

*Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! ~ Hail the Son of Righteousness!*

*Light and life to all He brings ~ Ris'n with healing in His wings*

*Mild He lays His glory by . . .*

*Born*  
THAT MAN  
NO MORE MAY DIE

*Born to raise the sons of earth ~ Born to give them second birth*

*Hark! The herald angels sing:*

*"GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING!"*

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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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## Christ and Christmas

*(Written December 1989)*

*Dave Hunt*

Christmas as generally celebrated today is one of many carry-overs from Roman Catholicism that survived the Reformation. Historian Will Durant reminds us that Roman Catholicism grew out of the merger between paganism and Christianity that took place under Constantine in the early 300s. Commenting upon the resulting "Christianization" of the Roman Empire, which Reconstructionists such as Coalition on Revival (COR) director Jay Grimstead look back to fondly as a model of what they hope to achieve, Durant wrote:

Paganism survived...in the form of ancient rites and customs condoned...by an often indulgent Church....Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus...the Saturnalia [Festival of Saturn in celebration of the winter solstice] was replaced by Christmas celebration...[I]ncense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments...which had pleased the people in older [pagan] cults were domesticated and cleansed in the Ritual of the Church....

In spite of its pagan/Roman Catholic origins and crass commercialization, we can rejoice that Christmas annually brings a reminder of the Savior's birth. Unfortunately, however, Christmas festivities generally perpetuate the confusion concerning who Jesus Christ really is, why He came, and what He accomplished. This is not surprising, considering the misunderstandings even among His own disciples at the first advent—and the far greater confusion that the Bible warns will precede His second coming. Indeed, the whole world—including millions of "Christians"—will follow and worship the Antichrist, convinced that he is the true Christ.

Christmas celebrations remind us that the same misunderstandings that prevented so many from recognizing Christ when He came to earth will prevail when He returns. The causes of confusion 1,900 years ago remain the key issues today: What is the Messiah's true mission—and the nature of His kingdom? When, how, and by whom will the Kingdom be established—and what is its relationship to Israel and the church? Many "Christians" today are blind in the same way as those early "disciples" who

turned from Christ because He didn't meet their false messianic expectations.

Even John the Baptist became so disillusioned that he demanded of Christ, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" (Mt 11:3). Such doubts seem impossible for the one whom God had sent to "prepare the way of the Lord"! Already filled with the Holy Spirit as a six-month-old embryo, John had leaped in the womb of his mother Elizabeth upon hearing the voice of the virgin Mary, who had just learned that she would give birth to the Son of God. Called and inspired of God to be the "forerunner of the Messiah," John testified, "He that sent me to baptize...said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he...and I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1:33-34). Confident in that supernatural revelation, John boldly declared, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*" (Jn 1:29). Yet the day came when, in despair, he sent two disciples to ask Christ whether He really was the Messiah after all!

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JESUS ANSWERED, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD: IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT, THAT I SHOULD NOT BE DELIVERED TO THE JEWS: BUT NOW IS MY KINGDOM NOT FROM HENCE.

—John 18:36

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Although given supernatural revelation as to His identity, John completely misunderstood Christ's mission. Hadn't the prophets said that the Messiah would set up His kingdom and reign in Jerusalem? Then why was *he*, the herald of the Messiah, in prison! John did not understand that Christ had come to die for our sins so that both Jew and Gentile, united in one church, could go to heaven. Nor did he comprehend that there had to be a *Second Coming*.

So it was with the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. Amazed, they watched the One whom they thought had all power, as, seemingly powerless, He was arrested, bound, and led away. Obviously, Jesus of Nazareth couldn't be the Messiah after all! Dreams shattered, they fled for their lives. Likewise the two on the road to Emmaus: "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel...[but they] crucified him!" (Lk 24:19-24). His death, which we

recognize today is the very heart of the gospel and without which we have no life, convinced Christ's contemporaries that He could not possibly be the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

"If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him!" (Mt 27:40-44) was the jeering taunt of the bloodthirsty mob and the religious leaders gloating at the foot of His cross. "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us!" echoed one of the thieves hanging beside him. Whom He came to save, from what, to what, and how, was clearly not understood at the time by anyone—not even by His closest disciples.

When Christ tried to explain that He must die for the sins of the world, Peter rebuked Him for being so "negative." Yet Peter, only moments before, had declared by revelation from the Father that Jesus was the Christ (Mt 16:16-17). Obviously he didn't understand the Messiah's mission, even though he knew who He was. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" (Mt 16:22-23), Christ had retorted quickly to Peter, showing the importance He put upon correcting such a gross misunderstanding of His mission.

So it was with those in Jerusalem (Jn 2:23-25) who "believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." They believed He was the Messiah, but they had a false view of what that meant. "Jesus did not commit himself unto them" because He knew what was in their hearts and that they would not believe the truth. We see the same error in those in John 6, who, because Christ had healed and fed them, wanted to "take him by force to make him [their] king" (Jn 6:15). There were many who called themselves His "disciples" (today they would be called "Christians") who had a false view of the Messiah, and when He tried to explain the truth to them, would not hear it but "went back and walked no more with him" (Jn 6:66).

We learn from Christ how to handle the multitudes who want to follow Him for the wrong reasons. We must do today what He did then. Many came "forward" to tell Jesus they believed in Him and would follow Him faithfully. Contrary to today's methods, Christ didn't have His disciples quickly sign up such persons as "church members" before they changed their minds, and get them involved in the choir or some committee in order to keep them active in the church. "The foxes have holes and the birds



have nests, but I have nowhere to lay my head" (Mt 8:20), Jesus told the eager would-be converts. "Are you certain you really want to follow me?" Such "negativism!"

"So you want to follow Me?" Christ would say. "Then let Me tell you where we're going. I'm heading for a hill outside Jerusalem called Calvary where they'll nail Me to a cross. So if you would be faithful to Me to the end, you might as well make up your mind: take up your cross right now, and follow Me, because that's where we're going!"

Today we're far too sophisticated to present the gospel in such negative terms. We've studied success motivation, psychology and Dale Carnegie courses in "How to Win Friends and Influence People" and consider such new techniques to be ideal for "winning people to Christ." So we fill the churches with multitudes who imagine that Christ's mission is to make them feel good about themselves by building up their self-esteem, answering their selfish prayers and fulfilling their self-centered agendas.

The Reconstruction/Kingdom/Dominionists are more confused than John the Baptist, though their error is similar. They refuse to walk in the rejection of Christ, bearing the reproach of His cross, because that would be "defeatism." They imagine that we're in the Millennial kingdom already and are supposed to act like "King's kids." They think that it's our task to establish that Kingdom through taking "dominion" over the media, educational institutions, and political leadership. The "signs and wonders" promoters imagine that they are in the process of taking dominion over all disease and even over death itself without the resurrection and return of Christ.

It's all very positive and ecumenical. Christian lobbyists are willing to work with Moonies and Mormons and all others who are in favor of bringing traditional values back to America. And at Christmas time, once again, being able to publicly display a cross or a crèche in public becomes a rallying point—a very low common denominator indeed for ecumenical agreement. In defense of such folly, Christian leaders stoutly defend the correctness of working with all those "who call Jesus 'Lord.'" Seemingly forgotten are the words of Christ: "Many will say to me...Lord, Lord, have we not...in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me..." (Mt 7:22-23). There are multitudes, such as Mormons and Catholics (to say nothing of many Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, et al.) who call Jesus "Lord" but are not saved.

On October 17 [1989], Paul and Jan Crouch welcomed three Catholics to their *Praise the Lord* program: two priests and a

woman lay leader. Paul displayed his usual naïveté and incredible ignorance of theology by smoothing over any differences between Protestants and Catholics as "simply matters of semantics." In his eager embrace of Transubstantiation, a heresy so great that thousands died at the stake rather than accept it, he declared: "Well, we [Protestants] believe the same thing. So you see one of these things that has divided us all of these years [Transubstantiation] shouldn't have divided us all along because we were really meaning the same thing but just saying it a little differently....I [am] eradicating the word 'Protestant' even out of my vocabulary....I'm not protesting anything anymore...it is...time for Catholics and non-Catholics to come together as one in the Spirit and one in the Lord." But Catholics have a different gospel of salvation by works and ritual through the essential mediation of that Church.

Christmas, with its emphasis upon "baby Jesus," tends to perpetuate another serious Catholic heresy: the pernicious myth of Christ's subservience to His mother, which Roman Catholicism has deliberately promoted for centuries. Mary certainly should be called "blessed" as the mother of our Lord—but she is not "Co-Mediatrix" in and "Co-Redemptrix" as Romanism teaches. In Catholic cathedrals throughout the world, for example, one quickly notices that the paintings, statuary, and stained glass give Mary the dominant role. She is even at times shown on the cross as our Redeemer. Jesus is either a helpless babe on His mother's breast, a small child between her knees, or a lifeless victim of the Cross in her arms. Never is she in subjection to Him, and rarely if ever is He shown in the triumph of His resurrection. She is the "Queen of Heaven," where Jesus remains a child subject to her direction.

Typical is the beautiful thirteenth-century stained-glass window we recently observed in a church in France. At the top are the words *Le Pergatoire*, indicating that it is a depiction of "purgatory." Mary and Jesus are shown on a cloud (i.e., in heaven), with the tormented souls in the flames of purgatory below them, arms extended upward in supplication. Are they crying out to Christ for help? No, they are appealing to Mary. She wears the regal crown.

And Jesus, the Lord of Glory, who triumphed over Satan at the Cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father—how is He depicted? As a child about seven years old, standing between the "Queen of Heaven's" knees! No wonder the souls in "purgatory" do not appeal to Him for help. At the bottom of the beautiful stained-glass depiction of this abomination are the words: *Mère Marie, sauvez nous!* ("Mother Mary, save us!")

Such heresy does not originate in the

imagination of the artists but in tradition and dogma not only tolerated but promoted by the Roman Catholic Church. The fear of purgatory is very real to a Catholic, and "Mary" has provided an escape for those faithful to her. She allegedly appeared to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251, and gave him what is known as "The Great Promise": "Whosoever dies wearing this Scapular [two pieces of brown cloth containing Mary's promise on one, her picture with "Baby Jesus" on the other, worn one in front, one in back, connected over the shoulder by two strings] shall not suffer eternal fire." Like the Mormon's magic underwear, the Catholic's scapular will supposedly accomplish what the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ could not. In 1322, Pope John XXII received a further promise from "Mary" known as "The Sabbatine Privilege": "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death and whomsoever I shall find in Purgatory [who died wearing the scapular], I shall free." St. Simon Stock's famous prayer ends thus: "O Sweet Heart of Mary, be our salvation!"

Christmas offers a rare opportunity to share the true gospel of Jesus Christ and to expose and correct the ecumenical and confused picture it presents annually to the world. Millions are seduced into thinking they are Christians because they have a sentimental feeling for the "baby Jesus." Let us remember what Christ said to those who believed on Him: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:31-32). It is that truth that we are called upon to proclaim in clarity and power.

*[TBC: This twenty-year old message from Dave has not lost any of its relevance for the church today. There is still much confusion about the mission of Jesus and the kingdom of God. Many diverse movements that profess to be Christian and biblical are coming together in an attempt to help establish Christ's physical kingdom on earth prior to His return. Since the time that Dave first penned this article, the "kingdom here and now" proponents seem to be increasing in their influence exponentially, as we have been pointing out in our series "The Temporal Delusion." Part III is scheduled for January 2011.]*

Although Dave has, for the most part, retired from ministry, we are thankful to be able to mine the treasury of what he has written over the years and present his material to our readers on an ongoing basis. The Lord has graciously given him tremendous insights as a watchman regarding trends and issues that continue to adversely affect the church today and in the days to come.] TBC

## Quotable .....

The Christian life is the Spirit of God reproducing the life of the Son of God in the child of God. For this reason, when a Christian does something that others call "good," but it attracts attention to oneself, promotes oneself, persuades others of one's own spirituality, and brings credit to oneself, we have robbed God of His glory. As a believer, we will still be part of the redeemed but there will be no reward. ... Christ will not be appraising, "what did we do for Him?" but rather, "why did we do it?"

*Jerry Benjamin, What Is the Most Important Thing God Asks of Us?*

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION:** In the December '09 article you stated, "Shortly after the birth of Jesus, about A.D. 7, the sceptre departed when the Jews lost the right to enforce the death penalty." How can this be, as the Jews took up stones to kill Jesus (John 8:59) and talked of executing the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)? These took place well after the birth of Jesus.

**RESPONSE:** In Genesis 49:10, Jacob prophesied: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh [Messiah] come." By the time that Jesus was arrested, the Jews had already lost their independence and now answered to the Roman government. Consequently, they no longer had the authority to order the death penalty. This is why, in John 18:31, we read, "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*" [emphasis added].

The attempt to kill Jesus with stones (Jn 8:59) must have been a spontaneous act in reaction to the convicting words He spoke. The Jewish leaders brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus, reminding Him of what Moses said in the law and asking Him what *He* would do (Jn 8:3-5).

In Mark 10:33, with full knowledge of prophecy, Jesus told His disciples, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles." All these things happened, "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die" (Jn 18:32).

Rome's control was also demonstrated by the experience of Paul in Acts 21: "And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors

were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar" (Acts 21:30-31). It is significant to note that when the Jews "saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul."

**QUESTION:** I am being bombarded by material from friends [enclosed article by Chuck Pierce and Robert Heidler] insisting that as New Testament Christians we should still be observing Passover and the other Old Testament feasts. Should we?

**RESPONSE:** We have addressed the issue of keeping the Law in previous issues of the newsletter (01/2010), but because Pierce and Heidler integrate mysticism with legalism there is a good reason for an additional examination.

Chuck Pierce, along with his partner, Robert Heidler, teaches much more than keeping the Old Testament feasts. Indeed, they have gone far beyond keeping such celebrations as Passover and have delved into "Christianized" forms of astrology, numerology, etc., and the *kabbalah* (embraced by celebrities Rosie O'Donnell, Madonna, et al.)

An infatuation with mysticism will always take one away from the Scriptures and now takes Pierce and Heidler into *Jewish* mysticism. For example, consider the following statement from Kabbalah 365, "Daily Fruit from the Tree of Life," Day 131: "Although the air of the earthly atmosphere is thick in volume and mass, the mystery wisdom of the spirit realm still manages to enter this world because of the birds. For when the birds are in flight, their flapping wings cut through the thickness of the atmosphere, enabling in the moment for the mystery wisdom of the spirit realm to come through to our world."

On May 2, 2008, Pierce issued what he calls "A Key Prophetic Word!" that parallels the kabbalah: "I have come to make room for you to ascend to a new height. Extend your wings. Then extend them again. Stretch them to the left and the right. It is time for you to take flight!" ([http://www.glory-of-zion.org/outmail/5-2-08\\_EuropeTripLetterOnline.htm](http://www.glory-of-zion.org/outmail/5-2-08_EuropeTripLetterOnline.htm)).

Here's another example: "I am sorting out those situations that are presently confining you. I am coming in with a sorting instrument to begin to sort that which has kept evil in your midst, working against My best purpose for your life. I will sort out the confusion that is around you. I am sending help now. What you need will be sorted out and your path will be rearranged. I AM coming down and cutting through the atmosphere that has been too thick for your vision to progress" (Ibid.).

That's another parallel to kabbalah: "Your mind serves as a mail sorting room, where thousands of pieces of mail flow in to be sorted. The items that cannot be

'sorted' are swept into a pile, which we call the subconscious. Kabbalah gives you ten slots (Sephiroth) to sort the incoming mind processes in to, and making things manageable!" (<http://www.thelivinglightfoundation.com/classesKabbalah.php>).

Pierce and Heidler run roughshod over Scripture. First, regarding the Passover (and by implication the Law), they say, "The Bible tells us it is to be a permanent ordinance...a celebration for all time." The Bible does state this. What Pierce and Heidler fail to recognize, however, is that most sacrifices (bloody and unbloody) are also said to be "continual," or "perpetual." For example: "Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering" (Num 28:2-3). One would think that Pierce is not perpetually offering burnt offerings. But according to his reasoning, both the feasts and the sacrifices are said to be "perpetual." The word "perpetual," or "continual," means this sacrifice lasts as long as the covenant is in effect (Gal 3:23-25).

These traditions ended when the veil was rent in two. Further, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb 10:12-13). Paul writes very plainly in Colossians 2:14, that with His sacrifice, Jesus blotted "...out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

Unfortunately, along with many in what is called the "New Apostolic Reformation," Pierce often presumes to speak for God as in the following "utterance" recorded in the November 18, 2008, *Elijah List* online newsletter:

I AM brooding over many areas in the earth—government, economic and spiritual structures—and changing the structures of how these systems have operated in past seasons....There are sounds that are flowing through your blood. There are sounds that I am rearranging in the bloodlines of nations. Get in step with My harmony and the earth. ([http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display\\_word/7073](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word/7073))

This sounds like new age environmentalism. Consider the following statement from the new age publication *New Dawn*: "The great spiritual teachers tell us that the chaos of the modern age is merely part of



the natural order, that out of this chaos, a new age of harmony and grace will emerge. Many of us are moving beyond this phase in the cycle, realigning ourselves with spirit and feeling the great call to the light. We are planting the seeds for the world to come" (Sharron Rose, "2012: A Time Odyssey," No. 106, Jan-Feb 2008).

The words that Pierce attributes to God sound very much like the above, and which continue: **"I AM shaking nations into MY next order.** Trees are clapping their hands and root systems are becoming renewed. **Fruit that hasn't been seen in the last season will burst forth before the eyes of My people this year"** [emphasis in original].

Pierce claims that he is speaking for God. It is now nearly two years since his "this year" prophecy was given. We need to give greater attention to the biblical guidelines for prophets and those who presume to speak in the name of the Lord (Dt 13:1-3, 18:20-22, 1 Jn 4:1-3, etc.)

**QUESTION: I've homeschooled for over 20 years. Our group's former homeschool leader is now into this thing called "Integral Christianity." I'm having a hard time understanding what it even is, but this, taken from her blog, tells me that it is very new age and ecumenical: "On Sunday I sat in the presence of at least seven of what I believe to be some of the world's greatest spiritual luminaries of our time and only a few were from a Judeo/Christian heritage. It was an awesome and life-changing event for me....While sitting there, I thought...to be integrally spiritual (for me) is to be able to be a fully devout Christian and Biblical scholar while holding in reverence the wisdom and spiritual appropriateness of the collaborative Integral Spiritual Community...." My question is: are you getting much feedback on Integral Christianity?**

**RESPONSE:** There is certainly enough information to recognize the ecumenism above. It also sounds like universalism. It is of grave concern when evangelicals link up with other religions. It is one thing to work amicably with those of differing religious views in a secular setting. It is something else to come together with others on the basis that we are all "people of faith." There is a lack of discernment in speaking of "some of the world's greatest spiritual luminaries."

Our calling is to present the Gospel of Truth—how much more should we avoid giving tacit approval to false teachers? In 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." There are vast disagreements on the person and nature of God between religions,

and those who speak favorably of "Jesus" can easily be speaking of "another Jesus."

Paul warned the Corinthians, "If he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (2 Cor 11:4).

Finally, with a little digging, one can see the name Ken Wilber listed as an influence of Integral Christianity. As we noted on a radio broadcast (<http://www.thebereancall.org/node/519>), New Agers will recognize the name and one of his books, *The Atman Project*. "Atman," we assume, means the Hindu idea of the individual god Atman. Brahman is the universal god. Wilber says that if men and women have "ultimately" come up from amoebas, then they are ultimately on their way toward God. Here is the New Age lie (and there is nothing new about it—it's right out of the Garden): "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:5).

As Roger Oakland has written, "Ken Wilber was raised in a conservative Christian church, but at some point he left that faith and is now a major proponent of Buddhist mysticism. His book, *A Brief History of Everything*, which Rob Bell recommends, is published by Shambhala Publications, named after the term that in Buddhism means 'the mystical abode of spirit beings.' Wilber is one of the most respected and highly regarded theoreticians in the New Age movement today" (Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone*, p. 110).

Wilber is perhaps best known for what he calls "integral theory." On his website, he has a chart called the Integral Life Practice Matrix, which lists several activities one can practice "to authentically exercise all aspects or dimensions of your own being-in-the-world." A few of the spiritual activities that Wilber promotes are yoga, Zen, centering prayer, kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), TM, tantra (Hindu-based sexuality), and kundalini yoga. There are others of this nature, as well. *A Brief History of Everything* also discusses these practices in a favorable light.

## News Alert.....

**Israel Today, 10/24/10: CATHOLIC CHURCH: CHRIST NULLIFIED GOD'S PROMISES TO THE JEWS [EXCERPTS]**—A Catholic synod called at the Vatican to address the rising persecution of Christians in the Middle East wrapped up [10/23/10] with a joint statement that focused a lot of attention on demanding [that] Israel end its "occupation" of Arab lands. The gathering was meant to address the various acts of persecution, intimidation, and discrimination that are resulting in a severe dwindling of Christian communities across the region. But the bulk of the two-week

meeting was spent discussing how Israel is the root cause of all the Middle East's woes, including those faced by its Christians.

Cyril Salim Bustros, the Lebanon-born Greek archbishop of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Boston, Massachusetts, was responsible for delivering the final statement. ...[H]e stated that "the Holy Scriptures cannot be used to justify the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of the Palestinians, to justify the occupation by Israel of Palestinian lands." He then escalated the situation by declaring that the original promises made by God to the children of Israel "were nullified by Christ. There is no longer a chosen people." Bustros rejected the idea of Israel as "the Jewish state," and insisted that eventually all the so-called "Palestinian refugees" must return to the land, a sure recipe for the demographic destruction of the world's only Jewish nation-state.

Mordechai Levi, Israel's ambassador to the Vatican, decried Bustros' comments and the damage they had done to strengthening ties between Israel and the Church.

The Catholic Church has for years been trying to repair its image as an institution steeped in anti-Semitism. But Bustros' remarks make fairly clear that the Vatican remains as dedicated as ever to replacement theology—that teaching that says God has tossed aside the Jews, despite His irrevocable promises to them, and that "the Church" has instead inherited those promises.

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**Israel Today, 11/4/10: UN DECLARES RACHEL'S TOMB TO BE AMOSQUE [EXCERPTS]**—The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) decided [the week of October 25] to relabel as an Islamic mosque the tomb of Rachel, one of Israel's matriarchs, and demanded that Israel remove the site from its National Heritage list. UNESCO also said Israel had no right to add the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, where most of the rest of Israel's patriarchs and matriarchs are buried, to the National Heritage list. Israel responded on Wednesday by suspending all cooperation with UNESCO. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon said the suspension will remain in place until UNESCO reverses its decision.

Sites such as the Tomb of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb (which sits on the edge of Bethlehem) present an inconvenient truth for the pro-Palestine movement and its supporters, who want to claim that the Jews have no historic ties to this land.

Once again, the UN has shown itself to be anything but an impartial broker by ignoring historical evidence and embracing Muslim revisionism.

## Speaking Schedule

**Feb 7-8**  
(TA) **Fellowship of Bible Churches**  
**Men's Retreat**  
Mercersburg, PA  
(717) 597-8127

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

### TBC Holiday Schedule

Our office will be closed the following days:

Dec 24  
Jan 3

## Letters .....

### Dear Dave and Berean Call Staff,

Thank you for the copy of *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny*. We will look forward to reading it. Your work continues to be of great value. Even yesterday, I got a call from a young believer with a question about Jehovah Witnesses. [We were] glad to be able to refer her to the material you have made available.

[Our friends] were very encouraged by the conference there in July. They brought home a fresh reminder to pray for you all... Dave's health, the ongoing work of Berean Call, etc.

We have been looking at a Psalm each week for Bible Study. I was struck by Psalm 9:1: "I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of ALL Your marvelous works." The question I was considering was, how often do I take the time to tell others or even consider ALL of God's marvelous works in my life? What is my current, personal testimony of God's marvelous works? [Psalm] 8 talks about God creating the heavens, moon, stars, animals—so yes, praise Him for those marvelous works—but what about the things in my every day life? His answers to prayers both big and small? [I] don't want to be negligent to consider God's personal involvement in my life.

Certainly, the relatedness we have with one another is one of those marvelous works! How different our life would be without our brothers and sisters. J&JE (CA)

### Dear TBC,

I love your publication! Thank you for generously providing me with a copy each month. I find the writing to be prolific, accurate, and sensible. The articles are concise, yet articulate and riveting! What a blessing this has been. I use your publication sometimes as I do my Bible: I highlight, mark in the margins, bend the ears, and even cut out sections to share. I appreciate that you've

been sending this to me free, but I want to make a nominal contribution....Again, thank you, God bless your ministry and keep up the great work. RJ (AZ, prisoner)

### Dear Brother Dave and Staff,

Thanksgiving fills our hearts again in re-reading *How Close Are We?*, one of twelve books from your pen that adorns our shelves. The clear and refreshing look at the Rapture and the Second Coming held the logical answers we needed from Scripture. We are thankful for the ministry of TBC and its diligent exposure of the occult, Catholicism, New Age, psychology, yoga, Calvinism, evolution, Islam, and many other counterfeits of our enemy. Thank you for your consistent and faithful dissemination of the Truth! LT (FL)

### TBC,

Remove my name from your mailing list of *The Berean Call*. I am sick and tired of reading your criticism of Billy Graham and other Godly leaders....You seem to think you are...holier than thou....You should be ashamed of yourselves! Remember God loves the humble and rejects the proud. Look in your Bible [at] what Jesus said to the Pharisees when they thought so much of themselves. RD (IA)

### To Dave Hunt and all involved in the Berean Call,

Again I would like to thank you and your ministry for the great teaching you provide, along with your unswerving stand on the place of Israel in the plan and purposes of God. With Replacement Theology being taught just about everywhere, along with the "new Christianity" in its many forms that now has a stranglehold on the churches, it is so encouraging to see those who are using God's Word accurately. My church has continued the downhill slide in our "Bible studies." We have used books by people like Philip Yancey, Brendan Manning, Rick Warren, etc., and now [we] are using Tim Keller's books with their heavy Calvin, Luther emphasis as a model for where our church is going. My suggestion to study the Bible was met with some hostility! How sad to have to get sound Bible teaching from the internet and not from your church. I thank God that the internet has a positive side for the seemingly growing number of people in my situation. May God continue to bless your ministry. AB (email)

### Dave and Tom,

I am writing in a curious position. I'd been a missionary for many years in the Balkans until we came home and were asked to pastor [locally]. After disciplining a Sunday school teacher and church member

who denied Christ's Deity, I was put to task, and preached the next few weeks on Truth vs. Error. This led to Catholicism being confronted and many other heresies surfaced in the church (even in the leadership—universalism and annihilationism). The result: rejection and a wish we'd never returned to America. Brothers, please know that your ministry is needed now more than ever. Have courage and God bless you in the strength of Christ. JH (email)

### Hi,

A couple of months ago you wrote about an article that had recently appeared in *Christianity Today* magazine, and suggested that your readers write to Billy Graham concerning the bad doctrine in this article. Knowing that Billy Graham is in his 90s, I wrote to his son, Franklin, and shared my concerns. I just wanted you to know that I did get a personal reply, in which Franklin said that he has had concerns for many years about many articles in the magazine. He said that even though his father had founded the magazine nearly 50 years ago, he has nothing to do with it today, and "it certainly has strayed from what he had wanted it to be." Just thought you might like to know. Thanks for your watchfulness. MM (email)

## TBC Notes

### Be A Berean!

If this is your first exposure to *The Berean Call*, as the name implies, we are all about encouraging our readers to be like the Bereans of Acts 17:10-11. They were Jews in the synagogue of the Greek city of Berea who were commended for listening to the preaching of the Apostle Paul and particularly for searching the Scriptures daily to make sure that what he was teaching was true to the Word of God.

Jesus, when asked by His disciples about the last days and the signs preceding His return, indicated that spiritual deception would be a chief characteristic (Matthew 24:3-5). Based on the increasing number of prophetic events being fulfilled in the world, and the widespread development of spiritual deception throughout Christendom, it seems evident that those days are upon us.

What is a believer to do in order to stand firm in the faith and be fruitful for the Lord? Be a Berean!

T.A. McMAHON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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# LIVING BY FAITH

DAVE HUNT

A LIFE THAT IS PLEASING TO GOD must be founded upon His truth and lived in obedience thereto. As the psalmist said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). There is a path along which we must follow Christ (Matthew 16:24); a path which Satan doesn’t know and upon which he cannot touch us (Job 28:7-8; Isaiah 35:8-9); a path of God’s protection and guidance, a path of obedient, loving service to Christ and to others—where love both lives and speaks the truth (Ephesians 4:15). How tragic (and unloving) to live an otherwise exemplary life of sacrificial service to others and yet fail to speak God’s truth.

Mother Teresa [now deceased] provides the classic example of compassionate and charitable deeds divorced from truth. She says that her purpose is to bring her patients closer to the “God” in whom they already believe; so that a Hindu becomes a better Hindu, a Buddhist a better Buddhist, etc. (Vatican II says those of all religions are somehow saved through the Church.) She tells how to witness for Jesus:

One day they brought to our home a man with half his body eaten away. Worms crawled all over him, and the stench was so terrible....As I was cleaning him he looked at me and asked, “Why are you bothering?”

“I love you,” I said....“For me you are Jesus coming in His distressing disguise.”...Then...this Hindu gentleman...said, “Glory be to Jesus Christ.”...He realized that he was someone loved. (*New Evangelization 2000*, Issue 9, pp 11-12)

Tragically, this “Hindu gentleman,” though lovingly cared for physically, was left in his spiritual corruption with all of his superstitions and false beliefs intact. He was left in his sins to die without Christ, a Hindu who was “loved,” but not loved enough to be told the truth that would rescue him from hell!

*Time* magazine asked Mother Teresa a number of questions in November 1989. Her answers were revealing:

Q. Here in Calcutta, have you created a real change?

A. [We’ve] created a worldwide awareness of the poor.

Q. Beyond showing the poor to the world, have you conveyed any message about how to work with the poor?

A. You must make them feel loved and wanted. They are Jesus for me...in disguise.

Q. What do you think of Hinduism?

A. I love all religions....

How poor must one be in order to become “Jesus in disguise”? And how much money or possessions must one acquire to cease being “Jesus”? This loving woman hides a false gospel under emotional slogans. She launches the ones she loves from a clean bed into a Christless eternity and is praised for doing so! It is wrong to preach about a future life in heaven while neglecting to help those who suffer in this present life. Yet is it not equally wrong to fail to prepare souls for heaven while caring well for their bodies on earth? Pastor John MacArthur visited Mother Teresa in Calcutta in August 1988 and reported the following:

We asked her questions that might reveal her spiritual state. Her answers were troubling: “I love and respect all religions”—an unthinkable remark in light of the hellishness of India’s dominant religions.

“All my people die beautiful deaths,” she told me. I am convinced Mother Teresa is providing false comfort to the dying.” (*Masterpiece*, Winter 1988, p. 6)

Yes, we dare not just mouth doctrine but must live it. Don’t forget, however, it is *doctrine*, God’s truth, that we must live. Truth held in the head that is expressed only in words but not in deeds is hypocrisy. On

the other hand, love without truth is sentimentality. Parents who fail to discipline their children (a veritable plague these days) do not really love them. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,” Christ says (Revelation 3:19). Must we not do the same if His love is in us?

How thrilling to know that God has a purpose for our lives. Yet many Christians sink into discouragement, discontent, depression, and despair, feeling that their lives are too difficult, unhappy, and meaningless. That should never be the case for any true believer. But what of the elderly, bedridden, or just ordinary Christians with seemingly little influence upon others?

A life that is devoted to loving and praising God (no matter how lonely and hidden from men’s eyes) may bring a greater reward in heaven than that of someone who is on radio, television, writes books, and is known worldwide. Be true to God first, in all purity of heart-devotion to Him, in diligent study of His Word and in prayer “without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Trust Him to be your strength, to live His very life through you in the power of His Holy Spirit. Such a life of faith brings joy beyond expression!

Every life impacts others. It is not enough simply to “live a good life” without standing up for the truth and contending “earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). Yes, our speech must be “always with grace” but it must also be “seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6). We must be kind, gracious, patient, loving, tender, compassionate. Yes, “love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:8). But it would be a failure of love not to correct those who are straying from God’s truth.

Neither the world nor the church likes correction. Many Christian parents fail to discipline their children, thinking they are being kind, sympathetic and loving by giving in to their whining demands. Parents thereby train their children to be disobedient, lazy, undisciplined, self-indulgent, lacking in concern for others, and contemptuous of authority. Paul taught his “son in the faith” to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3).

Of Christ it was said, “...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:2). We can endure the persecution that comes from being true to Christ if we know the joy that awaits us. We can even know that joy now in the midst of trial. Christ’s joy was not only in having us in His presence, but even more than that, in having done His Father’s will. To know that we have been true to Him, that we have taken this talent of time and being, which He has entrusted to us (Matthew 25:14-30), and have used it to His glory, brings joy not only in this life but throughout eternity.

God has made us eternal beings. Every person ever born will continue in existence forever, either in the ecstatic bliss of God’s presence (Psalm 16:11) or in the unimaginable horror and remorse of separation from Him forever. The choices we make, the manner of life we live, and our attitude toward God, His Word, and others, carry consequences not only for this life but for eternity. Life on earth is short; eternity never ends. That fact is awesome to contemplate and in itself should cause us to live by faith in Him.

We walk by faith. Faith is not a power to aim at God to get blessings from Him, but faith opens the heart to God’s will and brings obedience to His Word. Knowing we are in God’s hands and that He loves and cares for us doesn’t guarantee that we may not be persecuted and even killed for His sake. But it assures us that He will be with us and will give us the grace to endure in His strength and with joy, whatever trial comes, so that He may be glorified in our bodies, “whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

[EXCERPT FROM *TBC* JUNE 1994]



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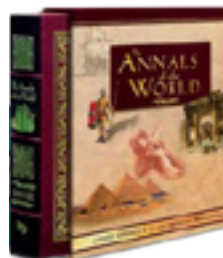
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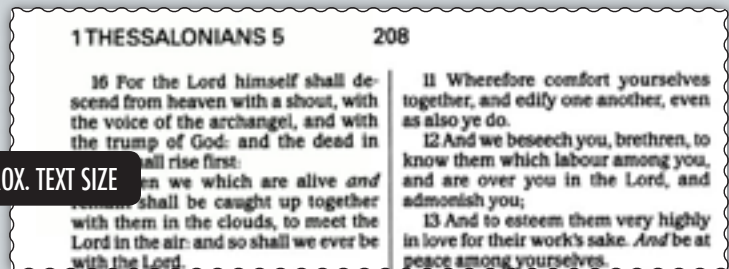
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