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OCTOBER 2010

KNOWING AND LOVING GOD

by DAVE HUNT

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THE BEREAN CALL

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

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Knowing & Loving God

Dave Hunt

[The following is from the November 1993 issue of *The Berean Call*.]

"Hear, O Israel: . . . thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deuteronomy 6:4,5)

"Jesus said...This is the first and great commandment." (Matthew 22:37,38)

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23)

Both the Ten Commandments given to Israel and the moral law God has written in every conscience (Rom 2:14-15) require each of us to love God with our entire being. Such a demand is laid upon us not because God needs our love, for He is infinite and lacks nothing. Nor is it because God is self-centered or proud and thus demands that we love Him above all else. He commands us to love Him with our whole heart because nothing else could save us from our incorrigible enemy, Self.

This first and greatest commandment is given for our own good. God loves each of us so much that He wants to give us the greatest possible blessing: Himself. He does not, however, force Himself upon anyone, for that would not be love. We must genuinely and earnestly desire Him. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13) is the promise of God, who otherwise hides Himself (Is 45:15). And again, "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6).

This fervent seeking after God with the whole heart, without which no one can know Him, has always been the mark of His true followers. One of the psalmists likened his passion for God to the thirst of a deer panting for water (Ps 42:1,2). David expressed it the same way: "O God...I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee..." (Ps 63:1). What greater desire could one have than knowing God? Yet this most worthy pursuit is neglected even by Christians.

How astonishing that the infinite Creator of the universe offers Himself to such degraded creatures as ourselves! Nor is His love an impersonal cosmic force; it is inti-

mately personal. Think of that! Such love should awaken a fervent response within us. Yet how many of us express our love to God even once a day, let alone love Him with our entire being? Sadly, even Christians are caught up instead in the forbidden love of the world (1 Jn 2:15) and the pursuit of its deceitful rewards.

Loving God is the first commandment because our obedience to all His other commandments must be motivated by love for Him. Moreover, since God commands us to love Him with our whole being, then our entire life—yes, everything we think and say and do—must flow from that love. Paul reminds us that even giving everything one possesses to the poor and being martyred in the flames is in vain unless motivated by love for Him.

[LOVE]...SEEKETH NOT HER OWN
[SELF]...

— 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

If loving God with one's whole being is the greatest commandment, then not to do so must be the greatest sin—indeed, the root of all sin. How is it, then, that loving God, without which all else is but "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1), is not even found in the course lists of our theological seminaries? How can it be that this "first and great[est] commandment" is so neglected in the church? The sad truth is that among today's evangelicals it is not loving and esteeming God but self-love and self-esteem that are presented as the pressing need!

I speak to my own heart. At times I weep that, like Martha (Lk 10:38-42), in the busyness of serving Christ, I give so little thought or time to loving Him. Oh, to be more like Mary! How does one learn to love God without ever having seen Him (Jn 1:18; 1 Tm 6:16; 1 Jn 4:12,20)? Obviously, there must be a reason for loving God—or anyone. Yes, reason and love do go together. Love must result from more than a physical attraction, which, in itself, can only arouse a fleshly response. In addition to the outward appeal there are the inner beauties of personality, character, integrity, and, of course, the other's love response. God loves without such reasons. Our love, even for Him, requires them. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19).

Our heavenly Father loves even those who make themselves His enemies, those

who defy Him, reject His laws, deny His existence, and would tear Him from His throne. Christ proved that love in going to the Cross to pay the penalty for all, even asking the Father to forgive those who nailed Him there (Lk 23:34). Such is the love that the Christian, having experienced it for himself, is to manifest through Christ living in him: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Mt 5:44).

To love God with our whole heart and our neighbors as ourselves is not something we can produce by self-effort. Love for our fellows must be the expression of God's love in our hearts; nor can we love God except by coming to know Him as He is. A false god won't do. Yet at the 1993 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., Vice President Al Gore said, "Faith in God, reliance upon a Higher Power, by whatever name, is in my view essential." No one can love the "12-Step God as you conceive Him to be." That would be like loving some imaginary person. To know the true God is to love Him; and to know Him better is to love Him all the more.

Most of us have an all-too-shallow knowledge of God. Nor can our love for God grow except from a deepening appreciation of His love for us—an appreciation that must include two extremes: 1) God's infinite greatness; and 2) our sinful, wretched unworthiness. That He, who is so high and holy, would stoop so low to redeem unworthy sinners supremely reveals and demonstrates His love. Such an understanding is the basis of our love and gratitude in return and will be the unchanging theme of our praise throughout all eternity in His glorious presence (Rv 5:8-14).

There can be no doubt that the clearer one's vision of God becomes, the more unworthy one feels, and thus the more grateful for His grace and love. Such has always been the testimony of men and women of God. Job cried out to God, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor [hate] myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Isaiah likewise lamented, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Is 6:5).

Such recognition of their sin and unworthiness did not decrease but enhanced the

saints' love for God and appreciation of His grace. The more clearly we see the infinite chasm between God's glory and our sinful falling short thereof (Rom 3:23), the greater will be our appreciation of His grace and love in bridging that gulf to redeem us. And the greater our appreciation of His love for us, the greater will be our love for Him.

There is no joy that can compare to that of love exchanged. Nor is there any sorrow so deep as that of love spurned or ignored. How it must grieve our Lord that His redeemed ones love Him so little in return! That grief comes through in scripture passages such as these: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Is 1:2). "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer 2:32).

Even more reprehensible than forgetfulness and neglect is the teaching of Christian psychology that God loves us because we are lovable and worth it. Richard Dobbins, best known Assemblies of God psychologist, suggests that one repeat, "I am a lovable, forgivable person." Bruce Narramore boasts, "The Son of God considers us of such value that He gave His life for us." If that were true, it would not increase but decrease our love for Him and our appreciation of His grace. The Bible teaches that our love for God and our appreciation of His love and forgiveness will be in proportion to the recognition of our sin and unworthiness.

Such was the lesson Christ taught Simon the Pharisee when He was a guest in his house. Jesus told of a creditor who forgave two debtors, one who owed a vast sum and another who owed almost nothing. Then He asked Simon, "Which of them will love him [the creditor] most?" Said Simon, "I suppose...he, to whom he forgave most." "Thou hast rightly judged," replied Jesus. Then, rebuking Simon for failing even to give him water and a towel, and commending the woman who had been washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair, Christ declared pointedly, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Lk 7:36-47).

It is both logical and biblical that the more sinful and worthless we realize we are in God's eyes, the greater our gratitude and love that Christ would die for us. By whatever extent we imagine that we are lovable or worth His sacrifice we lessen our appreciation of His love. The Bible teaches that God loves us not because of who we are but because of who He is. "God is love" (1 Jn 4:16). If God loved us because something attractive or worthwhile within us elicited that love, then, changeable creatures that

we are, we could lose that appeal and with it God's love. But if He loves us because God is love, then that love can never be lost, for God never changes. Therein lies our security for eternity (Jer 33:3)—and all the glory is His!

We often find it difficult, especially in trying circumstances, to rest in God's great love for us—no doubt because deep within our hearts we know how unworthy we are. Christian psychology tries mistakenly to cure this sense of unworthiness by persuading us that we are worth it after all. Robert Schuller declares, "The death of Christ on the cross is God's price tag on a human soul....[It means] we really are Somebodies!" Not so. Christ didn't die for Somebodies but for sinners. Dobbins says, "If we hadn't been worth it He wouldn't have paid the price." On the contrary, the greater the price the costlier our sin, not our worth. That the sinless Son of God must die upon the Cross to redeem us shouldn't make us feel good about ourselves but ashamed, for it was our sins that nailed Him there. Yet Bruce Narramore calls the Cross "a foundation for self-esteem!"

BUT WHOSO KEEPETH HIS WORD, IN HIM VERILY IS THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECTED...

— 1 John 2:5

This humanistic, self-inflating false gospel is being increasingly embraced by evangelicals. Establishing the counselee's self-worth is a key concept utilized at Rapha counseling centers founded by Robert S. McGee. Anthony A. Hoekema writes, "Surely God would not give His Son for creatures He considered to be of little worth!" Thus the love and gratitude toward God that the Cross ought to arouse in us is stifled by the perverted new belief that He did it because we are worth it. Jay Adams points out the horrible error of teaching that what God does for us is "a response on His part to our significance rather than an act of His love, free mercy, goodness and grace!"

Our song for eternity will be, "Worthy is the Lamb" (Rv 5:12). Heaven has no place for the erroneous belief that Christ died because we are worth it. Christ's death in our place had nothing to do with our worth but with the depths of our sin, the demands made by God's justice, and His eternal glory.

Of course those who brought humanistic psychology's selfism into the church attempt to support it from Scripture. Bruce Narramore quotes Psalm 139 and suggests that the "wonderful pattern for growth, fulfillment and development" that "God built

into our genes...is the ultimate basis for self-esteem." Surely the genius of the genetic code should cause me to bow in wonder and worship at the wisdom and power of God—but self-esteem? Seeing the marvels of God's creative power in my genes is no more cause for self-exaltation than seeing God's creative power in another's genes or in any other part of the cosmos—I didn't create it!

Paul declared, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10). No basis for self-esteem there! Dare we think that we will ever be able to erase from our memories the fact that we are unworthy sinners saved by grace? Yes, God in His grace will give us crowns and rewards and we will even hear from our Lord's lips, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:...enter thou into the joy of thy [L]ord" (Mt 25:21; 1 Cor 4:5) But will that give us a positive self-image, a sense of self-worth and self-esteem? C. S. Lewis answers: "The child who is patted on the back for doing a lesson well,...the saved soul to whom Christ says, 'Well done,' are pleased and ought to be. For here the pleasure lies not in what you are but in the fact that you have pleased someone you rightly wanted to please. The trouble begins when you pass from thinking, 'I have pleased him,' to thinking, 'What a fine person I must be to have done it.'"

Our love for God even influences whether we yield to temptation. Lust is called both "deceitful" (Eph 4:22) and "hurtful" (1 Tm 6:9) because it entices us with pleasure that is brief and involves disobedience to God and thus leads to pain and ruin in the end. Those whose focus is upon themselves think of God's commandments in terms of pleasures denied. But those who are enraptured by God's love have been delivered from self and find true and lasting pleasure and joy in obeying and thus pleasing Him. There is a joy that comes from pleasing God that is so far beyond any pleasure of this world that temptation loses its power in comparison.

The new theology denies us this path of victory. Its joy is selfish. To obey the first and great commandment is necessarily to deny self as Christ commanded (Mt 16:24). Nor can one deny self and at the same time love, esteem, and value self. Seeing God's love as a response to my significance and worth salvages just enough value for self to deny God's truth. Let us forget ourselves, our needs and hurts, and seek to know and love God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) because of who He is and His love and grace to us. His love will then flow through us to others, whom we will then esteem better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). Such is the path to true joy (Heb 12:2). **TBC**

Quotable

Those who trust in the Lord will never be disappointed. Some who helped us for a while may fall asleep in Jesus, some may grow cold in the service of the Lord, some may be as desirous as ever to help but no longer have the means, and some may have both a willing heart to help and the means but may see it to be the Lord's will to give in another way. If we were to lean upon man, we would surely be disappointed; but in leaning upon the living God alone, we are beyond disappointment and beyond being forsaken for any reason.

George Müller

Q&A

QUESTION: Some Calvinists have argued that 2 Peter 2:12 clearly shows that there are some who are “made to be taken and destroyed.” How do you explain this verse?

RESPONSE: Second Peter 2:12 reads: “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” These individuals are “like” (“as,” or “similar to”) “natural brute beasts” who—the beasts—are “made to be taken and destroyed.” “Brute beasts” like tigers or lions who lose their innate fear of man and begin to prey upon humans must be destroyed. The false prophets of 2 Peter 2 are like brute beasts since their behavior (“speak[ing] evil”), makes them deserving of destruction. While their behavior parallels that of brute beasts, it is not that they are chosen to be “taken and destroyed” but rather that their behavior makes them worthy of the same treatment as animals. They “shall utterly perish in their own corruption.”

Interestingly, if someone argues election from 2 Peter 2, they inadvertently trample “limited atonement” (the “L” in T.U.L.I.P.). Verse 1, in context speaking of the false prophets, reads, “But there were false prophets also among the people...who...shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” So much for “limited atonement.” The price for redemption (the death of Jesus, who “bought them”) was paid even for those who would ultimately reject Him and His provision.

QUESTION: Do you think President Barack Obama is a Muslim? I respect your answers to questions.... I just read an article in which the author thinks Obama is a “closet” Muslim.

RESPONSE: It would seem that rather than being a closet Muslim, Obama is more of a universalist with some new age beliefs thrown in. Consequently, he may be sympathetic to Muslims but always identifies himself as a “Christian.” His “Christianity,” however, is not biblical Christianity, and those with whom he has associated are known for their Liberation Theology—an attempt to marry Christianity with Socialist/Communist principles.

It has been shown through “interviews with dozens of former classmates, teachers, neighbors and friends...[that] Obama was not a regular practicing Muslim when he was in Indonesia, despite being listed as a Muslim on the registration form for the Catholic school, Strada Asisia, where he attended 1st through 3rd grades. At the time, the school most likely registered children based on the religion of their fathers, said [Israella Pareira] Darmawan, Obama's former [1st-grade] teacher. Because [his stepfather] Soetoro was a Muslim, Obama was listed as a Muslim, she said. ‘...Obama was an irregularly practicing Muslim who rarely or occasionally prayed with his stepfather in a mosque’” (<http://www.hudson-nyc.org/1485/a-muslim-view-of-obama>).

When he took his oath of office, he was sworn in with his hand on the Bible. Regarding his “faith” in Christ, he has said, “I believe that there are many paths to the same place, and that is a belief that there is a higher power, a belief that we are connected as a people....”

“Jesus is an historical figure for me, and he's also a bridge between God and man, in the Christian faith, and one that I think is powerful precisely because he serves as that means of us reaching something higher” (Cathleen Falsani, “Barack Obama: The 2004 ‘God Factor’ Interview Transcript,” June 24, 2008, posted at Falsani's blog).

In conclusion, the evidence indicates that Obama is a universalist who believes that all paths lead to God. His overtures to Muslims would seem to be more pragmatic than heartfelt. Indeed, although some Muslims hopefully consider him a closet Muslim, others have considered him anything but a follower of Islam, as has been well attested in articles and statements in Islamic media.

QUESTION [The following comments were received in response to a TBC update quoting ex-Mormons discussing the false prophet Joseph Smith]: I very much appreciate your ministry. However, the grace you give to prophets and prophecy in the church appears to me to be lacking. It is one thing to be diligent about testing prophets and prophecy and another thing to be outright skeptical. I would like to call you to account for a statement

regarding Deuteronomy 18:20-22. The following is what you said: “The Bible gives a criteria for testing prophets in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. One false prophecy is enough to dismiss a person as a false prophet—forever!” Deuteronomy does not say, that. This scripture says that we can know if a *prophecy* is from God. If the prophecy does not come to pass, then [it] is not from God. It does not say that we can know if a *prophet* is not from God if his prophecy does not come to pass. If it does not come to pass, then the prophet has spoken the prophecy presumptuously. He was not called a false prophet.

RESPONSE: You are correct that there is no specific verse in Scripture stating that one false “prophecy is enough to dismiss a person as a false prophet—forever!”

We're a bit puzzled, however, regarding your idea that “the grace [we] give to prophets and prophecy in the church appears...to be lacking,” particularly since the excerpt that we quoted from ex-Mormons addresses a genuine false prophet who was never in the church. It seems a bit odd that calling Joseph Smith to account prompted the comment, especially linked with the idea of our being “outright skeptical.”

This does raise a concern, particularly when considering that some regarded today as prophets teach that “prophets” have a learning curve. One has said, “Prophets are really messy. Prophets make mistakes; And sometimes when a prophet makes a mistake, it's a serious mistake” (Jack Deere, National School of the Prophets, “Mobilizing the Prophetic Office,” May 11, 2000, 11:30 AM tape #3). Rather than excusing wrong behavior by using the word “mistake” instead of “false prophecy,” consider the biblical example of Samuel: “And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground” (1 Sm 3:19). No low expectations here.

The passage in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 concludes that others should “not be afraid of him.” This certainly indicates that one should have no further respect for nor pay attention to that individual. Why? Because he has shown himself to be false. When the Scriptures discuss “prophets,” there are two categories: true or false.

Finally, there is one more criterion for judging a prophet. Deuteronomy 13:1-3 states, “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know

whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Verse 5 continues, “And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.” The Lord is very serious concerning those who presume to speak in His name.

QUESTION: I just watched the Glenn Beck show from 8-17-10. He spent the whole show trying to link the North American Indians to a Jewish heritage. He is now promoting Mormon doctrine on his show.... He knows that if he can link the American Indians to Israel he can validate Joseph Smith's claims. When is the church going to wake up to this guy?...He is corrupting the church with ecumenical unity by using national restoration as his unifying point. Do we stand for the real Gospel, or do we stand for America? Please expose this.

RESPONSE: The focus of the church is always the presentation of the gospel. To reform a political system without changing the hearts of men is ultimately futile. We are on a rescue mission, sent by our Creator, the One who came to earth to pay the penalty for the sin of humanity: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8).

Professing agreement with this, Glenn Beck appears to hold contradictory ideas. In conflict with Mormon teaching, on his July 13, 2010, broadcast, he said, “You cannot earn your way into heaven. You can’t! There is no deed, no random act of kindness, no amount of money to spread around to others that earns you a trip to heaven. It can’t happen. It’s earned by God’s grace alone, by believing that Jesus died on the cross for you. This is what Christians believe.”

In direct contradiction to Beck, Mormon Apostle Richard G. Scott wrote, “The demands of justice for broken law can be satisfied through mercy, *earned by your continual repentance and obedience to the laws of God* [our emphasis]. Such repentance and obedience are absolutely essential for the Atonement to work its complete miracle in your life” (Scott, “The Atonement Can Secure Your Peace and Happiness,” *Ensign* [Conference Edition], November 2006, 42).

If Beck truly believes the biblical gospel, he is on an inevitable collision course with the teachings of Mormonism. Nevertheless, Beck at times uses Mormon terminology,

as at his May 15, 2010, commencement address at Liberty University: “Beck urged graduates not to underestimate the power of the atonement. When he was 13, his mother took her life. He said he nearly followed in her footsteps. ‘As a man who needed the atonement...I read the promise. He will carry your burdens. I made Him a promise. You keep your word and I will keep mine,’ he said. ‘He will never break his promise, and now it’s all up to me’” (David Hylton, Liberty University Online, May 15, 2010).

Of great concern are the “bridges” Beck is building as a representative of Mormonism. In that same commencement address, Beck stated that his appearance at Liberty was “an endorsement of your faith. This is a time when we all need to come together. We may have differences, but we need to find those things that unite us” (Ibid.).

As you point out, there is also the problem of Beck promoting the made-up history of The Book of Mormon as he attempted to “prove” that American Indians are the surviving descendants of Hebrews who came to North America. As the documentary *DNA vs. The Book of Mormon* demonstrates by presenting evidence from DNA researchers, including Mormon scientists, there is no link between the Mongoloid American Indians and Semitic Jews. Neither has any objective evidence of the great civilizations promoted in The Book of Mormon ever been found (see August 2003 *TBC*). Consequently, if Beck is serious about basing his faith on the Bible, he must forsake Mormon teachings and the “Jesus Christ” of the Latter Day Saints.

QUESTION: I have recently become an evangelical and am now seriously studying the Bible for the first time in my life (though I was in the Roman Catholic Church for years). Can you interpret Colossians 1:24 for me, please? This passage appears to deny the efficacy of Christ's sufferings as the sole means of salvation.

RESPONSE: Colossians 1:24 in the KJV reads, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”

This isn’t speaking of working for Paul’s own salvation. His “sufferings” were for “his [Christ’s] body’s sake.” The very next verse begins, “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col 1:25).

Christ finished the work the Father had given Him to do (Jn 19:30). Consequently, *everything that can be done for our salvation has been done*. Nevertheless, according to Luke 4:18, Jesus said, “he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent

me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Jesus did not personally do this for every person who was living then or who would be born. He is now seated at the right hand “of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).

We have been commissioned (Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15, Lk 24:47, Jn 20: 21, Acts 1:8) to be His ambassadors; we will now “preach the gospel to the poor,” etc. That is what’s “lacking” in Christ’s afflictions and why Paul was “made a minister.”

News Alert.....

Evolution News, August 2010 [EXCERPTS]: Over at BioLogos, biologist Kathryn Applegate has offered what has to be one of the more creative alternatives to the intelligent design of the bacterial flagellum: Magic.

I’m not kidding. Applegate readily concedes biochemist Michael Behe’s point that the flagellum “looks and functions just like the outboard motor, a machine designed by intelligent human engineers. So conspicuous is the resemblance that it seems perfectly logical to infer a Designer for the flagellum.” But, wait, she says: “The bacterial flagellum may look like an outboard motor, but there is at least one profound difference: the flagellum assembles spontaneously, without the help of any conscious agent.” Acknowledging that “the self-assembly of such a complex machine almost defies the imagination,” Dr. Applegate assures her readers that this is not really a problem because “Natural forces work ‘like magic.’” Presto, change o, something appears!

Now Dr. Applegate admits that in our common experience things don’t just magically self-assemble without any guiding intelligence. “We’ve all put together toys, furniture, or appliances; even the simplest designs require conscious coordination of materials, tools, and assembly instructions (and even then there’s no guarantee that we get it right!).”

However, Dr. Applegate assures us that with nature things are different. “It is tempting to think the spontaneous formation of so complex a machine is ‘guided,’ whether by a Mind or some ‘life force’ but we know that the bacterial flagellum, like countless other machines in the cell, assembles and functions automatically according to known natural laws. No intelligence required.”

[*TBC: On the contrary, Intelligence required but not wanted.*]

Correction: The Q&A from our September 2010 issue regarding prayer walking was originally printed in the October 2008 issue, not October 1988. We apologize for the mistake.

Speaking Schedule

Apr 8-9 *Discerning the Times Bible Conf.*
(TA) Saskatoon, SK
(306) 384-9611

May 16-20 *Calvary Chapel Shepherd School*
(TA) Schloss Heroldeck, Millstatt, Austria
Contact info. to follow soon

Letters

Dear Brother Hunt,

I am listening to your October 2007 message “What Love Is This?” that was preached, evidently, in England. I appreciate your kind attitude so much with regards toward your “Reformed” brethren. So much of what you have said touches me so much. I have been a pastor for 31 years. ... I absolutely had to pause the video and write because you got to the point that you were shocked, after having taught on this subject for so many years, [when] you discovered what they meant by regeneration in order to get saved. I never took Calvinism seriously enough until a few years ago and you have expressed exactly the reaction I had when I found this out. I didn’t know how I had missed it. When I shared this with many of my fundamentalist pastor friends, they were equally shocked....Well, thank you for your many insights and studies that you have done on this subject. May God bless you. PZ (NJ)

Dear Dave,

Thank you for your excellent book *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny*....I am enjoying it very much. I have mentioned it to several people. The Lord bless you, Mr. Hunt, as you serve Him. I pray for Mr. Dawkins that the Lord will save him. He has so much hatred for the Lord who loves him. LG (Canada)

Dear Brother Dave,

As two Christians (former Roman Catholics) saved by the Lord Jesus in 1977, we just want to say “Thank You” for your book, *A Woman Rides the Beast*. If only all of our still unsaved family members would read it! Needless to say, we were never taught about the Inquisition or some of the true facts coming out of Rome. T&MS (email)

Dear Brother Dave,

I just finished reading *Debating Calvinism* and now I deeply appreciate 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. I got the impression that, based on Mr. White’s writings, I would need the original Greek manuscript, or copies thereof, with a working knowledge of Greek and its grammar in order to understand salvation. Glory to our Father that I can sit in a prison cell and, by the leading of the

Holy Spirit, grow in a loving relationship with Almighty God. Thank you, Brother, for your faithfulness. SS (CO, prisoner)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I have been blessed by your teachings in many ways for more than two decades. One thing is that you have kept me from being led into the wrong direction by churches I attended and the things they practiced. I don’t know how to thank you enough. And before my 24-year-old son was 4 years old, we had more fun reading *The Money Tree* than I can put into words!! You are a good man and may the Lord bless you forever. NR (email)

TBC,

Thanks again for the lending library. *Ten P’s in a Pod* was another blessing to us.... We have started memorizing Scripture—2 John 1. Even our four [and six year olds,] who can’t read...yet, have memorized it....We also have been inspired to read...one hour in the morning and thirty minutes after each meal, as did the Pents. We had devotions before, but being in the Word even more is proving already to be a blessing. BF (IN)

Dear Dave Hunt and Ruth,

We recently watched the 2010 Great Lakes Prophecy Conference from the internet, which showed the thanks and appreciation for the influence Dave has had on the speakers’ lives. It was sincere, though humorous, too. [We] want to add our two cents. TBC has been a continual blessing. I used to call the newsletter my “love letter,” as it gave assurance and encouragement in leaving the RCC as an adult. That happened to both of us after we were married. There were times of hurts and testing and God sent help through your ministry when we needed it. Thank you so much. May your reward be great. D&CL (SD)

TBC,

In the most recent edition of *The Berean Call*, you asked for a response to whether I want to continue receiving your newsletters. I do not. While I have usually found something of value in each and every edition, Dave Hunt’s increasingly hostile tone toward those whom he disagrees with, bitingly polemic spirit in which he argues his points, a general lack of redemptiveness and graciousness, and the way he selectively uses church history to his own ends are the reasons for my departure. It appears to me that Dave Hunt believes he is the last bastion of truth within evangelicalism today [because of]—direct quote—“the leaven of heresy that has been deposited in all theological camps”—except his own theological camp, of course. I have received *The Berean Call* since I was in high school and watched, over the years, its migration from a helpful source of biblical

instruction and reference for believers in dealing with cults and the Roman Church, to an organization that finds its primary mission in attacking and undermining any truth or view that does not fit within the narrow confines of the dispensational/pre-trib theology that you espouse as the only correct view. I wish you God’s best, although I fear that the lampstand of ministry is being removed. Several of those who worship with us here feel the same. GS (OR)

TBC Notes

Ireland, England Praise Report and Thanks...

Thanks to your prayers, from the day I landed in Dublin until I left from London’s Heathrow airport more than three weeks later, the Lord filled each moment with sweet fellowship and numerous ministry opportunities. Ireland felt like a homecoming for Thomas Aloysius McMahon III as it was the birthplace of my grandfather, Thomas Aloysius McMahon I. I spoke eight times in six days and thoroughly enjoyed ministering and being ministered to by my wonderfully hospitable and gracious hosts. “Buíochas le Dia” (“Praise the Lord”), for those who speak “Irish.”

England was more of the same, speaking 17 times over a 14-day period, including two conferences packed with youth and young adults in the National Park of Dartmoor. It was a thrill and a privilege to preach to many different fellowships throughout England—especially to teach more than 200 of the next generation of saints at Truth4Youth and the Young Bereans, not to mention the great time spent with the parents and leaders who tirelessly served those young people.

I am deeply grateful to all of my “new families” who blessed me so much during my travels, and to the men with whom I was privileged to share a pulpit. Also, I thank the Lord for Trevor and Maggie Stewart-Sweet—for their selfless ministering to me personally and for their administering regarding every aspect of my engagements and stay in England.

Forget jet lag! I’m still cruising on the abundant joy of my experience!

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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PATRICK HENRY PATRIOTISM: THE BELIEVER'S BLESSED HOPE?

Prominent Pastor Cries "Liberty or Death" In Flight to Mountain States for Historic Last Stand

FEW ARE AWARE that within a generation of the Revolutionary War's conclusion in 1783, another bloody battle was fought on American soil—a war that was not merely for political independence but for true religious freedom. No, it was not the War of 1812 (sometimes termed the "Second War for Independence"). Set against the backdrop of a fledgling nation suffering from "endemic problems with land speculation, wildcat banking, and counterfeiting," this intense but brief armed conflict was as much about the right to worship and follow God as it was about rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Determined to escape the politics and conflict of the liberal and industrialist-controlled East Coast, a faithful group of hardworking pioneers began settling in "the promised land" of Missouri and Ohio, determined to forge a new life in what they considered to be a veritable Garden of Eden. But when thousands of these church-going Americans began buying land in this region of the newly-birthed United States, property values skyrocketed to nearly seven times their value in a matter of months. As the United States reeled from the Bank Panic of 1837—in which nearly half of the 850 banks in the United States closed permanently, causing a five-year depression—the "senior" settlers in these areas became increasingly resentful and distrustful of the newcomers, and were afraid of the political clout being wielded by the conservative "invaders."

It was in this tumultuous landscape that thousands of freedom-loving American families moved west, seeking refuge to grow and establish town, city, and county governments upon their strong convictions to worship and serve God. But in the face of increasing persecution and danger from those with opposing spiritual and political views, one of the congregation's leaders rallied the believers on July 4th of that year—Independence Day, 1838. Speaking authoritatively and passionately for their cause, Sidney Rigdon's words rang as loud and true to those gathered in the town square of Far West, Missouri, as did those of Patrick Henry in Saint John's Church in Richmond, Virginia, back in 1775. Many Christians can quote Henry's famous speech verbatim, but perhaps only a few may be familiar with the equally impassioned cry of Rigdon, whose strong voice echoed an eerily similar declaration:

We take God and all the holy angels to witness, this day, that we warn all men, in the name of Jesus Christ to come on us no more for ever, for from this hour we will bear it no more; our rights shall no more be trampled on with impunity; the man, or the set of men who attempt it, do it at the expense of their lives. And that mob that comes on us to disturb us, it shall be between us and them a war of extermination...one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed. Remember it then, all men. We will never be the aggressors, we will infringe on the rights of no people, but shall stand for our own [liberty] until death! (Wikipedia)

Who is this man whose powerful sentiments appear to be alive and well in our land today—not only in the increasingly ecumenical Tea Party movement but even from within conservative evangelicalism? Was he a patriot? A constitutionalist? A Christian? "The rest of the story," as Paul Harvey would say, is that Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), was "an important figure in the early history of the Latter Day Saints movement." Wikipedia notes that "Rigdon's influence over the early years [of Mormonism] is considered by many historians to have been nearly as strong as that of its founder, Joseph Smith Jr." The war into which Rigdon spurred the fervent followers in 1838 is called the Missouri Mormon War.

Rigdon's July 4th oration was meant as a Mormon "declaration of independence" against "mobocrats" and anti-Mormon persecution. His dramatic appeal has every bit the "bite" of the famous Gadsen flag flown by many of today's Christian patriots, which features a coiled rattlesnake on a bright yellow field, emblazoned with the warning to tyrants synonymous with the Revolutionary War cry: "DON'T TREAD ON ME."

Today there is a new rush for freedom in the land, fueled by similar fear and anger against "mobocrats" and their federalized anti-Christian, anti-patriot acts, treaties, and executive orders. But it's not just the "Tea Party" organizers and attenders, nor is it only those involved in ecumenical patriotism against Big Brother, who have issued the rallying cry. After several years of saber-rattling via "talk radio" and his popular syndicated columns, former Constitution Party candidate for President of the

United States, Chuck Baldwin, recently announced his resignation from Crossroads Baptist Church in Pensacola Florida, where he ministered for 35 years. Simultaneously, Baldwin declared a "freedom rush" to Montana, where he hopes thousands of faithful patriots will follow him and his wife, their two grown sons, and their wives and children. Indeed, such a pioneering move is sure to spark the wagon-train spirit in many of those who hold romantic ideals of *Little House on the Prairie* and "one nation, under God." Baldwin explains:

Mark my words: [Sarah] Palin and [Glenn] Beck may see themselves as part of a conservative "movement," but they want nothing to do with an old-fashioned, honest-to-God, Patrick Henry-style revolution. In fact, they are doing everything in their power to keep such a revolution from taking place....My family and I are ardent patriots. To us, freedom and liberty are much more valuable and desirable than wealth and riches—or even comfort and security. And we believe God has been showing us that if there is a place left in America where true freedom has an opportunity to experience a rebirth, it is in the Mountain States....It is our studied opinion that America is headed for an almost certain cataclysm. As Christians, we suspect that this cataclysm could include the judgment of God. As students of history, we believe that this cataclysm will most certainly include a fight between Big-Government globalists and freedom-loving, independent-minded patriots....As this battle escalates (and it will most assuredly escalate), only those states that are willing to stand and fight for their independence and freedom will survive—at least in a state of freedom. And we believe that God has already put the love of liberty deep into the hearts of the people of the Mountain States; and we further believe that God is already calling...many other freedom lovers to those states. One thing is for sure: we know He called us! ("We Need a Revolution, Not a Movement," 8/27/2010)

Pastor Baldwin sincerely believes that "God has been showing us..." and "God is calling many other freedom lovers..." to Montana. For what? According to Chuck, to help bring about the "rebirth...of true freedom." Wait a minute! Is God double-minded? Is Baldwin hearing from the same "author and finisher of our faith" who declared, "My kingdom is *not* of this world...[else] would my servants fight"? Lest anyone mistake his militaristic remarks as simply metaphor, Baldwin decrees,

We are going to fight...! We are going to help the freedom-minded people of Montana make their stand for liberty! In many ways, the Mountain States just might become *The Alamo* of the twenty-first century, with, hopefully, much better results. But if not, I would rather die fighting for freedom with liberty-loving patriots by my side than be shuttled off to some FEMA camp.... ("Why We Are Moving to Montana," 9/15/2010)

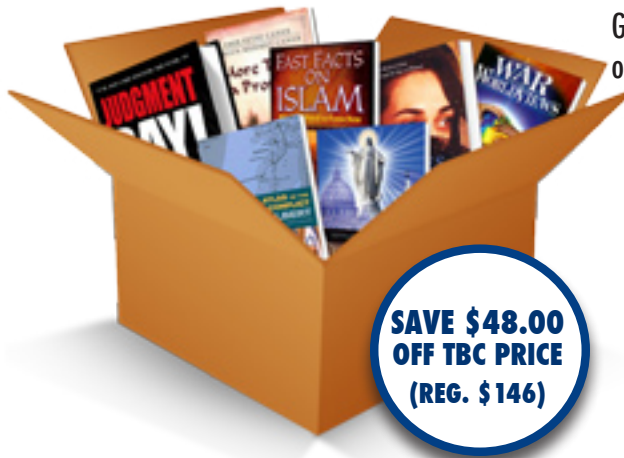
As I've addressed in previous "Extras," we are all concerned with encroaching tyranny and global governance of the New World Order (now emerging, I should add, in perfect accordance with Bible prophecy!) We all lament the loss of "America...land that I love" as it is sold to foreigners, populated by enemies, governed by traitors, and monopolized by multinational corporations. But as God-fearing believers, we need to search the Scriptures—not our gun racks—for a biblical response. Arch-patriot Chuck Baldwin has drawn his line in the sand, and undoubtedly many will follow. But if he truly seeks a "restored" kingdom on earth where Christians may prosper in perpetuity, is his doctrine and determination very different from that which caused the Mormons to fight and to flee from state to state in pursuit of establishing their own fabled "Zion"?

Should it be to such a city (or state) built by hands that Christians flee today? Or should we follow the example of the saints and martyrs who "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"? (Heb 11:10). Scripture records that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth....But now they desire a *better* country, that is, an heavenly...for [God] hath prepared for them a city" (Heb 11:13-16).

"Give me liberty, or give me death!" Should this be the cry of *Christians* today? Is Baldwin's "old-fashioned, honest-to-God, Patrick Henry Revolution" a *biblical* one? Or is the quiet confidence of Paul our example, who declared, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain"?

—Mark Dinsmore

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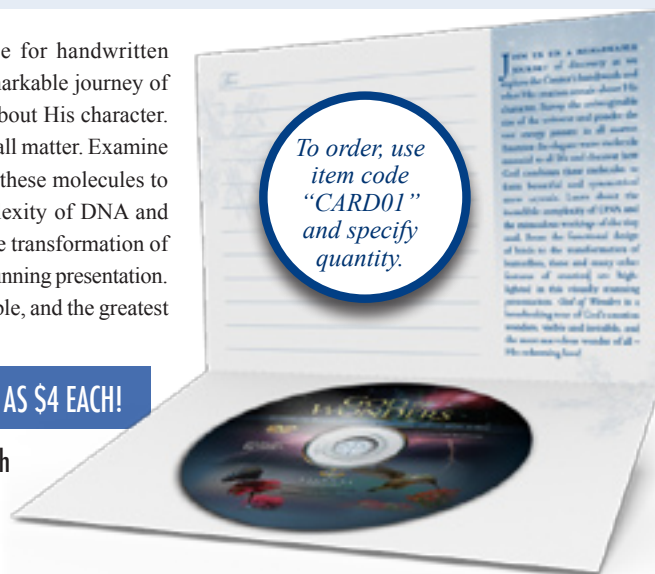
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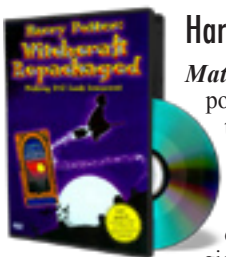
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OCTOBER 2010

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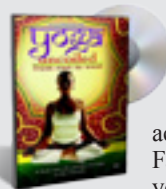
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