

"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily,

[to see] whether those things were so."
—Acts 17:11

Living as Bereans

Rob Yardley

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

—TITUS 1:9

THIS IS PART THREE in our series of articles on being a Berean. Tom McMahon wrote "Being a Berean," an article that laid out who we are as a ministry. Tom and Dave started The Berean Call to help get God's message out through newsletters written by Dave Hunt (and later by Tom, too). In part two, Dave wrote a newsletter entitled, "More on Being a Berean" that continued the theme of what our ministry stands for with examples of error being taught in our Lord's name. This newsletter will continue on those themes and our desire to do God's will out of love for Him.

We start with the very first commandment, which Jesus said is "...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19), which the Lord demonstrated because "...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), "...was buried, and...rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

God saved us from an eternal punishment that we fully deserve, but He didn't stop there. He has given us His Word, which He magnifies above His name (Psalm 138:2). In addition, Jesus promised that He would send from the Father (John 15:26) the Spirit of truth, who will

guide us into all truth (John 16:13). With God's Word and His indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16), He "...hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

God's Word is powerful in the lives of both believers and unbelievers. The Bereans in Acts 17 were Jews being presented the gospel by Paul, and they are commended because they "...received the **word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The Lord used Apollos to "...mightily [convince] the Jews...shewing by the **scriptures** that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:28). In their outreaches, the apostles preached the **Word** in Samaria, Salamis, Perga, and many other cities (Acts 8:25; 13:5; 14:25; 15:36; etc.). Jesus told a group of Jews who sought to kill Him, "Search the **scriptures**; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:18, 39).

It is with **words** that the Lord chose to communicate with mankind, forbidding *any* images. He "...[wrote] with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18) the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:4). After the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, many things changed in man's relationship with God—no more required sacrifices by the sons of Aaron (Exodus 29); no more mandatory observance of sabbath days (Exodus 31:15); men were no longer required to come before the Lord three times in the year (Exodus 23:17); no more dietary restrictions (Leviticus 11, etc.). However, the commandment against graven images

is set in stone. Art had risen to a high level in the 1st century AD, yet God did not choose to use images, or even descriptions, of the Man Jesus Christ. It is obvious why He didn't: how could you accurately depict the One who said to Philip, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..." (John 14:9)?

In 1982, my wife and I moved to Greenville, South Carolina, so my new bride could complete her senior year at Bob Jones University. BJU had what they called a "Sacred Art Museum." I wasn't sure what sacred art could be, given that the Lord had forbidden graven images. Much to my surprise, the museum was full of images of one who was supposed to be "Jesus Christ." In many cases he was depicted as a baby or child (sometimes a graphically naked one), sometimes in Mary's arms, sometimes with a crown. He was also depicted as an adult, sometimes effeminate, sometimes a strapping man. He was depicted on the cross, with a halo...image types that you would expect to see at the Vatican Museum, not at a fundamentalist Christian university. The wildly disparate images could not possibly be the same person, but had one thing in common: none of them was a true depiction of the Lord Jesus Christ "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Peter 3:22).

At that same time, BJU was involved in a Supreme Court battle over their tax exempt status because they forbade interracial dating or marriage. Dr. Bob Jones III, BJU president at the time, said,

"Bob Jones University is opposed to interracial marriage, and I believe every Christian should be [opposed to interracial marriage] on the basis of the principles of the Word of God..."¹ and

"God doesn't want the black race to become white or the white race to become yellow or the yellow race to become green. God doesn't want that! He wants the distinctions to remain lest we help the cause of Antichrist in bringing about that obliteration of the differences that God has established."²

BJU required students to get involved with a local fellowship, but they "excommunicated" any church in the Greenville area that allowed an interracial couple to attend their fellowship. BJU's influence was such that being banned by the University in Greenville at the time was tantamount to a church death sentence. I wasn't

sure what an interracial married couple was to do if they moved to Greenville. Should they attend a liberal church (since the conservative churches feared the consequences of allowing them in), or get divorced, or...? I couldn't find anyone who could answer that question.

Doctor Jones' main text for the message quoted above was the 11th chapter of Genesis. The Lord's only spoken

words in Genesis 11 are, "Behold, the people is one, and they have all **one language**; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there **confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech**" (Genesis 11:6-7). This passage deals with languages, not races.

The Bible deals with the issue of races succinctly. God has said that He has "...made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..." (Acts 17:26): there is only one race, the human race. God does deal with cultures in the Bible: Paul wrote to Titus, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true..."

I WILL WORSHIP TOWARD
THY HOLY TEMPLE, AND
PRAISE THY NAME FOR THY
LOVINGKINDNESS AND FOR
THY TRUTH: FOR THOU
HAST MAGNIFIED THY WORD
ABOVE ALL THY NAME.

—*PSALMS 138:2*

(Titus 1:12-13). This passage is clearly a generalization about the culture that had developed on Crete because right before this, Paul told Timothy, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest...ordain elders in every city...If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:5-9). There were godly candidates for being an elder on the island of Crete, but the Cretian culture was debased.

I spoke to faculty and senior administration to no avail. I wrote to Bob Jones III and noted that his chosen text of Genesis 11 quoted above is about the confounding of languages, not the establishment of races: if he believed that “maintaining God’s distinctions” was truly God’s will, logically he would have forbidden foreign language instruction at Bob Jones University instead of forbidding interracial dating. BJU held to their stance and subsequently lost their tax-exempt status before the Supreme Court in the case *Bob Jones University v. United States*.³

BJU was perhaps the best-known university that marketed itself as a fundamentalist institution. Fundamentalism has a bad name in the world and in the church, but true fundamentalism is the only rational position for a Christian to take. As Dave Hunt wrote, “If to be a fundamentalist means that one adheres to the sound fundamentals of math, accounting, chemistry, or whatever one’s profession, then I happily accept the label. And since the Bible

is literally God’s Word and inerrant, embracing and standing true to *its* fundamentals is the only intelligent choice.”⁴ We must insure when defending the fundamentals, they are God’s fundamentals, not our personal preferences. Neither celebrating images of Jesus nor forbidding interracial marriages are defended biblically.

In extolling His Word, the Lord said, “Every **word** of God is pure...” (Proverbs 30:5). Jesus said, “...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). The Lord has given us His Word to be understood, and sometimes He makes small changes that make a big difference. At the lake of Gennesaret, Jesus told Peter, “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets [plural] for a draught” (Luke 5:4). Peter replied, “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net [singular]” (Luke 5:5). Whether through willful disobedience or a misunderstanding, Peter only let down

KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE
THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND
THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD
DWELLETH IN YOU?

IF ANY MAN DEFILE THE
TEMPLE OF GOD, HIM SHALL
GOD DESTROY; FOR THE
TEMPLE OF GOD IS HOLY,
WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE.

—1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17

a single net. Following Peter’s inappropriate response, the crew “...inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake” (Luke 5:6). In contrast, the resurrected Christ appears in John 21, and He tells the seven disciples to let down the net (singular). Despite being full of great fishes, the net did not break (John 21:4-11).

Another singular/plural distinction with a significant impact is noted in Paul’s epistle to the Galatians. The Lord wrote through Paul, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). Many of the “seed” (Hebrew word *zera*‘) passages in Genesis refer to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (i.e., the Jews), but the Lord is highlighting the blessing the nations

receive in Jesus Christ, e.g., “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:18). Even with the clarification, some translations of Galatians 3:16 are poorly rendered in English, e.g., “Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ.”⁵ According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, the plural of “offspring” is also “offspring.”

When studying with others, we are to evaluate even trusted sources (like The Berean Call) or teachers, even as the Bereans checked out the Apostle Paul. As a young Christian I listened to Walter Martin, who referred to himself as “The Bible Answer Man.” From him I was able to learn much about the teachings of the Mormons and the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and how to effectively share with people who used the same words I did, but with a different meaning. Walter frequently recommended the New International Version (NIV) as the best and most scholarly English Bible translation available. I knew that the Bible was God’s Word and I wanted the best that God had available, so I bought an NIV for my Bible reading and study. Imagine my surprise when I read the Gospel of Mark in my NIV and found that Mark’s gospel “ended” with chapter 16, verse 8, which reads, “Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.” Below that verse was a large blank section with bracketed statement that read,

[The earliest and most reliable ancient manuscripts do not have verses 9-20.]⁶

The MacArthur Study Bible similarly has a footnote: “The external evidence strongly suggests [verses 9-20] were not originally part of Mark’s Gospel. While the majority of Greek manuscripts contain these verses, the earliest and most reliable do not....”⁷

This was followed by the last 13 verses of Mark, verses that the reader has just been led to believe are not trustworthy. It is difficult to imagine that even the most jaded cynic would think that the Lord completely omits any appearance of the resurrected Jesus Christ from one of His gospel accounts. After reading that, I went back to using the King James Version, the translation that was used at the fellowship I attended and that we use at The Berean Call.

By God’s grace, we at The Berean Call will continue as Paul exhorted Timothy: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.... [F]ollow righteousness, faith, [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves...” (2 Timothy 2:15, 22, 25). May we be led of the Holy Spirit and walk in obedience with the Lord, speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), remembering “...though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not [love], I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

TBC

END NOTES

1. Bob Jones III, BJU Tape *God’s Barriers Between Men*, January 15, 1982.
2. Bob Jones III, BJU Tape *God’s Barriers Between Men*, January 15, 1982.
3. At the turn of the century, BJU removed their ban on interracial relationships.
4. Dave Hunt, “Am I A Fundamentalist?”, TBC Newsletter August 1998.
5. Galatians 3:16, English Standard Version.
6. The latest revision of the NIV has moved up the text and has the bracket section stating [The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.].
7. John MacArthur, ed, *The MacArthur Study Bible, 2nd Edition, English Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2021), 1366.

QUOTABLE

Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms or is most eminent for temperance, chastity or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God wills, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness and has a heart always ready to praise God for it. Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit, for it turns all that it touches into happiness.

—WILLIAM LAW (EXCERPT FROM *A SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT & HOLY LIFE*)

Q&A

QUESTION: I have kind of a loaded question concerning the kingdom parables of Matthew 13. I don't know if you are able to follow me on this, but the typical evangelical interpretation of the parable of the "leaven hidden in three measures of meal" starts with "leaven is usually bad in the Bible," but in this case it is good. This to me is not an acceptable interpretation, but I'm really perplexed as to why so many evangelical leaders, who undoubtedly are aware, at least, of the other interpretation still persist in this.

RESPONSE: The fuller context of this parable is found in Matthew 13:33-42, which includes the Lord's explanation of the "tares and the wheat." It is instructive that in the parable of the tares and wheat, the Lord has planted "good seed." We cannot deny that this is good. The enemy, however, has (using the same method) sowed his own seeds. The seed of the Lord permeating the world like leaven is good. Yet the tares (until the harvest) are virtually indistinguishable from the wheat. This is bad. Leaven is a natural development in the process

of making good bread and the process is used by both the good and the bad. And it is true that most references to leaven are used as a negative, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal 5:9, etc.).

This parable gives insight to what we are seeing in the world. Church congregations have tares in them, which have been planted by the enemy. Today, it seems like we are drawing close to the end, and perhaps the initial stages of the harvest are being seen. People speak about the problems of church splits, but often the "split" occurs because the good seed are withdrawing from congregations controlled (for the most part) by tares.

In summary, the short parable about the leaven has both good implications (God's seed working like leaven) and bad (Satan's seed also working like leaven and affecting the whole), as the Lord explains in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

QUESTION: In the recent lead article by Dave Hunt [February 2025], he says, "So by the gift of healing, the disciples could loose the sick from their bondage to illness; and by casting out demons they loosed souls from that form of bondage. Every Christian has the power, in the name of Jesus (as He would and to His glory), to do the same today." So, TBC thinks every Christian today has the power of Jesus and the disciples to heal the sick and cast out demons? If so, why isn't this happening all the time? I think you are wrong on this one.

RESPONSE: The issue regarding what Dave Hunt said is not the question. Rather, did he quote the Scriptures correctly and in context? You ask: "So TBC thinks every Christian today has the power of Jesus and the disciples to heal the sick and cast out demons? If so, why isn't this happening all the time?"

As Dave wrote: "The promise of having from the Father what two or three agree upon echoes Christ's similar promises concerning prayer, such as, 'Ask, and it shall be given you;

seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matt 7:7). All of these promises—binding and loosing, agreeing upon a request, or simply believing—seem very much alike. But what is meant? Christ surely does not mean that no matter what we bind, loose, agree upon, or ask, God will grant it like an overly indulgent grandparent. It is axiomatic that God has not turned His universe or mankind over to us to do with as we will.

“James declares that God, far from giving us a blank check, does not indulge our selfish desires: ‘Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts’ (Jas 4:3). John writes, ‘And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight...if we ask anything according to his will...we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him’ (1 Jn 3:22, 5:14-15).”

Consequently, those in the Third World Nations today where the gospel is now reaping greater numbers of the saved bear a likeness to the history of the church in its early days. Yet, even in our nation, there is a growing number of individuals who have come to the Lord through the intervention of the Holy Spirit operating in ways some have not more recently seen.

In short, with today's growing interest in the occult by our citizens, there certainly is a need for the Lord to do as He did in the early church. And, He does so in His time, place, and reason in using those who are available.

QUESTION: I challenge you to prove the Trinity without the help of Catholic Church councils like Nicea in 325 and others after. Also don't even give me the opinions from the early Church Catholic Fathers either. Also, don't even give me any theological eisegesis interpretation on who is God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

RESPONSE: You sound like you're not acquainted with our position on the Godhead. The Berean

Call has never referenced “Church” Councils in establishing that the Scriptures are the final authority as to whether or not the Trinity exists.

The key to understanding the Godhead is knowing His Word. To study the Trinity to the point of full understanding requires extremely finite individuals grappling with an infinite God. Further, we have to understand what is said in Scripture. Titus 3:4 speaks of “God our Saviour” and Titus 1:3 speaks of “God our Saviour,” while the next verse speaks of “Jesus Christ our Saviour” (1:4).

Isaiah 43:11 tells us, “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.” Yet in Acts 4:12 (speaking of Jesus), we are told, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

The declarations made are often explained by the idea that the one God takes on a different “mode” or existence. Yet Jesus, the Son, left the disciples at times to go and have conversations with the Father. As limited humanity, we cannot conceive of a simultaneous unity and diversity. Our closest “understanding” (and that a stretch) is what some call schizophrenia; but we are not deities.

Yet even the prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus contain elements foreign to anyone less than God: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic 5:2). Jesus is a distinct individual who regularly talks to His Father. “For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (Jn 12:49). He was also in submission to the Father.

That's just a few of the challenges to those who deny the Trinity (Godhead). We would encourage you to read what we have already written; there is quite a bit more (see—<https://bit.ly/4csqWT3>).

LETTERS

Dear TBC,

To say “Pope Francis is just a big-hearted guy who loves people” is a shockingly NAIVE and misinformed portrayal of a man who LEADS an organization that is OPPOSED to the True Gospel of Jesus Christ: and not only that, but a man who claims to REPRESENT CHRIST (Vicari di Christo) to the world: which, btw, is the textbook definition of the word ANTI-CHRIST. The HOLY GHOST, not any man, or a man-made organization, represents Jesus Christ, the Head of His church, and Savior of the world, to the church, and to those He is calling OUT of Satan’s world system (the Ecclesia). AM (email)

Dear T. A.,

I thank the Lord for you and Dave and all the discernment you have brought to the body of Christ. As a new Christian in the 1980s, TBC helped me so much to see the error of the [Roman Catholic] Church/Calvinism and the New Age Movement. I met you once near Southampton, UK, and found you to be such a humble and gentle man—and you gave me wise advice when I was withdrawing from an ungodly church. May the Lord bless all your days—long or short—with His peace and presence. AP (email)

Dear TBC,

Blessings to you all at the Berean Call. I just happened to notice a question in December’s newsletter about a person wanting to know about praying, whether using beads or some other kind of thing to hold on to would help them to pray better. Maybe if they just got quiet and put away ALL distractions and do what works for me...I talk with my Father like I would talk to anyone else, because He...wants a relationship with me. That might be the only appropriate way to spend time with your favorite Friend. It works very well with me because I’m always in prayer, and might not be able to

carry around some beads or, like you said, a distraction. Love your work and I pray blessings on your ministry. See you in the sky. SG (email)

Dear TBC,

[Concerning the video “King of Screens”, see—www.bit.ly/3ReYiem] “They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood” (1 John 4:5-6). Those involved in these so-called “faith” productions are of this world and speak from the viewpoint of this world. They are blind fools held captive to the will of the ruler of this world. They do not know the one true God and they do not obey the true gospel of Jesus Christ. They reveal themselves as pawns in the hand of the father of lies, used by him to craft false narratives that subvert the truth and seduce a multitude onto the broad way that leads to destruction. HH (email)

Dear TBC,

I am grieved and heartbroken. However they can, this new world ecumenical movement of gathering all religions into one big happy group is going strong. Pray that all these people who are involved or who get sucked into watching these movies will be able to separate the lies from the truth. In the last days there will be many who come to the true Christ, and perhaps the true and only God will use this blasphemy for His good. Anon. (email)

Dear TBC,

I didn’t know all these stories are claiming to come from the Bible; it’s blasphemy. Satan is trying to reach those that like to be entertained and have their ears tickled. TEACH DIRECTLY FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

Thank you for sharing and keeping us aware of the worst entertainment of all times. SM (email)

Dear TBC,

We walk by faith, not by sight. Without faith it is impossible to please God. We should be led by the still, small voice of the Spirit and not by scripts or actors' voices trying to portray Jesus. Even though maybe well-meant and intentioned, these movies and docuseries are presented through the media of entertainment.

The time watching them should be spent in prayer and the Word. The money to make them could be donated to missions. America desperately needs revival, not movies, acting, and entertainment. Sadly, one of the definitions for acting is "hypocrisy," pretending to be someone you are not. Believers are to be Christ-like, not acting a part, and not paid to do it. Sadly, this will greatly deceive and mislead children.

Horrible literary "license" is being practiced in *The Chosen* series with "clever" and "humorous" lines found nowhere in Scripture. Really an insult to God's Word and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Pray this will stop and all involved will repent of their sins. GJ (email)

Dear TBC,

I thank God for this ministry. Keep it up, Bereans. You are an eye opener and the Lord will not "forget your labor of love shown towards His name." God will justly judge all who are blaspheming and insulting Him and His holy Word to perfect judgment. They think they are wise and smart but they are fools. ID (email)

NOTE: Our purpose in this section is to simply show what kind of feedback we receive. We may respond to some of them in private whether or not we agree with their views.

NEWSWATCH

ON A POSITIVE NOTE

MIDWESTOUTREACH.ORG, 2/13/25, "ON A POSITIVE NOTE" [EXCERPTS]: According to "Most American teens 'very motivated' to know

about Jesus: Barna" by Leonardo Blair, Senior Reporter:

Although religious affiliation and church attendance are on the decline, more than half of American teenagers say they're "very motivated" to know more about Jesus, and just over 75% say they're at least "somewhat motivated" to learn about the centerpiece of Christianity, according to Barna Research.

While not a biblical worldview, there is an interest in churches that take the time to answer the questions and disciple the youth into a biblical worldview that could bring about a considerable change in culture as a whole.

(<https://bit.ly/42vAojW>)

PEDIGREE DOGS AND ARTIFICIAL SELECTION

CREATION.COM, 7/1/10, "PARADE OF MUTANTS'—PEDIGREE DOGS AND ARTIFICIAL SELECTION" [EXCERPTS]: When choosing a pet, many people opt for purebred pedigree dogs. Though they come at a price, it is easier to predict the eventual size, temperament, and needs of a purebred dog breed than for a "mutt." But as a new BBC documentary "Pedigree Dogs Exposed" shows, the cost of breeding purebred dogs is genetic as well as economic.

All dogs are descendants of a wolf-like ancestor. This ancestor had the genetic diversity that allowed people to breed dogs as different in size as the Chihuahua and the Great Dane. Other traits such as colour, temperament, and exercise needs are just as diverse among the breeds. This great variability is an example of just how much genetic variation is built into the various created animal kinds. Other breeds, as will be shown, are the result of downhill mutations.

Over many hundreds of years, humans have produced the various breeds by specifically selecting different traits to breed for; there are currently over 200 distinct varieties of dog,

but all belong to the same species, and could theoretically breed with each other....

Over time, breeding only for certain traits allows great predictability in what a dog's offspring will look like—a Dalmatian mated with a Dalmatian will produce Dalmatian puppies, and so on. When this occurs regularly, the type of dog becomes an official breed. But this predictability comes at a genetic cost. The breeders have drastically reduced the amount of genetic information in the population of dogs—such as for other coat colours and lengths, or different sizes or temperaments.

The Eugenics movement, founded by Darwin's cousin Francis Galton, held that the key to human improvement was in controlling who could reproduce with whom.... While we know today that the eugenicists' ideas about purity make no scientific sense, the documentary argues that The Kennel Club is one of the few organizations that still operate under the fundamental assumptions of eugenics.

(<https://bit.ly/3Eh8joi>)

SWEDISH WOMAN CONVERTS TO ISLAM, JOINS ISIS, HOLDS SLAVES

JIHADWATCH.ORG, 2/13/25, "SWEDEN: WOMAN CONVERTS TO ISLAM, JOINS ISIS, HOLDS YAZIDI SLAVES, FORCES THEM TO RECITE QUR'AN AND PRAY" [EXCERPTS]: What Lina Ishaq did after converting to Islam is wholly inexplicable in light of the picture of Islam that the Western political and media establishment pushes on

the public. Maybe that picture is inaccurate, eh?

"A Swedish court on Tuesday sentenced a 52-year-old woman to 12 years in prison on genocide charges, in the country's first court case over crimes by the Islamic State group against the Yazidi minority.

"Accused of keeping Yazidi women and children as slaves at her home in Syria in 2015, Lina Ishaq was convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, the Stockholm district court said in a statement....

"Ishaq also forced the Yazidis, who practice their own religion, to 'become practising Muslims' by making them recite Koran verses and pray four or five times a day.

"She also called the injured parties 'demeaning invectives such as "infidels" or "slaves"', the court said....

"Ishaq grew up in a Christian Iraqi family in Sweden but converted to Islam after meeting her late husband and Islamist Jiro Mehho, with whom she had six children, in the 1990s...."

(<https://bit.ly/4cwgTMH>)

NOTE: News stories are selected for reader awareness and as an exercise in discerning the times from a biblical perspective.

THE CALL *to* DISCIPLESHIP

EXCERPTED FROM *THE NONNEGOTIABLE GOSPEL* • PP 33-44 • BY DAVE HUNT

Go ye therefore, and [make disciples of] all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

—MATTHEW 28:19-20

CHRIST DIRECTED HIS DISCIPLES to preach the good news of the gospel to everyone everywhere. This command to His original followers has become known as the “Great Commission.” It is stated in two ways: “Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel...*” (Mark 16:15); and *make disciples* (Matthew 28:19-20). Those who preach the gospel are to disciple those who believe it. Born again by God’s Spirit into His family (John 3:3-5; 1 John 3:2), converts begin a new life as Christ’s followers, eager to learn of Him and to obey the One to whom they now owe such an infinite debt of gratitude.

Christ warned that some would seem to receive the gospel with great enthusiasm only to become entangled in the world, discouraged and disillusioned. They would eventually turn back from following Him. Many maintain a facade of Christianity without inward reality, deceiving perhaps even themselves. Never fully convinced in their hearts, they are unwilling nevertheless to admit their unbelief. “Examine yourselves,” Paul warned, “whether ye be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Of those who are genuine, all too few are able to give a *reason* for the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15). How many Christians are able to convincingly persuade an atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, or New Ager with overwhelming evidence and sound reason from Scripture? God’s Word is the sword of the Spirit, but few know it well enough to quell their own doubts, much less to convert others.

One of today’s greatest needs is for the solid

Bible teaching that produces disciples who are able to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once [for all] delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). That faith for which we must contend was delivered by Christ to the original twelve disciples, who were then to teach those whom they evangelized “*to observe all things*” that Christ had commanded them.

Through succeeding generations of those who have been won to Him and who have in turn, in obedience to their Lord, disciplined others, this unbroken chain of command comes down to us in our time. Not some special priest or clergy class but each Christian today, like those who have passed before, is a successor to the apostles. Think of what that means!

At the heart of Christ’s call to discipleship is the daily application of His cross in each life. Yet one seldom hears in evangelical circles Christ’s definitive declaration: “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me...[and] forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27-33). The call to discipleship must be honestly faced. Through the Cross we die to self and begin to live to our Lord in resurrection power (Galatians 2:20). Indeed, Christ’s death on the cross would have been a hollow act if it did not bring forth new life, for now and for eternity.

Resurrection life reckons the old life dead and makes no provision for the flesh (Romans 6:4,11; 13:14). Instead of the popular self-esteem, God calls us to deny self, to love truth and hate folly, to please God instead of others or ourselves, no matter what the cost in this life. Never mind social pressures from what others think, say, or do. We must be fully persuaded that what God thinks and what He will say when we appear before Him one day is all that matters.

As Jim Elliot, one of the martyrs killed in

Ecuador, said when as a young man he chose the mission field over more popular careers, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” That choice is only logical if one believes that time is short and eternity endless. Such commitment brings heavenly joy, peace, and a fulfillment that nothing earth offers can rival.

To those whom He called into a saving relationship with Himself, Christ said, “Follow me” (Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 16:24, etc.). This simple command, which our Lord repeated after His resurrection (John 21:19, 22), is as applicable to Christians today as it was when He called the first disciples.

Following Christ

What does it mean to follow Christ? Did He promise His followers that they would be successful, wealthy, and esteemed in this world?

God may grant earthly success to a few for His own purposes. On the whole, however, our Lord declared that those who were true to Him would follow in His path of rejection and suffering: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.... The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you....for my name’s sake...” (John 15:18-21).

Such was the lot of the early church. Yet today, as the key to “the good life,” Christianity is popularized. The idea of suffering for Christ doesn’t suit a worldly church. How strange such verses as the following seem to Christians in America: “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Philippians 1:29). Suffering is *given* to us? Paul speaks as though it were a *precious privilege* to suffer for His sake! After being imprisoned and beaten, the early disciples rejoiced “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). Such is the commitment to which the gospel actually calls us.

Christ told His disciples after the Resurrection, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21). The Father sent the Son as a

lamb to the slaughter into a world that would hate and crucify Him! And as the Father sent Him, so Christ sends us into a world that He promises will treat His followers as it did Him. Are we willing? Is this not your idea of Christianity? Then think again, and check it out against the Scriptures. We are further from Him and His truth than we realize!

Peter, who failed so miserably and was restored by the Lord, explained that Christians would be hated, falsely accused, and persecuted, and would be expected to suffer these wrongs patiently (1 Peter 2:19, 20; 4:12-19; etc.). Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote,

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness...” (1 Peter 2:21-25).

Christians are being imprisoned and martyred again in communist China, in Muslim countries, and at the hands of Catholics in Mexico. Similar persecutions could well overtake us in America. Already pastors are being fined and imprisoned and churches locked and sold by the state. In 1986, for example, Jefferson County, Kentucky imposed a licensing fee upon every “business, profession, trade, or occupation”—including pastors and churches.

Recently I listened, with tears welling in my eyes, as my wife, Ruth, read to me some of the stories from her Anabaptist heritage. For being rebaptized after they became Christians (and thus denying the efficacy of Rome’s infant baptism), these Anabaptists were burned at the stake. To escape the flames, many fled the Inquisition in Holland to Prussia. From there they fled to Russia, and in the closing days of World War II, many attempted an escape from godless and oppressive communism back to the West.

Out of one group of 611 leaving Russia, only 31 arrived back in Holland. Tramping day and night through the snow, unable to find food or shelter, some were caught and returned. Others were killed or died of exposure. Children were torn from parents, husbands from wives. The terror and agony were beyond imagination.

As Ruth read of the indescribable suffering, I thought of the thousands of Christians in America who find it necessary to enter “therapy” and spend months, if not years, dealing with comparatively trifling “hurts from the past.” I thought of the thousands of Christian psychologists who encourage their clients to pity themselves, to pamper their “inner child,” when what they need is to deny self, take up the cross and follow Christ!

In contrast, I was inspired by the testimony of those who suffered the loss of possessions, of loved ones, of almost every earthly hope and joy, yet triumphed through their faith in Christ. Going to a “therapist” and engaging in self-pity would have seemed incomprehensible to them when they had the Lord and His Word and when they knew that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17)!

The Strength to Stand

Whence comes the strength to stand against overwhelming suffering and to triumph as Christ’s faithful disciples? Oddly enough, victory comes not through our strength but through our weakness.

When Paul cried out for deliverance from a severe trial, Christ replied that He had allowed it to make Paul weak enough so that he would trust only in the Lord, rather than in his great abilities. “[M]y strength is made perfect in [your] weakness,” our Lord promised (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul exhorts us, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6). Did we not receive Christ in weakness as helpless, hopeless sinners crying out to Him for mercy and grace? That, then, is the way we are to walk this path of triumph in suffering—as

sinners saved by grace, weak and helpless in ourselves, and trusting totally in Him.

We are earthen vessels, but we contain a great treasure: “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). Such is the secret of our triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil. The load is too heavy for us to carry. What a relief to turn it over to Him! And what a joy to be delivered from the fear of man, from seeking to win the acclaim of this world, from seeking anything but His “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21) in that coming day.

Some manage to amass a fortune to leave at death to their heirs. Others have little of this earth’s goods but have great riches laid up in heaven for eternity. It takes little wisdom to know who of these have made the wisest choice and who have been truly successful.

God has an eternal purpose for our lives. Our passion should be to know and to fulfill that purpose, beginning here on this earth. One day, very soon, we will each stand before Him. What a tragedy to miss the very purpose for which we were created and redeemed!

You may say, “Yes, I want to be used of God, but I don’t know what He wants me to do.” Or, “I try to serve Him, try to witness for Him, and it all seems to come to nothing.”

Learn this: Greater than anything God can do *through* you is what He wants to do *in* you. What counts most is not *quantity* but *quality*, not so much your outward effort but your motive within—the purity of your heart rather than your prominence with men.

Moreover, what seems much in time may be very little in eternity. It is not one’s talents or energy but the empowering of the Holy Spirit that produces genuine and lasting results: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). Trust God for the filling and empowering of His Spirit.

Millions have laid down their lives for the faith. Their commitment to Christ meant so much that they would not compromise when

threatened with the most excruciating torture and death. Can we fathom their choice?

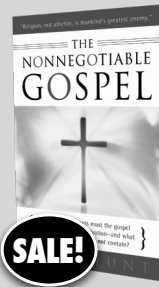
The martyrs could have chosen the ecumenical path of compromise, of avoiding controversy and affirming the “common beliefs of all religions,” and thus have escaped the flame or the sword. They chose instead to stand firm for the truth, to contend earnestly for the faith.

Christ calls us to do the same.

Paul said he had been “put in trust with the gospel” (1 Thessalonians 2:4). So have each of us. Let us be certain that we keep that trust for the sake of the lost and in honor of our Lord who paid such a price for man’s redemption!

There is no escaping the eternal choice that confronts us. Will we follow from afar, or will we

seek to follow in our Lord’s very footsteps? One day we will give an account before God for the path we choose. What joy there is now and will be eternally in being true to Him!



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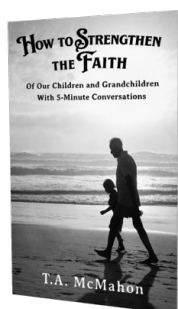
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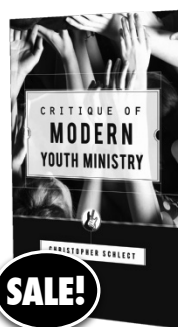


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Schlect—Youth ministry *must* return to the home. The church today does not expect what it ought to from children or their parents, and this can be attributed, at least in part, to a flawed concept of youth ministry. This need not, and should not, be so. Written by a former youth minister, this booklet is an inspired answer to the paramount problems found in today’s youth programs. The author states problems and their histories, and then provides the recipe for overcoming and dealing with them from a biblical standpoint. Above all, the intent of this booklet is to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. A wake-up call especially for parents, and anyone involved—or desiring to become involved—in youth ministry. —Cannon Press, 24 pp.

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Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

– Proverbs 22:6 (KJV)

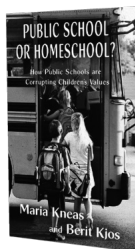


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Kneas/Putnam—The transgender agenda is already being practiced in some schools and is soon coming to schools nationwide. For the sake of our children, we cannot be apathetic; we must stand up for truth. This booklet boldly teaches the truth about Transgenderism, according to God’s Word.

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Kjos—From the author: “In this booklet, I want to give you a brief overview of what young people are being handed today in the form of books and literature. While much of this reading material is being touted as having value and virtue, the underlying sentiment is anything but that.” —Lighthouse Trails, 15 pp.

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10 Vital Things Parents Can Do to Help Children Keep Their Faith

Kjos—In a world where public schools, TV, movies, popular music, the Internet, and more all offer tempting counterfeits of what God promises His people, there is only one safe place for our children: in the loving arms of the Shepherd. This booklet offers 10 points of practical and Scriptural advice on how to raise your children. —Lighthouse Trails, 15 pp.

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