

WARREN



The
Berean
Call

SEPTEMBER 2008

THE SHAMEFUL SOCIAL GOSPEL

by T.A. McMAHON

NEW! HEAL OUR LAND A Ken Connolly DVD production



Ken Connolly, producer and narrator of the moving documentary on the life of George Müller, *Obstacle to Comfort*, delivers this stirring two-part examination of the Revival of 1859, including important historical examples and a biblical definition of true revival. Here are some excerpts: "What is a revival?" asks Connolly. "It is the sovereign, sudden, selective, sensational operation of the Spirit of God. It descends amid prayer, produces purity, and reaches the perishing. First," Ken begins, "it is sovereign. There is nothing man can do to pull it down or to pump it up. Books by good men have been written on how to have a revival. Godly, dedicated people have put the principles into practice but have never experienced revival. Revival is alone in God's sovereign will. Jesus spoke more distinctly when he said to Nicodemus, 'the wind bloweth where it listeth.' Second," Connolly continues, "it is sudden. It is possible that a man can go with a burden of sin and endure it for a long time. But during a revival, there comes a moment when it is unbearable. Can you imagine a dignified, well-dressed woman in the middle of the city, in the middle of the block, in the middle of the street, in the middle of the day, suddenly falling on her knees and crying from the agony of her heart, 'Oh, God, have mercy on me.' And when astonished people come to see what is happening, she turns to them and appeals, 'Can any of you lead me to Christ?' It is that suddenly that revival comes to the soul." Now re-mastered from VHS originals, this powerful program is perhaps even more needed today than when it was first produced. Ken Connolly went home to be with the Lord a few years ago, but he surely would have recommended this program as an antidote to the spectacles of today that substitute man-made media sensations for a true moving of the Holy Spirit.

DVD174

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COSMOS, CREATOR, AND HUMAN DESTINY: The "New Atheists," as they have been termed, are awfully angry at a God they say doesn't exist. Claiming that all religion is nothing more than "tolerance of pervasive myth and superstition," this seething mob of mockers is intent on stringing up, gunning down, and burying biblical Christianity. Enter Dave Hunt, internationally esteemed researcher, apologist, and defender of "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Taking up the whole armor of God, which includes the unshakable faith of a certain young shepherd boy, Dave Hunt's *Cosmos* brings the Goliath of Humanism crashing, face down, to the ground. Every pastor and professing believer will want to witness Dave's bold, biblical dismantling of vain imaginations, in order that they may be better equipped to cast down "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

THE BEREAN CALL

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

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SEPTEMBER 2008

The Shameful Social Gospel

T. A. McMahon

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."
Romans 1:16

For various reasons, Christians of different sorts have tinkered with "the gospel of Christ" as though it needed adjustments. Not major alterations, most will tell you, but just some minor tweaking here and there. The changes often begin by one's declaring that there is no real change involved, simply a shift in emphasis. Yet, no matter what the rationale may be, the end result is being "ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

To be "ashamed of the gospel" covers a number of attitudes from being totally embarrassed by it to thinking one can improve upon it a bit to make it more acceptable. One example of the former is the recent claim by an Emerging Church author that the teaching regarding Christ's paying the full penalty for the sins of mankind through His substitutionary death on the Cross is irrelevant and viewed as "a form of cosmic child abuse." More subtle examples include trying to make the gospel seem less exclusive, and the "softening" of the consequences from which the gospel saves mankind, such as the wrath of God and the Lake of Fire.

Prevalent among many religious leaders who profess to be evangelical Christians (i.e., Bible-believing Christians) is the promotion of a gospel that is acceptable to, and even admired by, people throughout the world. Today, the most popular form of this is the social gospel.

Although the social gospel is common to many new movements among evangelicals, it is not new to Christendom. It had its modern beginning in the late 1800s, when it developed as a way to address the various conditions in society that caused suffering among the populace. The belief was, and is, that Christianity will attract followers when it demonstrates its love for mankind. This could be best accomplished by helping to alleviate the suffering of humanity caused by poverty, disease, oppressive work conditions, society's injustices, civil rights abuses, etc. Those who fostered this movement also believed that relief from their conditions of misery would improve

the moral nature of those so deprived.

Another driving force behind the introduction of the social gospel was the eschatological, or end times, views of those involved. Nearly all were amillennialists or post-millennialists. The former believed that they were living in a (symbolic thousand-year) time period in which Christ was ruling from heaven, Satan was bound, and they were God's workers appointed to bring about a kingdom on earth worthy of Christ. Post-millennialists also believed they were in the Millennium, and their goal was to restore the earth to its Eden-like state in order for Christ to return from Heaven to rule over His earthly kingdom.

The social gospel, in all of its assorted applications, helped to produce some achievements (child labor laws and women's suffrage) that have contributed to the welfare of society. It became the primary gospel of liberal theologians and mainline denominations throughout the 20th century. Although its popularity alternately rose and fell as it ran its course, it was often energized by the combination of religion and liberal politics, e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement. Midway through the last century and later, the social gospel influenced developments such as the liberation theology of Roman Catholicism and the socialism of left-leaning evangelical Christians. It is in this present century, however, that the social gospel has gotten its most extensive promotion. Two men, both professing to be evangelicals, have led the way.

George W. Bush began his presidency by instituting the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. His objective was to provide government funding for local churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious ministries that were providing a social service to their community. Bush believed that programs run by "people of faith" could be at least as effective as secular organizations in helping the needy, and perhaps more so because of their moral commitment to "love and serve their neighbor." As he prepares to leave office, he has declared that he considers his Faith-Based program to be one of the foremost achievements in his tenure as president. Presidential candidate Barack Obama stated that, should he win the election, he will continue the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Rick Warren, the mega-selling author of *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The*

Purpose-Driven Life, has taken the social gospel to where it's never been before: not only worldwide but into the thinking and planning of world leaders. Warren credits business management genius Peter Drucker with the basic concept that he is executing. Drucker believed that the social problems of poverty, disease, hunger, and ignorance were beyond the capability of governments or multinational corporations to solve. To Drucker, the most hopeful solution would be found in the nonprofit sector of society, especially churches, with their hosts of volunteers dedicated to alleviating the social ills of those in their community.

Warren, acknowledging the late Drucker as his mentor for 20 years, certainly learned his lessons. His two *Purpose-Driven* books, translated into 57 languages and selling a combined 30 million copies, reveal the game plan for what Drucker had envisioned. Warren had local churches implement this vision from his books through his enormously popular 40 Days of Purpose and 40 Days of Community programs. To date, 500,000 churches in 162 nations have become part of his network. They form the basis for his Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan.

What is his P.E.A.C.E. plan? Warren's presentation of the plan to the church is found at www.thepeaceplan.com. On video, he identifies the "giants" of humanity's ills as spiritual emptiness, self-centered leadership, poverty, disease, and illiteracy, which he hopes to eradicate by (P)lanting churches, (E)quipping leaders, (A)ssisting the poor, (C)aring for the sick, and (E)ducating the next generation.

Warren uses the analogy of a three-legged stool to illustrate the best way to slay these giants. Two of the legs are governments and business, which have thus far been ineffective, and, just like a two-legged stool, cannot stand. The third very necessary leg is the church. "There are thousands of villages in the world that have no school, no clinic, no business, no government—but they have a church. What would happen if we could mobilize churches to address those five global giants?" Warren reasons that since there are 2.3 billion Christians worldwide, they could potentially form what President Bush has termed a vast "army of compassion" of "people of faith" such as the world has not yet experienced.

In addition to the *Christian version*, Warren has an expanded *inclusive version* of the P.E.A.C.E. plan that has drawn support

and praise from political and religious leaders and celebrities worldwide. At the 2008 World Economic Forum, he declared, "The future of the world is not secularism, but religious pluralism...." Referring to the ills besetting the world, he declared, "We cannot solve these problems without involving people of faith and their religious institutions. It isn't going to happen any other way. On this planet there are about 20 million Jews, there are about 600 million Buddhists, there are about 800 million Hindus, there are over 1 billion Muslims, and there are 2.3 billion Christians. If you take people of faith out of the equation, you have ruled out five-sixths of the world. And if we only leave it up to secular people to solve these major problems, it isn't going to happen" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGytW4yh0C8>).

To accommodate working with people of all faiths Warren has revised the "P" in his P.E.A.C.E. from "planting evangelical churches" to "(P)romoting reconciliation" and the "E" from "equipping [church] leaders" to "(E)quipping ethical leaders." Warren has elsewhere acknowledged his practical shift to pluralism: "Who's the man of peace in any village—or it might be a woman of peace—who has the most respect?...They don't have to be Christian. In fact, they could be Muslim, but they're open and they're influential, and you work with them to attack the five giants [to which he has added global warming]." He quotes a secular leader who affirms what he's doing: "I get it, Rick. Houses of worship are the distribution centers for all we need to do."

Warren has joined the advisory board of Faith Foundation, established by former British prime minister and recent Roman Catholic convert Tony Blair. The Foundation's goal is to further understanding and cooperation among the six leading faiths: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jewish. How does the Cross fit into this ecumenical gathering? It doesn't. Critical to achieving that ecumenical goal is the elimination of the problem of *exclusive* religions, a concern articulated by one of the World Economic Forum panelists: "There are some religious leaders in different religious faiths who, in seeking to affirm their own faith and its authenticity and legitimacy...deny other people their faith with its legitimacy and authenticity. I don't think we can keep going like this without... spawning the kind of hatred we are all here to try and solve. I think it's up to us to hold the clergy's feet to the fire of whatever faith. That we insist that we affirm what is beautiful in our own traditions while at the same time refusing to denigrate other faith traditions by suggesting that they are illegitimate, or consigned to some kind of evil end."

The Bible declares all the religions of the world to be "illegitimate" and "consigned" not to "some kind of evil end" but to their *just* end. Only belief in the biblical gospel saves humanity: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name [Jesus Christ] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;...He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Acts 4:12; John 3:36).

The history of the social gospel is, in nearly every case, a sincere attempt by Christians to do those things that they believe will honor God and benefit humanity. In every case, however, the practical working out of "benefiting humanity" has compromised biblical faith and dishonored God. Why is that? God's Word gives no commission to the church to fix the problems of the world. Those who attempt to do so are starting out under a false premise, "...a way which seemeth right unto a man," not God's way. So where can it go from there? "The end thereof are the ways of death," i.e., destruction (Proverbs 14:12). Furthermore, the problems of the world are all *symptoms*. The root cause is sin.

What percentage of the "people of faith," who comprise all religions and make up five-sixths of the world's population, understand and accept the gospel—the only cure for sin? Or how many of the 2.3 billion "Christians" in the world believe the biblical gospel? The numbers tumble down exponentially. "Yes, but...they are a massive volunteer force and distribution outlet of resources for slaying the giants of world suffering!" What does it profit the billions of "people of faith" who may alleviate some of the world's symptoms yet lose their very souls?

The social gospel is a deadly disease for "people of faith." It reinforces the belief that salvation can be attained by doing good works, putting aside differences for the common good, treating others the way we want to be treated, acting morally, ethically, and sacrificially—and that doing so will endear humans to God. No. These are self-deceptive strivings that spurn God's salvation, deny His perfect standard, and reject His perfect justice. Salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast." In fact, it is "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8,9). Jesus declared Himself to be condemned humanity's only hope for reconciliation with God: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). There is no other way, because God's perfect justice demanded that the penalty for sin for every human ("for all have sinned"—Romans 3:23)

be paid. Only the perfect, sinless God-Man could and did pay that infinite penalty in full by His death upon the Cross. Only faith in Him reconciles a person with God.

The shameful social gospel today not only promotes "another gospel," it helps prepare a kingdom contrary to the teachings of Scripture. "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). He will return from heaven (John 14:3) to "rapture," or catch, those who believe in Him (His bride) up into the clouds and take them to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The kingdom that remains on the earth will be the kingdom of the Antichrist.

Consistent with its amillennial/postmillennial beginnings, the efforts of the social gospel are earthbound in their attempted restoration of the kingdom of God. Eugene Peterson has infiltrated that heresy into his *Message Bible*: "God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again" (a perversion of John 3:17).

Rob Bell, in his book *Velvet Elvis*, reflects the "fix the earth" eschatology of nearly all Emerging Church leaders: "Salvation is the entire universe being brought back into harmony with its maker. This has huge implications for how people present the message of Jesus. Yes, Jesus can come into our hearts. But we can join a movement that is as wide and as big as the universe itself. Rocks and trees and birds and swamps and ecosystems. God's desire is to restore all of it....The goal isn't escaping this world but making this world the kind of place God can come to. And God is remaking us into the kind of people who can do this kind of work."

For Emerging Church leader Brian McLaren, this is the future way of life for the Christian. In an interview July 28, 2008, on *ChristianPost.com*, he said: "I think our future will also require us to join humbly and charitably with people of other faiths—Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, secularists, and others—in pursuit of peace, environmental stewardship, and justice for all people, things that matter greatly to the heart of God." No, what matters to the "heart of God" is "that all should come to repentance" and believe the gospel.

Anyone who puts his hope in this social gospel, which employs "people of faith" to make "this world the kind of place God can come to," needs to heed the words of Jesus in Luke 18:8: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" People of *all faiths*, yes, but certainly not "*the faith*," for which Jude exhorts true believers to earnestly contend. Lord, help us all not to be ashamed of Your gospel! TBC

Quotable

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). There is a great difference between prayer and the life of prayer. Almost everyone prays, but very few pray without ceasing. This is the habit of devotion. This is the altar of incense ever burning in the Holy Place. This is the fragrance of a heart that lives in the presence of the Holy One, and breathes the very life of God. This is the deep undertone of a sanctified life. It is from this that the sweetness, the gladness, the holiness, and the helpfulness come. Lord, teach us the habit of prayer, the prayer that springs spontaneously from the heart, and which neither secular duty, satanic temptation, nor the waves of sorrow, can interrupt, but which is only stimulated by the things that try us, until every experience becomes transformed into an occasion for communion and fellowship with God.

A. B. Simpson

Q&A

QUESTION: Would you please help me to understand Philippians chapter 1, verses 15-18: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." It seems like this opens the door to anyone who "names the name of Jesus."

RESPONSE: Paul, who pointedly warned the Corinthians against receiving "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4) whom he did not preach, could not therefore be giving license to anyone who preaches a false Christ. No, Paul's concern here was the motivation of the heart of those who preached the biblical Jesus. Some were envious of other Christians and/or their ministries. Though resentful, their message about Jesus Christ was true to the Word of God. In their methods of ministering, however, they wronged Paul or others who were receiving more attention, who were being more highly thought of, or who had a larger following, etc.

The attitude of those who preached "Christ of contention, not sincerely" involved selfish ambition. They even went beyond inwardly delighting in Paul's incarceration in Rome to somehow implying that his imprisonment was his own fault, thereby attempting to discredit him among their own supporters and those of Paul.

Paul, however, although he often corrected individuals and ministries that were deviating from the truth of God's Word, held preaching Christ *in truth* as paramount. His love of Christ and the gospel transcended his own suffering—in particular, the afflictions generated by envious Christians—yet by God's grace he could declare, "Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

QUESTION: I recently read an article on *onenewsnow.com* in which T.A. McMahon was quoted as being in opposition to what Rick Warren is doing to encourage Christians to help solve many of the problems that have plagued the world. I'm surprised that anyone who calls himself a Christian would object to his humanitarian efforts. Isn't Pastor Warren simply exhorting us to fulfill the numerous verses in the Bible that would have us demonstrate our Christianity by our good works?

RESPONSE: One of the main purposes of *The Berean Call* is to encourage believers to check out what they are being told or taught against what is presented in the Scriptures. That is not only what I encourage, it's what I try to do in my own life. The articles quoted me accurately as I challenged the biblical basis for what Rick Warren is promoting. No matter how sincere someone's "humanitarian efforts" may be, if they are not supported by the Word of God, they constitute "a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Warren has a goal of trying to solve the most pervasive ills of the world (poverty, disease, ignorance, the environment, etc.) through the involvement of "people of faith," i.e., those who follow the world's various religions. Initially (it seemed), his agenda was intended only for Christians and, supposedly, evangelical churches that would prioritize sharing the gospel in addition to doing good works. That later changed to allow the potential inclusion of the 2.3 billion people of every religious grouping that calls itself Christian (Catholics, Baptists, Orthodox, Mormons, Lutherans, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, etc.). Now it includes *all religious people groups* (amounting to five-sixths of the world's population) and their houses of worship as distribution centers for the goods and services required to meet the needs of the suffering world. This is Warren's 50-year global P.E.A.C.E. plan.¹

The practicality of what Warren hopes to do is rife with problems that I doubt many of Warren's supporters have considered. For example, what religious group is in

charge of this global religious operation, and which one will manage it at a regional and local level? Doctrinal differences are no small matter. Catholics today are persecuting evangelicals and Pentecostals throughout South America. Sunnis are killing Shiites and vice versa. Hindus are attacking Christian missionaries. Muslims are murdering Jews and burning Christian churches. Beyond that, and should there be some successes, who is given the glory, and who is to be thanked? Allah? Buddha? Jehovah? The Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints? Ganesha, the Elephant God, or Shiva, the Destroyer?

Warren addressed an audience of diverse religions at the World Economic Forum recently and presented his P.E.A.C.E. plan. He brought up the motivation for doing good, i.e., relieving the suffering of humanity, and noted that *his* motivation was Jesus Christ. He acknowledged that this wasn't *their* motivation and then added that it mattered little to him what their motivation was as long as they "did good."² "Good works" is the common denominator that Rick hopes will bring about the cooperative efforts necessary for his P.E.A.C.E. program to be successful. Successful according to whose standard? The world's or God's?

The critical question here is: Are Warren's humanitarian efforts true to the teachings of the Word of God or not? Good works aside for the moment, the fundamental issue is whether or not the Bible teaches an *exclusive God and the one way* of salvation. That is certainly its claim from Genesis to Revelation. Consider the following among hundreds of verses: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, and there is no God beside me." (Isaiah 45:5); "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:11); "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13); "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name [Jesus Christ] under heaven given among men, whereby we *must* be saved" (Acts 4:12); "I [Jesus Christ] am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

If there is no other true God but the God revealed in the Bible, and if salvation comes only through Jesus Christ—as the Scriptures declare—then all other gods and other ways of salvation are false, with no hope for their followers. That's not a message that paves the way for collaboration among the world's religions. One of the panelists sitting next to Warren at the Davos World Economic Forum complained that those who claim that their faith is the only true faith, and who deny the legitimacy of other religions,

breed hatred and obstruct the cooperation that is imperative among people of faith who are working for the common good. Warren made no comment.

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that God's salvation is received only by grace through faith, and that it is "not of [good] works, lest any man should boast." This belief is contrary to that of all the religions of the world; salvation for their followers is earned, obtained, realized, accomplished, etc., by their good works. To encourage that delusion today is akin to patting the lost on the back for working for the "common good" while ushering them into an eternity separated from God and subject to His wrath and the everlasting torments of the Lake of Fire.

The Bible makes a clear and continual distinction between the saved and the lost, the lives of the regenerate and the unregenerate, and those who are born again spiritually and the spiritually dead. There is nothing "good" the lost can do to please God (Romans 3:10-18). "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21). They can neither receive nor know the "the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14). They walk "in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:17-19). They are "dead in trespasses and sins," subject to "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1,2). They are God's enemies (Romans 5:10).

It is for these reasons that the Apostle Paul tells us, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Corinthians 6:14,15). The believer is exhorted to minister to unbelievers—but not *with* them.

Far from being a pride issue among Christians, every believer knows that he or she was once in the condition the verses above describe. Moreover, believers know full well that it is only by God's grace and mercy that anyone can be saved, and that salvation is freely available to whosoever will receive God's gift of eternal life with Him.

Christians certainly can be—and have been—wonderfully involved in humanitarian efforts as witnesses of the love of Christ. Titus 2:14 indicates that those who are saved are to be "zealous of good works." Ephesians 2:10 tells us that Christians

have been saved "unto good works." However, that witness can be quickly compromised as it accommodates man's way of accomplishing man's objectives rather than following the Scriptures. Furthermore, there is not a hint from the life of Christ or the acts of the apostles of any model or organized program for the church directed at eradicating poverty, disease, environmental abuse, ignorance, etc.—all symptoms of the sin condition of the world and the sin nature of mankind. The gospel is mankind's only hope. Therefore, anything that does not conform to the biblical gospel and to the truth of the Word of God in attempting to aid mankind, no matter how sincere, is a disservice of eternal proportions leading to dreadful consequences.

Jesus warned those who *in His name* believed they had "done many wonderful works" yet not according to "the will of my Father which is in heaven": "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

News Alert.....

Home School Legal Defense Association 8/11/08, A GREAT VICTORY FOR CALIFORNIA HOMESCHOOLERS [EXCERPTS]: In a unanimous decision, the California Court of Appeal for the Second Appellate District ruled that "California statutes permit home schooling as a species of private school education."

Today's decision stands in stark contrast to the opinion this same three-judge panel issued in February, which would have made California the only state in the union to outlaw home education had it remained in effect.

"It is unusual for an appellate court to grant a petition for rehearing as this court did in March," said HSLDA Chairman Mike Farris, "but it is truly remarkable for a court to completely reverse its own earlier opinion. We thank you for your prayers and give God the glory for this great victory."

When the court vacated its earlier decision on March 25, 2008, it invited interested organizations to file friend-of-the-court briefs. "I have never seen such an impressive array of people and organizations coming to the defense of homeschooling," said Farris, who was one of the attorneys who argued the case on rehearing along with Alliance Defense Fund attorney, Jeff Shafer.

California's three largest homeschool organizations, California Homeschool Network, Homeschool Association of California and Christian Home Education Association joined together in one brief to

defend the right of all parents to homeschool. HSLDA, Family Protection Ministries and Focus on the Family also joined in a separate brief. Numerous other private organizations came to the defense of home education as did California's governor, attorney general, and superintendent of public instruction.

[TBC: *Amazing, some good news out of California!*]

Onenewsnow.com, 8/13/08 [Excerpts from an Albert Mohler editorial]: THE GAY MARRIAGE ISSUE—Proposition 8 will appear on the November ballot in California. The proposition—put on the ballot by public support—is an attempt to return the state's marriage law to where it stood earlier this year, with marriage defined as the union of a man and a woman. In 2000 the people of California voted by an overwhelming margin to pass an initiative, Proposition 22, which stated: "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

That is where the matter stood until May 15 of this year, when California's Supreme Court ruled by a vote of 4-3 that "same-sex marriages" must be legalized and recognized in the state. Thus, Proposition 22 and all similar laws were struck down by the court, and the court ordered that the state must allow and recognize same-sex marriages, effective approximately one month later.

The California Constitution still does not mention "same-sex marriage." No such right existed before May 15. The right exists now only by judicial action, not by any amendment to the constitution. [The court ruled] that the right of same-sex couples to marry is a "fundamental right"—a right that is either enshrined within the constitution, drawn from the notion of natural rights, or a necessary implication of the constitution. The court also defined homosexuals as a protected group and thus deserving of special attention in questions of rights.

But the California Supreme Court is not the final authority in such matters—the people are. The court and its decisions are ultimately accountable to the people, who can, when motivated by great concern or outrage, change the court's composition or amend the constitution itself. The voters of California now have the opportunity to define and defend marriage and to return the state's definition of marriage to where it stood just three months ago.

[TBC: *Is it possible that the "Golden State" could dig up two righteous nuggets in a row?*]

Endnotes

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGytW4yh0C8>.
2. Ibid.

Speaking Schedule

On the advice of his doctor and the recommendation of TBC's Board of Directors, Dave has cancelled all of his speaking engagements that require travel beyond Bend through the end of the year. Lord willing, this will expedite his recovery, which has been plagued by recent setbacks.

Sep 5-7 **Great Lakes Prophecy Conference**
(TA) Appleton WI
 (920) 735-1242

Oct 31 **Bible in Culture Conference**
(TA) Birch Run MI
 (969) 743-6700

Nov 14-16 **TBC Conference**
(Dave/TA) Bend OR
 (800) 937-6638

Letters

Dearest Dave Hunt & TBC staff,

Your article "In the Name of Jesus" [July 2008], really spoke to me regarding our responsibility in proclaiming the gospel....You...point out the untruths that permeate the world today that affect even the firmest believers. There are few left who truly want to set their hearts and minds on Christ alone and who choose to stand in His truth....I thank you that I have found a common ground with all of you (this ground is shockingly eroding at a faster pace these days). That common ground is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Anchor, our firm foundation, our solid Rock on which we stand.... Thank you for speaking so boldly for Him. His glory shines brightly through TBC's faithful ones. KD (FL)

Hello,

I feel sorry for you to promote the myth and fake teachings about the Jews. Read Genesis 3:15, children of light and children of darkness. I know one thing, I won't see you in heaven! CG (UT)

Dear TBC,

I just read Dave Hunt's July article "In the Name of Jesus." I have been a Christian for more than 50 years and his article is one of the finest articles that I have ever read. He hit the "nail on the head" in every instance. Please express my gratitude to him. SL (OK)

Dear Dave and T. A.,

I wanted to write and thank you for the exhaustive work you guys do in contending for true Christianity. I want to commend [TBC] for the excellent job it does in the prophecy conferences. I've not been able to attend a conference, but I do make full use

of the videos you offer. I firmly believe that Christianity is not a "spectator sport," and since my true conversion I have tried to be as active in the Lord's work as I can....In these endeavors I encounter almost daily the insidious teachings that try to creep into the church. Your research and insights have been a valuable help to me and my fellow believers. BR (PA)

Dear Dave,

I just looked at a stack of *Berean Call* newsletters that I have been receiving free of charge and saving since Oct. 2004. I don't know how to express my gratitude for what your ministry means to me....I used to get angry with you because I thought you were too harsh in pointing out other people's errors in doctrine. But now I take every word to heart....You are teaching me to be a Berean....I went to a seeker-friendly church for several years.... Thanks to you, my eyes were opened and I really began to pay attention. I noticed that the pastor never spoke about certain things in his message, like Israel, the Tribulation, or hell, for example....He was really just a motivational speaker....I've since started attending a small church....The very first Sunday the pastor was speaking from Romans about how God is not finished with the nation of Israel. I was so refreshed to hear a Bible-based message instead of a message that's "all about me." I love that church! RD (OH)

Dear Dave Hunt and brethren,

Your newsletters are so refreshing to receive every month. I liked your last two (June and July), encouraging us to stand strong for the faith....I was the salutorian of my [Bible College program] graduating class and had to give a speech....Due to the fact that we had a mixed crowd I gave a speech that was listener friendly to all. Your article "In the Name of Jesus" led me to believe that I was wrong. I was trying not to offend....I should have used the [opportunity] to stand up for the faith. I was not doing anyone any favors by trying not to step on any toes. No true messenger of God's Word can go through life without offending others....Thanks for your newsletter. It's a great encouragement. JR (prisoner, MS)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

Please, please continue your work as you tell us plainly and truthfully from the Bible, God's message, as well as clear up questions, errors, lies, etc. I have found the whole paper very helpful. You expose everything to the True Light and are not swayed. My thanks to you and Tom McMahon. FB (Canada)

TBC Notes

Praying Without Ceasing

As a ministry, we receive numerous requests for prayer, many of them heart-rending in nature. We want to assure our readers that we take them seriously and devote our Thursday intercessory prayer time to lifting up your needs. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16) is a challenge and a privilege for each of us here at The Berean Call.

Coveting Prayer Without Ceasing

Dave and I are on the mend, although not without some seeming setbacks. Dave recently had to have spinal surgery and, more recently, had a bad fall resulting in a broken rib. Prior to this, he underwent prostate surgery. I (Tom) am facing additional surgery this month that will have me in the hospital for about a week. We covet your prayers, as we have seen them answered continually throughout our trials. We thank God daily for His loving kindness and tender mercies, and for your loving encouragement and prayer support.

TBC Conference in November

Although our conference is months away, Dave and I are looking forward to it with great expectation. First of all, by God's grace, we expect to be completely recovered from our recent and pending surgeries. That will be a wonderful relief, enabling us to enjoy fully the fellowship with attendees that has been our delight at past conferences.

Second, Dave is excited to share messages based upon the content of his upcoming book *Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny*. He believes it is his most important book yet. I'm thrilled about our other speakers, long-time friend Roger Oakland and fellow Oregonian Don Chittick.

Third, we just toured the recently completed Riverhouse Convention Center, overlooking the beautiful Deschutes River near downtown Bend. I hope many will join us as we glorify the Lord Jesus, proclaim His truth, and encourage one another in the fellowship we have in Him.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
T.A. McMAHON

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PRAYER GRASPS ETERNITY

Excerpt from *Why Revival Tarries*

No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a shopwindow to display one's talents; the prayer closet allows no showing off.

Poverty-stricken as the Church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of prayer. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.

The two prerequisites to successful Christian living are vision and passion, both of which are born in and maintained by prayer. The ministry of preaching is open to few; the ministry of prayer—the highest ministry of all human offices—is open to all. Spiritual adolescents say, “I’ll not go tonight, it’s only the prayer meeting.” It may be that Satan has little cause to fear most preaching. Yet past experiences sting him to rally all his infernal army to fight against God’s people praying. . . . God is not prodigal with His power; but to be much for God, we must be much with God.

This world hits the trail for hell with a speed that makes our fastest plane look like a tortoise; yet alas, few of us can remember the last time we missed our bed for a night waiting upon God for a world-shaking revival. Our compassions are not moved. We mistake the scaffolding for the building. Present-day preaching, with its pale interpretation of divine truths, causes us to mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals.

The secret of praying is praying in secret. A sinning man will stop praying, and a praying man will stop sinning. We are beggared and bankrupt, but not broken, nor even bent.

Prayer is profoundly simple and simply profound. “Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try,” and yet so sublime that it outranges all speech and exhausts man’s vocabulary. A Niagara of burning words does not mean that God is either impressed or moved. One of the most profound of Old Testament intercessors had no language—“Her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.” No linguist here! There are “groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Are we so substandard to New Testament Christianity that we know not the historical faith of our fathers (with its implications and operations), but only the hysterical faith of our fellows? Prayer is to the believer what capital is to the business man. Can any deny that in the modern church setup the main cause of anxiety is money? Yet that which tries the modern churches the most, troubled the New Testament Church the least. Our accent is on paying, theirs was on praying. When we have paid, the place is taken; when they had prayed, the place was shaken!

In the matter of New Testament, Spirit-inspired, hell-shaking, world-breaking prayer, never has so much been left by so many to so few. For this kind of prayer there is no substitute. We do it—or die!

— Leonard Ravenhill

BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP



"They Keep Watch Over Your Souls"

Strauch—Shepherding God's people is both a noble calling and a great responsibility. Leading, feeding, protecting, and caring for others requires skill, diligence, and a continual dependence on the Holy Spirit. Though frequently demanding, eldership remains a critically important task, for without proper shepherding, local communities of faith are slow to take on the character of Christ and often succumb to the enemy's constant attacks. In this series of eight important lessons on biblical eldership, Alexander Strauch addresses the key issues every man must consider when taking on or executing the office of eldership. Lewis & Roth, 6 CDs, approx. 4 hours.

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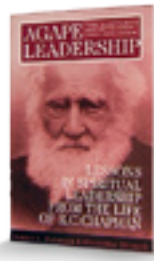


Biblical Eldership

Strauch—Misconceptions surrounding the doctrine of eldership have caused a great deal of confusion in churches worldwide. The five distinguishing characteristics of New Testament Christian eldership are outlined and defined. Lewis & Roth, 48 pp.

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Agape Leadership

Strauch—The lessons in spiritual leadership from the life of R. C. Chapman (1803-1902) provide us with an extraordinary example of agape leadership. "Whatever the difficulties of the times and our sorrow because of divisions in the church and a corrupt gospel in the world it is ever open unto us to please God. If this great success of pleasing God be not ours, in ourselves lies the hindrances." -R.C. Chapman. Lewis & Roth, 74 pp.

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When you order the Eldership Set (see above) get one free *Obstacles to Revival* tract pack

Oswald J. Smith.—"There is only one obstacle that can block up the channel and choke God's power, and that is *sin*." This 7-panel tract deals with removing different types of sin from one's life and restoring fellowship with God. Moments With The Book, 7 pp.

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GEORGE MÜLLER RESOURCES THAT ARE SURE TO INSPIRE AND EDIFY



Obstacle to Comfort

Connolly—George Müller of Bristol became a legend in his own generation. He was the builder of schools, a supporter of missions, and a father to some 10,000 orphans. The amazing issue of his life does not lie in what he did but in how he accomplished it. He operated by faith—relying solely on God to meet all of his needs and those of

the ministry he founded. He refused to accept any donations from unbelievers, and when he started his Scriptural Knowledge Institution (SKI) to accomplish these tasks, he and his partner possessed no more than one shilling—or twelve pence—together. He refused to tell anyone of his needs, mentioning them only to God, in private, on his knees. In stark contrast to many "faith ministries" of today, all of this was accomplished without fundraising appeals, emotion-driven crusades, or modern technology. George Müller's testimony is a pure example of God's grace through "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man." International Baptist Missions, 55 min.

DVD038

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A Brief Account of the Life and Labors of George Müller

Mrs. Müller
—Written by Müller's second

wife, Susannah, this book is a concise, faithful, and intriguing overview of Müller's remarkable life and work. It was intended to provide a low-cost, condensed version of Mr. Müller's multi-volume *Narrative*, which had ignited a revival that swept through Ireland, England, Europe, and even into Asia Minor beginning in the mid 1800s. Includes a collection of his journal entries titled, *George Müller on Money and Possessions*. Christian Communicators Worldwide, 161 pp.

B05316

wt .6 \$11.00



Answers to Prayer

Mueller—Prayer was the vital component of George Mueller's nineteenth-century ministry to Eng-

land's orphans. Through his narrative account, Mueller reveals how powerful and spiritually rewarding prayer can be in one's life. As Mueller penned, "I desire that all the children of God who may read these details may thereby be led to increased and more simple confidence in God for everything which they may need under any circumstances, and that these many answers to prayer may encourage them to pray." Moody Publishers, 126 pp.

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The Berean Call—February 2008 in Whitby, Ontario, Dave earnestly contended for the faith by participating in three debates held at the annual Toronto “Skeptics’ Conference,” moderated this year by a popular Catholic media personality. During the course of just two days, Dave debated a Hindu, a Muslim, and an atheist, skillfully presenting “a reason of the hope” that is in the heart of all true Christians and doing so “with meekness and fear.” DVDs are attractively packaged in a clamshell

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Religion Forum: Islam, Judaism, and the Truth

The Berean Call—T.A. McMahon participated in a religion forum at the University of Oregon that featured views of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

Although the non-debate format required that the speakers could only address and answer questions regarding their own beliefs, the content is quite informative, even rather startling. Viewers will be better informed on worldviews that oppose biblical Christianity and, we pray, be inspired and equipped to proclaim the gospel. A question-and-answer session followed the brief presentation by the speakers. We were permitted to video the proceedings, and though the audio quality is lower due to unforeseen circumstances, we offer this “value-priced” DVD as a helpful tool for understanding contemporary expressions of Judaism and Islam. One disc, 90 min.

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wt .1 **\$7.50**