RC (OH)

Hi friends!

There's a "famine of bread" here, as in much of Christendom. I'm currently going through my old *TBCs*—it's amazing how such a concentrated focus can enlighten and bless. Dave's and T.A.'s articles are very incisive and to the point. The Q&As are most helpful... Your books are so thoroughly researched and the subject treatment, comprehensive. For example, *What Love Is This?* is really a text/reference book—a classic. What impresses most is the unthreatened and real Christian attitude presented to critics... That is a tremendous witness—unfortunately very rare today. TT (Australia)

Dear Dave,

I've believed all along that psychology can be dangerous... People combine a little knowledge of behavioral psychology with God's Word... They're convinced they know what they're talking about (or choose to be convinced). They end up hurting themselves and others. KR (FL)

Dear Ones in Christ,

I would like to share my thoughts with you concerning your first Q&A in the Dec. '03 edition... pertaining to how our Lord's body was created or prepared.

The one word I...didn't find in your reply was the word "blood." Leviticus 17:11, 14 states, "For the *life* of the flesh is in the blood..." Since the life of man is in his blood and man must die because of sin, it can be stated that there is death in the blood. The very fact that sin affected the blood of man (his life) necessitated the virgin birth of Christ if He was to be a son of Adam and yet a sinless man. For this reason, Christ could partake of Adam's flesh, which is not inherently sinful, but He could not partake of Adam's blood, which was completely sinful. Because He had not one drop of Adam's blood in His veins, He did not share Adam's sin. It is a medical fact that from the time of conception to the time of birth not *one single drop of blood* ever passes from the mother to the child or from child to mother. The blood comes from their father at the time of conception, and thus it is the father who gives life (the blood) to the child at conception. That's why the Bible says the father begets (gives life to) and the mother bares (carries and gives birth to). In Hebrews 2:14 we read, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same..." The Greek word for "partakers" is *koinoneho*, and means "to share fully," so all of Adam's children share fully in Adam's flesh and blood. When we read that Jesus "took part of the same," the word is *metecho*, which means "to take part but not all." The children take both flesh and blood of Adam, but Christ took only part, that is, the flesh part, whereas the blood was the result of supernatural conception. RJ (CA)

Dear Ones at Berean Call,

We are so very thankful for your newsletter and all the books by you, Dave. Our precious daughter-in-law is a born-again Christian and has worried so about her Catholic dad and mother. They always rejected her efforts to talk to them about God's Word. Her mother died, and her dad was beside himself with grief. He was saying he didn't know anything for a certainty. Our son...explained salvation to him and told him it was a gift from God—all he had to do was accept it. He said, "You mean it's that simple?" Our son assured him it was. He prayed with him, and it was like a light came on in his soul. He told our son that he was a new man, that a burden had lifted from him. BD (TX)

Dear Dave and Tom,

Just wanted to drop you a note to encourage your radio show on CSN. I...always find the time spent to be rewarding and informational. The Scripture that comes to mind says, "my people perish for lack of

understanding." Your program is helping to correct that problem. BD (WA)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I have almost finished reading *What Love Is This?* I do not claim to be Calvinist, nor Arminian... Your book is the only book I have read that examines Scripture without trying to prove one of the two sides of this theological argument. I ran across an interesting quote in Calvin's commentary on Psalm 1: "From his characterizing the godly as *delighting* in the law of the Lord, we may learn that forced or servile obedience is not at all acceptable to God, and that those only who are worthy students of the law who come to it with a cheerful mind, and are so delighted with its instructions, as to account nothing more desirable or delicious than to make progress therein" (p.9). SM (KY)

Praise God!

I'm truly enjoying reading your book *A Woman Rides the Beast*. I'm in prison, and I was asked to take the trash and recycle to the Recycle Center, and this book was about to be destroyed. RW (prisoner, IN)

## TBC Notes

### Please Pray for Us

We don't want to do anything that isn't covered (even smothered!) in prayer. In Acts 12:5 the church prayed "without ceasing" for Peter's circumstance and ministry. Paul prayed without ceasing and exhorted all believers to do likewise (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Every blessing that takes place at TBC, from the wonderfully encouraging letters and the necessary financial support to the grace for persevering through the trials, is an answer to your bringing Dave, me, the staff, and our families before the Lord.

As we look forward to carrying out the various projects the Lord has graciously given us to do this year, pray that first and foremost we concern ourselves with pleasing Him, not only in *what* we do, but especially in *how* we go about it.

T.A. McMahon  
Executive Director

The Berean Call is a nonprofit 501 [c] [3], tax-exempt corporation registered in the State of Oregon. It is overseen by an independent board which has full and final authority over all corporate assets, personnel, and affairs. (2/04)

## Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

Matthew 16:13

**Mary Baker Eddy** (founder of Christian Science): "[You must] recognize that Jesus Christ is not God..."<sup>1</sup>

**Yasser Arafat** (leader of the PLO): "[Jesus was] the first Palestinian fedayeen who carried his sword."<sup>2</sup>

**Paul Yonggi Cho** (Pastor of the world's largest church): "You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth... He is bound by your lips and by your words... Remember that Christ is depending upon you and your spoken word to release His presence."<sup>3</sup>

**Benny Hinn** (televangelist): "Don't tell me you have Jesus. You ARE everything He was and everything He is and ever shall be..."<sup>4</sup>

**Joyce Meyer** (televangelist): "You cannot go to heaven unless you believe with all your heart that Jesus took your place in hell."<sup>5</sup>

**Mahatma Gandhi**: "I cannot say that Jesus was uniquely divine. He was as much God as Krishna, or Rama, or Mohammed, or Zoroaster."<sup>6</sup>

**Mikhail Gorbachev** (Soviet political leader): "Jesus was the first socialist, the first to seek a better life for mankind."<sup>7</sup>

**Robert Schuller** (televangelist): "In other words, Jesus had an ego. He said, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' Wow, what an ego trip He was on."<sup>8</sup>

**Fred Price** (televangelist): "The Bible says that He has left us an example that we should follow His

steps. That's the reason why I drive a Rolls Royce. I'm following Jesus' steps."<sup>9</sup>

**Louis Farrakhan** (leader of the Nation of Islam): "You don't have to look anywhere for your Jesus. I represent Him....Who is Jesus, who is Elijah? Jesus and Elijah are one in the same...I am that Elijah that was to come and now is."<sup>10</sup>

**Joseph Smith** (founder of Mormonism): "I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam....Neither

Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I..."<sup>11</sup>

**John Lennon** (of the Beatles): "We're more popular than Jesus now."<sup>12</sup>

**Creflo Dollar** (televangelist): "I'm telling you, Jesus wasn't poor, and He didn't wear no rags....Jesus didn't have no rags on. He wore designer clothes, honey!"<sup>13</sup>

### What did Jesus Say?

- I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)
- I am the good shepherd. (John 10:14)
- I and my father are one. (John 10:30)
- I am the resurrection and the life... (John 11:25)
- He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. (John 5:23)
- ...before Abraham was, I am. (John 8:58)
- I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)
- I am come a light into the world...(John 12:46)
- ...I am meek and lowly in heart...(Matthew 11:29)
- The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. (Matthew 17:22-23)
- ...[B]ehold, I come quickly...(Revelation 22:12)

### ENDNOTES

1. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 1875 writings of Mary Baker Eddy (reprint, 1994), 361:11-13.
2. United Nations press conference in 1983.
3. *The Fourth Dimension*, (Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1979), Vol. I, 83.
4. Hinn, teaching tape, *Our Position in Christ* #2, 1990.
5. *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make* (Harrison House, 1998), 1991, 3.
6. <http://directionstoorthodoxy.org/t/share/docs/Quote.doc>.
7. *Daily Telegraph* (London, June 16, 1992).
8. Donahue Transcript #08120, 12 Aug 1980, 10.
9. *Ever Increasing Faith*, TBN Dec. 9, 1990.
10. CBN's *Newswatch Today*, March 6, 1996.
11. *History of the Church* (Deseret Book Company, 1973), Vol. 6, 408-9.
12. *Evening Standard*, March 4, 1966.
13. *Crusade*, February 9, 1999.

Whom do you say Jesus is?