

**SPECIAL FEATURE:** THE GOD WHO IS NOT THERE by Ruth Hunt —page 8

a very  
biblical hope  
present  
for overcoming  
help  
isolation

**NEW!**

TBC Exclusive  
by Ruth Hunt

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**The Berean  
Call**

NOVEMBER 2012

*THE UPCOMING PSYCHOLOGIZED GENERATION*

by T. A. McMAHON

# NEW! A VERY PRESENT HELP

## Biblical Help For Overcoming Isolation — Written by Ruth Hunt!



### A Very Present Help

**Ruth Hunt**—Originally published in 1976 by Fleming H. Revell with the title *Sparrow on the Housetop*, The Berean Call is pleased to present this new edition of Ruth Hunt's incisive look into the lives of some of the Bible's most interesting characters.

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We tend to put the various individuals in the Bible into categories: this one was good, that one was bad, this one was good and bad, and so forth. But it's helpful to also keep in mind that God included each one in His book not only to teach us about ourselves and what He wants from us, but more important, as we see how He dealt with the lives of these men and women, He is teaching us about Himself, His character, and how we can see His love manifested as He works in *our* lives.

Ruth Hunt knows that Jesus Christ is Savior, but she also knows that He is the ultimate Friend—the only One who can truly fill the emptiness we sometimes experience. With great skill and enormous insight, Mrs. Hunt ties each Bible story back to mankind's only source of help and beautifully reveals how Christian love and compassion can banish loneliness and despair forever.

Her sensitive approach to her subject gives special impetus to all who yearn to solve personal problems of loneliness, and to those who, in the spirit of Christ-like love, wish to respond to the needs of lonely people around them.

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**ABOUT RUTH HUNT:** Ruth was raised in a godly home. Her family tree goes way back to a Mennonite ancestry in the Netherlands. Her father became a beloved preacher among these fervent believers. Ruth followed her university graduation with teaching and administrative careers. A highlight was her God-blessed marriage to author/lecturer David Hunt and the gift of four lovely children. She presently spends her

days in a care facility where her invalid husband resides. Ruth and David can declare with heartfelt thanks that "The eternal God is [their] refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" Deuteronomy 33:27.

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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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## **The Upcoming Psychologized Generation**

*T. A. McMahon*

When Dave Hunt and I wrote *The Seduction of Christianity* more than 25 years ago, the conservative evangelical church was more than pleased that we were addressing some of the erroneous teachings and practices of the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, particularly those that promoted the unbiblical prosperity and healing doctrines. Yet that enthusiasm was short-lived when many such readers got to chapters 12 and 13. Why? Those chapters addressed the biblical problems with *psychological counseling* in the church, a phenomenon that had installed itself within evangelical Christianity in a major way.

That was more than a quarter of a century ago, and one might guess (or hope) that the body of Christ would have become aware of the preponderance of studies from some research psychologists who demonstrate that psychotherapy is not only practically worthless but is even quite harmful in many situations. Few, however, have taken notice. As a consequence, psychotherapy has become so accepted among evangelicals today that rarely is anyone aware of the dangers.

How did the evangelical church slide into such an astounding lack of discernment? The fundamental reason is shockingly simple: most Christians, including many who claim to look to the Bible as their *authority* in all matters of living their lives in submission to the Lord, give only lip service to the *sufficiency of God's Word*. In other words, they contradict their professing belief in biblical authority by looking elsewhere for solutions to solving life's problems, primarily by turning to so-called authorities or "experts"—and particularly to psychologists. This is a tragic mistake because God's Word is sufficient: "*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*" (2 Peter 1:3). The Word of God is the Manufacturer's Handbook, with instructions for humanity regarding "*all things that pertain to life and godliness.*" What exactly are the "*all things*"? Certainly everything that pertains to or involves moral issues and anything that is sin related—either how to avoid it or how

to repent of it. Clinical psychology cannot deal with sin—although most if not all of the issues for which people turn to psychotherapists are *due* to sin. The outcome of seeking psychotherapeutic help is always destructive for the faith of the believer for what should be obvious reasons.

Psychological counseling is an anti-biblical replacement program for the Manufacturer's Handbook. Its essential doctrine is that *self*, which is declared to be *innately good*, is the key to solving all of life's problems. Therefore, foundationally, it stands in direct opposition to the Scriptures, which declare that *self*, i.e., man, is *innately sinful* (Jeremiah 17:9). If self, also known as the heart of man, is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" as the Bible declares, then self is the *problem* rather than the solution. Just as a leopard cannot change its spots, there is nothing within self that can change its sinful nature. Nothing in the theories or practices of psychotherapy can change this fact. So why would psychotherapists, in view of all of the horrendous evil that we see demonstrated daily throughout the world, hold to a premise that simple observation denies? They have no choice. Without God, only self remains. And so the delusory charade based upon the innate goodness of man goes on (as well as the terrible consequence) for people who have turned from God to a *deified* self.

The good news is that God knows the problem that besets humanity and He has provided the solution through His Son—a solution that will change the heart of every human who will turn to Him and accept His offer. Christ's full payment for the sins of humanity not only makes those who receive His payment for themselves *new creatures* in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), but they are also sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, the only true Counselor and Comforter of all believers. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is the One who enables the born-again Christian to understand the Manufacturer's Handbook and live out its instructions (John 14:26; Zechariah 4:6). That's what the Bible declares; so why would those who profess to believe in the Bible forsake its wonderful claims? Jesus announced that He came that those who believed in Him "might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

So why do believers look elsewhere? One of the major reasons is simple—and

therefore correctible. If a believer is not reading his Bible and is relying on other sources for his biblical intake, he will have only a vague idea of what's in it, and much of his thinking about it may be deluded or distorted. That contributes to one's having a serious lack of confidence in God's Word. Such a person is rendered incapable of recognizing what's biblical and what's not. Yet the condition is hardly hopeless. Biblical discernment doesn't depend upon scholarship or knowing Greek and Hebrew or attending seminary or having an apologetics degree from a Bible college. It's simply a matter of a believer's disciplined reading (meaning every day!) of the Word of God, followed by a willingness to apply what one is reading to one's life. How can a believer expect to recognize truth from error if he or she is not disciplined in reading and doing what the Scriptures teach? Biblical discernment is basically a matter of comparing what's being promoted or taught in the world *or the church* with what the Bible teaches. A person cannot make that assessment if he is doubtful about biblical content. What is needed is the very thing that the Jews in the synagogue of the Greek city of Berea were commended for: they searched the Scriptures daily to see if those things that the Apostle Paul was preaching were true to the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11). If those Jews were so commended, how much more important it is that believers today follow their example.

Sadly, from my observation over more than three decades, the evangelical church has succumbed to nearly every seductive device the Adversary has dished out, all in support of his major strategy: *to destroy the effectiveness of God's Word in the church*, as well as in the world. The seductive program began in the Garden of Eden with Eve: "Yea, hath God said...?"—a ploy to get her to rethink God's commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had indeed declared to Adam, "...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Satan then denied God's command by telling Eve, "Ye shall not surely die..." (Genesis 3:4).

It is important to note that *the sowing of doubt followed by the denial of the truth of God's Word* has been the Adversary's tactic in his quest to destroy mankind ever since. His chief strategy is to *undermine the Scriptures*. To the degree that a believer turns from the Word of God—whether

through apathy, laziness, being spoon fed, having a self-serving interest, turning to outside sources, being deceived, listening to extra-biblical misinformation, etc.—to that degree his ability to discern has deteriorated. Without biblical discernment, a believer is ripe for any and all of Satan’s deceptions, which brings us back to what may be the Adversary’s most effective contemporary scam: “psyching out” the evangelical church.

It began, as most seductions do, in small doses and influences, all of them somewhat subtle and appearing to make sense. In the mid-20th century, psychologists such as Erich Fromm began writing about love, and in particular the value of self-love. Abraham Maslow, in the 1940s, included self-esteem near the top of his “hierarchy of needs.” Evangelicals took note. Norman Vincent Peale and psychiatrist Smiley Blanton early in the 1950s established the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry. The Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), took root at the same time. Also, at that time, the American Psychiatric Association set up luncheons around the US, in which psychiatrists suggested to the religious community that working together to meet the needs of their flocks would be a match made in heaven. As that relationship grew, it was gradually impressed upon the pastors and priests that they were ill equipped to deal with most of the issues of their congregations’ problems of living. Many pastors fell into that erroneous idea and returned to school to earn degrees in psychology.

What began as a trickle turned into a flood from the 1970s through the 80s. Psychologist James Dobson released his book, *How to Build Self-Esteem in Your Child: Hide or Seek*. Robert Schuller’s book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* was sent out gratis to 250,000 pastors. Toward the end of the 1980s, the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), an organization that strongly endorses the integration of psychology and the Bible, had its beginning. Today it boasts on its masthead: “Nearly 50,000 Members and Growing Stronger Every Day.” The list of leaders who have spoken at AACC conferences consist of a *Who’s Who?* of the evangelical community. My Middle Eastern friends would characterize what I’ve described early on as “the camel getting its nose in the tent.” It should come as no surprise, then, that years later the camel is right at home *within* the tent. That “beast,” however, has displaced God’s way and His truth and is causing much destruction within the body of Christ.

Unless there is a dramatic recognition of the antibiblical nature of psychological

counseling and its “spiritualized” counterparts (inner healing, Theophostic Counseling, Bethel’s Sozo, etc.), the worst is yet to come. What makes me think so? It has to do with our upcoming generation of evangelicals. Many are aware that evolution is a false science—a pseudoscience—thanks to the teaching and influence of organizations such as the Institute for Creation Research and Answers in Genesis and individuals such as Carl Kerby, Jobe Martin, and many others. Psychological counseling, however, is *also* a pseudoscience (which we have documented in numerous articles and books that we have offered for years). Can you name any ministries equivalent in influence to that of ICR or AiG that are pointing out the pseudoscientific nature of *psychotherapy*? Not that there aren’t some out there, but they are small voices crying in the wilderness.

Now here is the really bad news. Our evangelical young people are being led by the pied pipers of so-called Christian psychology and through the greed of professing Christian universities to become practitioners in an antichrist field. It’s tragic enough that the upcoming generation is functionally biblically illiterate—they know how to read, and they have Bibles but don’t read them (See this issue’s NewsWatch), but add to that grievous condition the fact that they are being *ushered into* psychology. A survey by the prestigious *Princeton Review* noted that psychology was listed as the number-two major among college students. It’s very likely that the percentage is even higher for Christian students at professing Christian colleges because of their belief in the *myth* that psychology is a scientific way of helping people and that jobs may be available for them as counselors at evangelical churches. There is also other encouragement for them to seek such careers.

Dr. James Dobson is one of the many highly influential evangelicals ushering this next generation into psychotherapy. He writes: “Christian psychology is a worthy profession for a young believer, provided his faith is strong enough to withstand the humanistic concepts to which he will be exposed” (*Focus on the Family*, Dec. 1988). Dr. Dobson couldn’t be more wrong in his counsel to young believers. To begin with, “Christian psychology” is a misleading term. According to CAPS, “there is no acceptable Christian psychology that is markedly different from non-Christian psychology...as yet there is not an acceptable theory, mode of research, or treatment methodology that is distinctly Christian” (From a paper presented at the Western Association of Christians for Psychological Studies, 1976, cited in

*Psychoheresy* by Martin & Deidre Bobgan, Eastgate Pub., 1987, p.5). As noted, scarce is the young believer today whose faith is strong enough and whose discernment level high enough (because of his study of the Word of God) to withstand the onslaught from such a pursuit. And finally, it isn’t merely a matter of being able to stand against some of the humanistic concepts in psychotherapy. No, the entire field of psychological counseling is *rooted* in the humanistic concept of self.

It is also rare that a Christian academic institution would reject psychology for biblical reasons (although there are a few). Some offer psychological counseling for the same reasons that they teach evolution in their so-called science departments—they accept it by faith. But it’s also a matter of “filthy lucre,” i.e., it’s an economic proposition: students keep the school afloat financially. If the school does not offer psychology, “the number-two most popular major,” the students will go elsewhere; if they go elsewhere, the school sinks economically.

What all of this leads up to is a generation of evangelicals who will have been heavily psychologized and further conditioned against the belief in the *sufficiency of the Word of God*. And because most of the church is supportive of the psychological way, there will be few warnings regarding the spiritual disaster that lies ahead.

Is there any hope of averting such a tragic end result? Yes...but the term “hope” may seem a bit optimistic. Nevertheless, we have a potential remedy and encouragement from the Book of Nehemiah. Upon returning to Jerusalem from Babylon, Nehemiah was confronted by a development that outraged him: the Jewish leaders had given to Tobiah, the servant of the wicked Sanballat and enemy of Israel, a “chamber in the courts of the house of God.” Nehemiah’s response, as a man of God, as a type of the Holy Spirit, as a watchman who oversaw the building of the wall surrounding Jerusalem for protection, was God ordained: “And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber” (Nehemiah 13:7-8).

Unless today’s men of God, shepherds of God’s flock, those whom God has privileged in leadership positions do likewise with the “psychological stuff” that is in the church, they are unwittingly contributing to the last days apostasy (2 Timothy 3:1-2). And by failing to warn this and the next generation, their “blood,” i.e., the resulting spiritual destruction, will fall upon those who will be held accountable—those who *could* have done something but did nothing. It doesn’t have to be that way.

TBC



## Quotable .....

Think it not strange, then, pilgrim,  
neither faint,  
Much less indulge in murmuring and  
complaint,  
If what you meet with in your heavenly  
road  
Is hard to bear; since all is planned by  
God,  
His child to train in wisdom's holy ways,  
And form a chosen vessel for His praise.  
Now we are slow those ways to under-  
stand;  
But let us bow beneath His mighty hand,  
Sure that His wisdom over all presides,  
His power controls, and love unerring  
guides.

— J. G. Deck

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION:** How do you respond to Christians who say, “As long as we Christians believe in the Trinity and that Jesus died for our sins...and we preach the gospel—let’s just put our theological disagreements aside”? Different denominations teach God’s Word differently from other denominations. For example, one church baptizes babies and the other doesn’t. Both believe they are teaching scripture! How do we reconcile this?

**RESPONSE:** It’s one thing to say that one believes in “the Trinity,” but one’s belief needs to be defined and compared to the Scriptures. Paul warns, “For 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 [i.e., they embrace the false teaching]” (2 Cor 11:4) Are their beliefs concerning Jesus, the nature of the Godhead, the gospel, etc., biblical?

Catholics affirm the Trinity, yet Catholics baptize babies because it is (in their view) an integral part of the salvation process. So Catholics may believe in the Trinity, but they have “another gospel.” Other groups that insist upon baptism for infants have also formulated “another gospel.” They may very well believe in the deity of Christ and the Godhead comprising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But they are preaching a *false* gospel.

There is only one gospel. It is eternal and changeless. It is the gospel of the Kingdom, the only gospel that Jesus or His disciples or Paul preached, and the same gospel that we must preach today. Unfortunately, seldom is the gospel preached in the way

that Paul preached it in Acts 17:2-3 and elsewhere. Romans 1, for example, reveals what must shock a Jew: that Christianity is not some new invention but the fulfillment of the *same message the Hebrew prophets had proclaimed*.

Yes, the gospel does pertain to the death and resurrection of Christ for our sins, as Paul declares in Romans 2, as David and the prophets declared, as Peter preached in his Acts 2 and 3 sermons, and as foretold in all of the Old Testament sacrifices. Abraham rejoiced to see Christ’s day, Christ was a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” and although the disciples didn’t understand fully what it meant that Jesus was the Messiah (Peter in Matthew 16, for example, acknowledged Him as such), they did point their listeners to Him as the fulfillment of the prophets’ message.

Regarding baby baptism, the Bible shows us through the example of the early church that baptism is *a declaration to the world of an individual’s receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior*—a visible demonstration of an invisible occurrence, in which the person has died to sin, thus identifying with Christ in His death, and is born to a new and living hope, identifying with Christ in His resurrection. That’s not possible for infants.

One must exercise discernment in all of these areas, searching the Scriptures to see what God’s Word, not man’s, really has to say about it.

**QUESTION: OK—you have questions about Mother Teresa. I agree with some of your reservations. However, she made Jesus famous in India as few have. I suspect that many dying Hindu’s cried out to the loving Jesus that she and her sisters presented in actions of love no one could deny. Most evangelicals have a lot to learn from that if we are honest.**

**RESPONSE:** We have the choice to objectively evaluate the evidence or to ignore it. Evaluated by Scripture, Mother Teresa taught “another Jesus,” which will save no one: “Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name [than the biblical Jesus] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

We cannot honestly find any examples of Teresa speaking the truth of the biblical gospel. Rather, we can find numerous documented examples of her professing to help people become “better Muslims, Hindus,” etc. Either her words have no meaning, or they should be evaluated objectively in the light of Scripture. You say that you “suspect.” Is that the criteria by which we operate? Paul was “not ashamed of the *gospel of Christ*: for it is the power of God unto

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).

The “gospel” that Mother Teresa presented was powerless because it was incomplete. We have the testimony of her own words and actions. Mother Teresa wrote, “We never try to convert those who receive [aid from Missionaries of Charity] to Christianity but in our work we bear witness to the love of God’s presence, and if Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, or agnostics become for this better men—simply better—we will be satisfied” (Mother Teresa, *Life in the Spirit: Reflections, Meditations and Prayers*, pp 81-82).

In her poem “On Suffering,” Mother Teresa wrote, “He allows us to share in His suffering, And to make up for the sins of the world.” This is Catholic doctrine. It is not the biblical gospel. Was this what the inspired writer of Hebrews meant when he wrote of the One who, “offered one sacrifice for sins for ever...” (Heb 10:12)? Official Catholic doctrine denies that Jesus paid the full penalty for sin. This is what Mother Teresa believed.

Native Calcuttan Aroup Chatterjee wrote in his book *Mother Teresa: The Final Verdict*:

On 15 June 1995 she was touring the neonatal unit at St Elizabeth’s Medical Centre in Brighton, Massachusetts. Parents could not believe their luck when she left the babies (many of them premature) her blessings and her hallmark, an oval aluminum “miraculous” medal. She told the media, “I have 200 small babies in my hospital in Calcutta. This is a beautiful place” (*Boston Globe*, 16 June 1995). She, however, does not have any hospitals in Calcutta, nor anywhere else in the world (Aroup Chatterjee, *Mother Teresa: The Final Verdict*, Meteor Press, chapter 1).

We cannot do more than speculate about the impact of her works. What about the suffering of those denied painkillers because she believed “suffering was a gift from God” and efficacious in helping those suffering to enter purgatory? What about those defrauded of money that she refused to return? Is this the testimony that leads an individual to Christ?

Regarding examples, we have far greater ones in the ministries of Amy Carmichael, Dr. Paul Gupta (see *God of the Untouchables*), William Carey, Henry Martyn, etc.

As others have noted, “The primitive hospice in Calcutta was as run down when she died as it always had been—she preferred California clinics when she got sick herself—and her order always refused to publish any audit.”

May the Lord deliver us from Christian political correctness and may we never flee from truth. The stakes are too high for anything less.

## T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

**Dec 3-5**     **21st Annual Pre-Trib Study Group**  
Dallas/Ft Worth, TX  
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**Jan 17-19**   **Calvary Chapel Finger Lakes**  
Farmington, NY  
(585) 398-3550

## Letters .....

### Dear T. A. & Staff,

I am astonished at the rising number of long-time, loyal supporters of TBC who suddenly find themselves opposed to its views, fiercely offended, and insisting that their subscriptions be cancelled, while accusing Dave & T. A. of a lack of love and unity. Sadly, because the views held by TBC have remained essentially unchanged since the beginning, the only explanation is that these folks have allowed themselves to become deceived by entertaining “doctrines of demons” and are no longer able to “endure sound doctrine.” After years of standing fast, they have abandoned their beliefs and have succumbed to the very peril that TBC diligently warns against. This should serve as warning to each and every one of us. Let none of us ever find ourselves writing one of those terminal letters, being offended and seduced by error. “Take heed lest ye also fall!” Keep contending for the truth at any cost! JC (AZ, prisoner)

### Brethren at TBC,

Regarding the book *The Harbinger*, here is the root problem of the book: the founding fathers’ dedication of the nation to God. Over what sources does Mr. Cahn say that? It seems that he rather assumes it. This is a belief many Americans assume, especially Christians, when there are valid sources saying otherwise, e.g., historical documents. For some, maybe it is better to believe a nice and groundless assumption, since it has been widely accepted for very long. I prefer to believe the truth, no matter how hard it may be. False assumptions always lead to false ideas and beliefs. AM (email)

### Dear Dave,

Having just read your article “Are We Too Negative?” I just want to say, well done, once again. While I can’t stand and smugly say I’m perfect, I know when I do what I shouldn’t do and I don’t do what I should do. The Lord has given me the tools required to walk the walk and after that it’s all down to choice, no matter how we try to pretty it up with various headings

and categories. We have become so soft on ourselves that we decide to put anything we don’t want to deal with into a separate heading and suddenly it’s not our fault anymore. May God forgive us and give us ears to hear what he is saying and a softness of heart to return to Him. Thank you, and keep on calling it what it is! MR (email)

### Dear Mr. Hunt,

Just a little note to thank you very much for the Berean magazines you sent me. I do look forward to them each month. God bless you and all the team for speaking and standing up for the Truth in these Last Days. JN (Northern Ireland)

### Dear Berean Call,

I am reading *Temporal Delusion* by T. A. McMahon. As Dave would say, “Wow!” Thank you, T. A., for putting pen to paper and giving us all of this vital info in one place. My plan is to share this book with as many as will read it. Again, thank you! AB (AL)

### Dear Friends at Berean Call,

Your article, “Are We Too Negative?” has prompted me to say “thank you” from the bottom of my heart for standing on the TRUTH of God’s Word and defending it at all cost.

Your articles online, as well as those on Lighthouse Trails Research and Understand the Times, helped our family get out of a “Christian Cult” by exposing their lies. Your articles also helped us find our way back to the TRUTH! We now enjoy expository teaching of God’s Word, reading and studying His Words in the context in which they were written—which is so very beautiful indeed!

I will remember you in my prayers as you fight for the TRUTH! Please be encouraged and know that your ministry is making a difference in many lives! JY (NC)

### Dear Mr. Hunt,

Thank you, Mr. Hunt, for being so honest about the Catholic Church. I actually left the church after having a revelation one day while saying the rosary. I came to the Hail Holy Queen prayer and while saying the words “our Life our sweetness and our hope,” I realized that it is only Christ who is our Life and our hope. I was so depressed after realizing that I had been so foolish to put my hope into another. I had many other doubts as well. My problem was that I wasn’t reading the Bible where we have the very word of God, which will guide us and help us in preventing these mistakes in the first place. I ordered your book *A Woman Rides the Beast*, and although I knew of a dark history within the Roman

Catholic Church, I didn’t know just [how] horrific and deeply disturbing. I thank you for standing up for the truth when many times I know it can be difficult. It is authors like you who make a big difference in the world of Christianity. God bless you, Dave. FW (email)

### TBC,

Show me one place in the Bible where it says what books belong in the Bible. Where in the bible does Jesus Christ ever say “write the Bible?” If you can’t answer this question, then based on your illogic, you might as well reject the Bible. You can’t point to a single verse in the Bible that tells us which books belong in the Bible. You depend on the trust that you have in the Authority and Infallibility of Pope St. Damasus, in accepting as inspired the scriptures which you reduced and corrupted. Neither can you point to a single verse where the Lord Jesus Christ says “write the Bible.” The word “Bible” is not even in the Bible.

So protestants depend on the original and one true Bible, as a blueprint, in counterfeiting their own, man made inspired so called “bibles.” This is proven by the fact that verses, chapters, and punctuation were first added to the Bible in the 13th century by Cardinal Stephen Langton of the Catholic Church. The verses and chapters found in the true Bible, are the same as those found in the protestant so called “bibles” and some verses begin right in the middle of sentences: and it is impossible for the protestants to have put the verses and chapters in their so called bibles, without first consulting the Original—of the Church. The only exception is that the protestants decided to number their book of psalms, 1 verse ahead (of the True Bible).

People don’t get to Heaven by merely thinking they will. Pray hard to Mother Mary and the Saints and Angels, so you may be delivered from your protestant heresies. CH (email)

### Dear Friends,

I cannot thank you enough for the 2012 conference. What great speakers, fellowship & ministry tools! Finally, I got to meet you. It really was the joy of my life. May God bless you all as you keep pressing on in these last days. LT (CA)

### Dear Dave and Tom,

Thank you for continuing to provide the premier discernment ministry in America. I just received the August issue of *The Berean Call* (which I’ve never paid a penny for, and devour more eagerly than anything else I get in the mail), and have not yet finished reading it through because I feel called on to voice my agreement with your stand on



the *Harbinger* controversy. Your ministry regularly takes stands that are despised by the world, but this seems to have set you at odds with some of your usual allies. That must make it an especially tough stand to take, so I feel bound as a long-time recipient of your publication to return a word of encouragement and support.

As a pastor who must regularly feed the flock, I realize how important hermeneutic principles are. No Scripture is of private interpretation, so if a study is doctrinal... we must take care to find the true interpretation. The main rule of correct interpretation is to compare Scripture with Scripture. How many doctrines can you think of that are made out of one verse? We discover the true meaning of a verse by seeing how it fits with a corroborating meshwork of other verses.... This method of testing the true meaning of a verse by comparing it with companion verses is based on the realization that God has given us a self-authenticating and self-interpreting Book....

*The Harbinger* does not allow for such a verification of its claims. It is a doctrine made out of one passage. That passage is not shown to exist in a harmonious network of supporting passages that... confirm and reinforce each other. The solitary passage is instead compared to certain historic events, and because of a superficial correspondence between them, the author claims to advance a true interpretation of the passage. His claim bypasses the first rule of hermeneutics. Rather than compare Scripture with Scripture, he compares an isolated passage with history. This faulty hermeneutic principle opens the door to all kinds of error. To interpret a particular Scripture in reference to worldly events that appear to line up with it is basically the allegorical method of interpretation. With no cross-references to validate interpretation, he resorts to a private interpretation founded on mere historic coincidences. Obviously this practice will facilitate erroneous teaching.

That this hermeneutic is acceptable to contemporary Christians is not so surprising. But that even some contemporary "discernment ministries" are taken in by it reveals just how bad the spiritual state of the modern church is.

Please keep up the good work, guys. You are sorely needed in our day! SB (MI)

#### **Dear TBC,**

Thank you for your constant work for the Lord. You and Dave have blessed me beyond words. My family members love you—especially my 22-year-old daughter. She just came down asking me where your latest newsletter was. She has listened to Dave Hunt's "What Love Is This?" lecture

many times. We love you at Berean Call. WR (email)

#### **Beloved at The Berean Call,**

I cannot thank you enough for your ministry to me over the past 22 years. Almost daily you have taught me and fed me the word of God. I am always so delighted and blessed to receive the email newsletters and articles. May the LORD continue to raise up faithful servants for this important service to the body of Christ. JD (Canada)

#### **Dear Berean Call,**

Please remove me from your mailing list. While I have enjoyed some of the articles, I also found a lot of error. Non-biblical teachings such as: secret rapture, 7 years of Tribulation, taking a statement in Daniel that refers to Christ (causing the sacrifices to cease) and saying that refers to the Antichrist, too much counter reformation Jesuit teachings, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cramer... none of them believed these things. I will pray for you. GS (WA)

#### **TBC,**

I appreciated the article entitled "Are We Too Negative?" in the August *BC* newsletter. The answer to the question is No, No, No! In fact, I am amazed at the willingness within the body of Christ to embrace any and all teachings, regardless of their biblical support, in the name of being "non-judgmental" and "loving one another." This is done to the abandonment of all sound biblical truth. Truth and love need to be equally balanced. It is certainly not loving to ignore false teachings. How can any Christian read the books of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, 1, 2 & 3 John, etc., and come to the conclusion that "contending for the faith" (Jude 6), "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), "speaking the things which are fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1), "prescribe and teach these things" (1 Timothy 4:11), "pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching" (1 Timothy 4:16), "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition" (2 Timothy 3:25), "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Timothy 4:2), "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with teaching" (Titus 1:9) is negative?

I think the question should be "Why are so many Christians opposed and desensitized to contending for our precious faith?" SY (OR)

#### **Dear Dave,**

As one who has been blessed by Bro Dave's work since 1973 (I was a senior in high school), I want to thank you for your tremendous contribution to my life and

ministry. I had the privilege of taking you to dinner twice, after you spoke at prophecy conferences. (It surprised me that you accepted my invitations.) Our conversations were the high point of each event for me. The patience and kindness you showed to this young ignorant minister moved me to tears. Your teaching inspired me to study hard and try to be a Berean Christian. I will always feel a debt of gratitude to you and most of all to the Lord for the way He has used you thru the years. May you have peace, joy, and all-sufficient grace every day. God bless your family for sharing you with us. You are in my prayers. HH (email)

#### **TBC,**

I have read a couple of Dave's books and found them excellent reading but had never visited your site. Recently, I was encouraged to read a book by John Piper; it didn't take long for me to realize that the message is basically the selfish pursuit of pleasure, couched in biblical terminology and a twist of the truth.... I wondered if Dave had made a comment on this and found it in the March '06 newsletter. I am very much encouraged, thank you Dave and thank you all for your work. MM (United Kingdom)

### **TBC Notes**

#### *Update on Dave and Ruth*

As most of you know, Dave Hunt had his 86th birthday in September. He is presently in a nursing care facility here in Bend, Oregon. Some months ago, Dave had a stroke, and though his vital signs are good, the Lord's warrior and watchman is no longer "standing on the wall" or able to swing the "sword of the Spirit" as he once did. Ruth spends half of her 24-hour days ministering to her champion, a challenging caregiving task that she assumes with joy.

Please continue to pray for Dave and Ruth as they see the Lord using them in new and different ways that are certainly no less fruitful as they glorify Him daily. Pray also for their children as they have the opportunity to minister to their parents as never before. The wonderful thing about knowing the Lord is that whether He provides the opportunity for us to minister to others, or we become the opportunity for others to minister to us, spiritual fruit is produced and God is glorified.

*T. A. McMAHON*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# THE GOD WHO IS NOT THERE

BY RUTH HUNT  
*Excerpted from A Very Present Help*

It was dark, appropriately so—the darkest night of Saul’s life. Behind him his armies were pitched on Gilboa, ready to face the Philistines massed against them. With two servants, he crept stealthily along the barely discernable path that led to an isolated hut. This night Saul was disguised. Never must it be known that Israel’s king, who by his own decree had outlawed the occult craft, was on his way to consult Endor’s witch.

For Saul, it was the ultimate loneliness. From the far side of an unbridgeable chasm he reached across to the God who was no longer there. He sought and he couldn’t find. He knocked and no one answered. In an extremity of anguish, he groped at the edge of the abyss, and like the shepherd boy who would sit on the throne after him, his cry might have been, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

David knew, however, that his cry of despair, uttered in a weak moment, was addressed to One who was there after all—One who would assuredly answer. “Be not silent to me,” David had pleaded, “lest...I become like them that go down into the pit.” With him, it was a cry to a God who was definitely there and infinitely to be desired. He knew that no loss, whether it was the throne that had eluded him so long, or friends, or reputation, or life itself, could compare with the loss of that relationship. For Saul, however, there would be no answer, and it was just at the brink of that great fixed gulf that Saul trembled on this dark night.

The very fact that God’s Spirit had once rested on Saul and had made His voice known made it all the more bitter. That guidance had assured success beyond his wildest dreams. Not only had God’s Spirit come and gone according to the need, but there had been faithful Samuel to give him counsel and encouragement. Now Samuel was dead—the prophet who had anointed him to be king and deliverer of Israel, and upon whose counsel he’d once depended. The Philistines, whose destruction he’d been elevated to accomplish, were waiting for the kill right now. That thought haunted him. David, the sweet singer he’d once loved and who he knew would be king after him, was with those armies, anointed, and ready to take the vacant throne. That thought haunted him, too. The great things he’d been meant to accomplish for Israel tortured him. Everything had come full circle for him this night, and the worst of all was that there was nowhere to turn. No one to reach out a helping hand. No one even to confess to. In hell, he lifted up his eyes and from an unfathomable distance saw everything that was really worthwhile and had once been his—or at least obtainable—totally and forever beyond reach. Only the powers of darkness were at his disposal now and he was helpless even to summon them without the aid of the despised woman to whom he was hurrying. Without God and without hope in this world, he merely went to have his doom confirmed. Hell.

What was a nice boy from Gibeah doing in a place like this? What, after all, is anyone doing at the gates of hell? The ingredients of the tragedy are in most cases frighteningly similar: a very ordinary human being expected by man and society to perform in a capacity for which he was never designed. The emergency is and was real. Our present world is in a mess. Israel stood in grave peril then as it does now. The debacle of the ark’s removal from Shiloh had had devastating results. Even after its recovery, the Philistines had continued their inroads, taking town after town in a series of demoralizing aggressions. With the death of Eli and his sons, Samuel had taken over the spiritual leadership of Israel, and, in a dramatic display of divine power, God had routed the Philistines at Mizpah. It was an affirmation of what God could do in answer to one man’s righteous prayers. When the victories weren’t immediately followed up, the demand came that sparked the disaster, “Appoint us a king to govern us like all the nations.”

Samuel’s first impulse was to feel sorry for himself. But no, God assured him, “They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them.... Yet protest solemnly unto them,

and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.”

That’s where the isolation had begun with Eve. *Had God really said* (Gn 3:1)? Wasn’t there another way to go than total obedience? For the nation of Israel, Moses’ deathbed charge and Joshua’s challenge to decision at the entrance to the land, and now Samuel’s warning, would add up to a monumental witness against the people, when those calamities of which each spoke would indeed fall on them. “And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

Into this tragedy-in-the-making fell Saul, and a more appropriately chosen victim one couldn’t find. Handsome, tall, a pleasing personality—he was all of these. Surely if the people must have a king, he was the best available. Still, he was no substitute for God, and that’s what the people wanted—and still do. Nevertheless, God was going to be with him. Samuel promised it—if. One of the big *ifs* had to do with obedience to God’s prophet: “And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man.” Humbly Saul began by following directions. It was all so new.

It wouldn’t be too difficult to replace Saul with any of today’s millions of bewildered “kings” who are trying to rule a personal universe over which they were never meant to have dominion. With all the looks, talent, and good intentions in the world, Saul knew he didn’t have enough to make it, and on the day of his presentation to the tribes he had hidden. It was quite possibly the most completely honest act of his life.

Sin was no new thing in Israel’s national life. It isn’t an isolated occurrence in ours, either. But Israel’s king was already a fact when Samuel’s final grim forecast was made (1 Sm 12:13-15). Though the people were smitten with remorse, it was too late to remedy the evil. Still, there was an out: “Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD.” Graciously, Samuel continued to comfort his conscience-stricken people. “God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you.... Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart.... But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.”

It wasn’t too auspicious a beginning for the young seeker of asses from Gibeah. Nevertheless, God’s promise of help rested upon him *if* he’d pick up the already marred fabric of the new kingdom and walk in humble dependence upon God.

How often we, too, must pick up the broken pieces that even a confessed sin leaves. God does help us to cope with the wreckage, and, with His beautiful *if*, He presents a way of escape. As Samuel prayed for Israel, there is One who prays for us, “with groanings which cannot be uttered.” And then there is God’s promise as it came on this occasion: “For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people” (1 Sm 12:22). The reliability and glory of God’s own name is at stake in the quality of help He gives. Add to that the pleasure He gets in making us His.... Nothing shall separate us from the love of God—ever. Neither would the Son allow anything to come between Himself and the joy that was set before Him in having us forever in His keeping. With all the certainty of God’s love to bolster and all the skill of the Great Physician to heal, we too can turn even a tragic mistake into a point of departure for a deeper and more chastened walk with Him.

Granted, Saul was in an uncomfortable spot—in fact, in the spot that only God should occupy. Still, He was faithful to His promise, and the electorate’s choice began his reign with all the popularity and goodwill that a new king could well expect. Could we stretch the point enough to suggest that he occupied just about the same position as a new Christian born into a marred world? It isn’t the best of all possible worlds. That one was left behind long ago in the Garden. But it’s the one we *have*, and with the help of the Holy Spirit to guide and Jesus



to stand surety to God's promises, we actually can make it. Saul definitely wasn't alone in this problem-riddled situation.

How important the first steps are for an infant. Compulsively, it clutches the outstretched hand. How terrifying the world appears from the height of those two chubby and now-upright legs. The infant dares because Mother is there, or Dad. We dare walk in this marred universe only because the Holy Spirit provides that helping ministry for us the moment we're born into God's family. We're not left alone. Any separation thereafter is by our own choosing. Saul's link with God and everything right in Israel's national life depended upon *obedience*—the *if* that spelled the difference between disaster and success.

It didn't take long for the man who had everything—except the right to rule—to alienate himself from the help he needed. A crucial battle with the Philistines loomed. The instructions were clear. Saul was to draw up his armies and wait for Samuel to come to present an offering and enquire of the Lord. The days passed. When Samuel didn't appear, Saul's men panicked and scattered. Saul couldn't wait. Militarily, the time for attack was right, and to get on with the action, Saul offered the sacrifice himself. When Samuel did appear, the excuses fell flat. Foolish Saul. The rule was his only *under* God. He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, whether it involves the ordering of one's own affairs or those of a kingdom. Both realms were lost to Saul that day. Thereafter it was "...war against the Philistines all the days of Saul."

Is this the story of your life? War—nothing but total and unremitting warfare? Life *is* a battle. We're told that. But we were never meant to fight the good fight of faith alone. Equipped with a will, we can say *yes* or *no* or *maybe* or *someday*. Saul took a calculated risk that day. "My good sense against Yours, Lord. My armies are scattering. Samuel is lingering. I'll take his place this once and do what *I* think is best!" Oh, yes, Saul thought it was best. It made all the sense in the world—that act of disobedience. Poor, miscast Saul—and Joe, and Sam, and Jane.

It had been a mini-test, with dynamic repercussions. Part of Saul's hell was knowing exactly what to expect....When he next took the field, he *knew* he'd lost the battle already, if not the war.

The final rupture in Saul's lifeline to guidance had come when he failed to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Their armies he beat; it was the king he spared—the one who had the power to direct and command and influence. He and the best of his goods he spared. Nothing vile or shoddy or reprehensible for Saul. No, just the sins of quality—the kind that only Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, would think of tempting him with.

That night saw Agag, king of the Amalekites, dead by Samuel's hand, and the angry prophet gone up to Ramah to stay. In Saul's hand lay his torn mantle, a visible reminder of Samuel's prophecy: the kingdom was already as good as in the hands of David. Better to be hunting asses still.

It's been surmised that one of the more exquisite tortures of hell is the realization of what might have been. From the time that the evil spirit from God began troubling Saul, there were dangled before his vision, in the shape of David, all the beautiful impossibilities. The boy with the sling, or the harp, or the song outclassed him every time. Fear gripped Saul's heart because he saw that the God who had forsaken him was now with David. It was no contest.

From now on, it was the vain and often ludicrous pursuit of what had already been lost. The close fellowship of one who is walking in God's favor isn't too welcome a sight for any of us when we're out of touch ourselves. And if that person is kind to us in our need, it's doubly painful. Saul found David's magnanimity when he had Saul in his power unendurable: "My lord the king," David respectfully addressed him. *But for how long?* "I will not put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed," David declared. *That's generous, but I'm not the Lord's anointed anymore.*

The gracious words seared Saul's conscience. He had known the quality of God's mercy. It was being reproduced in the one who would take his place upon the throne. Understandably, it was hard to say please and thank you. "After whom dost thou pursue? After a flea?"

David appealed. *Yes, and you're just as elusive. I'll never catch you, and still I'll pursue.*

Saul wept. What else was there to do? One last request. It was that his house might not be destroyed, though he should die. It was the plea of defeat. With David's solemn promise, the broken king had turned homeward.

Once again these two met—in similar circumstance. Unbelievable that Saul, the morally vanquished king, should bless the one he pursued and reaffirm his right to reign. He seemed to be marking time at the gates of hell. Literature is full of the less-than-tranquil statements of men who stand alone at the hour of death. Addressing the one in whom he didn't believe. Voltaire cried, "O Christ! O Lord Jesus! I must die—abandoned of God and of men!" Thomas Paine cried out in his death agony, "Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone!" For atheist Thomas Hobbes, death was "a great leap in the dark." The darkness...descends again when man cuts himself off from the light.

In the darkness of the witch's hut, Saul knew the alienation from one's Creator that cancels everything else out. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? The news that Saul learned that night denied him even a small part of that world. All the mighty exploits and even the time taken from the battle to track the fugitive David wouldn't make the slightest difference when he and his sons lay dead on the battlefield the next day. It was Samuel's final message. The prophet whom the witch had called up from the dead couldn't resist a final dig. "What's the point of asking me for advice if God himself won't speak to you?"

It took all the persuasive powers of the despised but compassionate witch to get Saul on his feet again. However terrible it was to know the magnanimity of David, it must have been more than humiliating for the King of Israel to sit on a bed in a smoky mountain hut, being persuaded to down a hastily prepared meal by the solicitous woman who knew his terrible secret.

The final battle would be a matter of going through the motions—a ritual that would finalize what had been decreed long ago. In this context, it's easy to see how those outside Christ are dead in trespasses and sins. He that doesn't believe is "condemned already"—a life in death. Eternity without Christ *has* begun for those who refuse Him. There could scarcely be a more pitiful figure in all the world than the disguised Saul staggering back into the night to face a battle that was already lost. He'd have to put on a good front tomorrow. Review the troops. Harangue his men. Inspire them with courage. Lead the charge. And die.

Is this *all* there is to life, and is this really the way to die? The Bible speaks of another death—the death to self that awakens life. It means the rooting out of Amalek, the sin principle. The Bible speaks of One whose right it is to reign and who is equipped for the job. It speaks, too, of a choice to be made and of the consequences when man tries to manage that kingdom on his own. It was voiced by Moses as a death charge before the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, the symbol for us of our entrance into our own Christian heritage:

*See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live.... But if [thou] turn away, so that thou wilt not hear...I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish...I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose life.** (Deuteronomy 30:15-19)*

Saul suffered the only kind of loneliness that God in His Word guarantees we need never feel. No lack of self-esteem for him, or prestige, or admiring friends. Just the alienation, by choice, of the One whose presence makes every other loss endurable, even of life itself.

• See page 2 to order **A Very Present Help** by Ruth Hunt •

## TBC NewsWatch

### THE AFGHANISTANIZATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

**FRONTPAGEMAG.COM, 10/3/12, "THE AFGHANISTANIZATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST" [EXCERPTS]:** Eleven years after September 11, Afghanistan is nowhere near being stable; instead it is the Middle East that is becoming Afghanistitized. Forget about having only one Afghanistan, after the Arab Spring we can pick and choose from new Afghanistans popping up all over.

Islamist militias are imprisoning unveiled women, mutilating thieves and destroying Sufi shrines in Mali. In Libya, Islamist militias started out by destroying Sufi shrines and, when the authorities made it clear that they would do nothing, escalated their campaign to an attack on the U.S. Embassy.

All it would take is a further meltdown of the already melted political situation for the Salafists to move from terrorizing neighborhoods and villages to making a play for entire cities. The ruling Islamists of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Tunisia's Ennahda have already shown that, as in Libya, given a choice between letting the Salafists burn churches and beat tourists and authorizing their military rivals to carry out a domestic crackdown, it is safer and easier for them to let the mobs do as they please.

The Muslim Middle East is facing a choice between two paths. One leads ahead to a Westernized society and the other back to the barren deserts of the 7th Century. The Muslim Brotherhood and other political Islamists claim that it is possible to have the best of both worlds, combining high tech and desert morals in a society where every woman is covered and every man is an engineer. But that illusion is under siege as Islamist militias begin fragmenting countries into tribal encampments.

(<http://frontpagemag.com/2012/dgreenfield/the-afghanisthanization-of-the-middle-east/>)

### 'HOMOSEXUALITY NOT A SIN' THESIS NOT PERSUASIVE

**CHRISTIANPOST.COM, 9/28/12, "THEOLOGICALS FIND VINES' 'HOMOSEXUALITY IS NOT A SIN' THESIS NOT PERSUASIVE" [EXCERPTS]:** "Being gay is not a sin" is the mantra that one young Harvard student is trying to promulgate. But while Matthew Vines has attracted a growing following with what some are describing as accessible, scholarly arguments, evangelical scholars don't believe he'll make much headway in the Christian community.

"His arguments are not new, and his predecessors failed to win the day within the Christian community," said Dr. Evan Lenow, assistant professor of Ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Therefore, I doubt he will have significant impact in the long term."

Vines, 22, grew up in a Christian home and takes his faith seriously. Thus, as a homosexual feeling conflicted with the church's teaching—that homosexuality is a sin—he decided to take a leave of absence from Harvard University two years ago in order to study Scripture and dozens of scholarly works on the subject.

But the arguments he presents have been rehashed from the work of such scholars as Finnish Old Testament scholar Martti Nissinen, homosexual New Testament scholar Dale Martin (Yale), and homosexual church historian John Boswell, according to Dr. Robert Gagnon, associate professor of New Testament at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, who is considered the foremost expert on the Bible and homosexuality.

"Every one of these rehashed arguments I have refuted in previous work, of which Vines shows not the slightest awareness," said Gagnon, who studied the issue for 15 years after completing a masters of theological studies at Harvard Divinity and a Ph.D. in New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. Nevertheless, Vines is challenging the "traditional interpretation" of Scripture, maintaining that Christians who hold this view are misreading the Bible.

(<http://www.christianpost.com/news/theologians-find-vines-homosexuality-is-not-a-sin-thesis-not-persuasive-82341/>)

**[TBC: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (Romans 1:26-27).]**

### THE BIBLICAL LITERACY OF TEENAGE BELIEVERS

**CHRISTIANPOST.COM, 9/12/12, "THE BIBLICAL LITERACY OF TEENAGE BELIEVERS" [EXCERPTS]:** Youth ministry researcher Chap Clark says, "I'm convinced that the single most important area where we've lost ground with kids is in our commitment and ability to ground them in God's Word."

As a result, Barry Shafer says, "The church today, including both the adult and teenage generations, is in an era of rampant biblical illiteracy." Duffy Robbins takes this one step further when he says: "Our young people have become incapable of theological thinking because they

don't have any theology to think about.... And, as Paul warns us, this...leaves us as 'infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching' (Ephesians 4:14)."

At the conclusion of the National Study of Youth and Religion, lead researcher Christian Smith reported: "Even though most teens are very positive about religion and say it's a good thing, the vast majority are incredibly inarticulate about religion. ...It doesn't seem to us that many teens are being very well-educated in their faith traditions."

To illustrate his point, Smith refers to teenagers in the study from conservative Protestant churches. "About half of their teens say that many religions may be true; more than one-third say it is okay to practice multiple religions; more than one-third believe people should not try to evangelize others; more than one-third say it is okay to pick and choose one's religious beliefs and not accept the teachings of one's faith as a whole, and nearly two-thirds say a person can be truly religious and spiritual without being involved in a church."

Summarizing the entire study, Smith reports, "The net result...is that most religious teenagers' opinions and views—one can hardly call them worldviews—are vague, limited, and often quite at variance with the actual teachings of their own religion."

Duffy Robbins considers possible causes when he says: "The church in general, and youth ministry in particular, has demonstrated more of an appetite for goose bumps than for God's truth, more interest in how our young people feel than how they think.... But where are Christian teenagers learning basic tenets of the Christian faith? And if they don't understand those basic truths or doctrines... then how does that impact their long-term faith? I'm concerned that too much of our teaching is reduced to what can... be communicated by a worship band illuminated by stage lighting and well-placed candles."

Here is some good news. Churches that tend to produce teenagers who can articulate their faith do exist. The Study of Exemplary Congregations in Youth Ministry identified characteristics shared by 21 churches that perennially are effective in youth ministry. Even across seven denominations, one shared characteristic that rose to the top was: "Bible study and biblical literacy are extensive and substantive."

(<http://blogs.christianpost.com/guest-views/the-biblical-literacy-of-teenage-believers-11909/>)



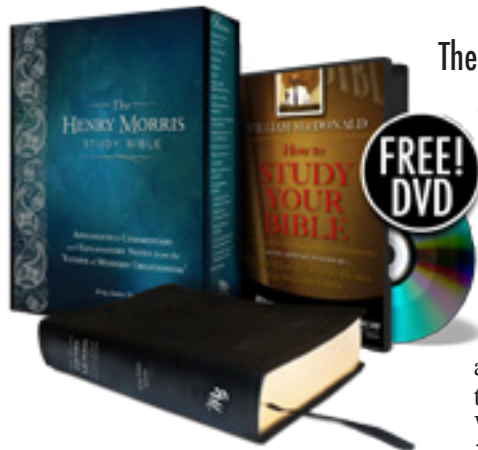
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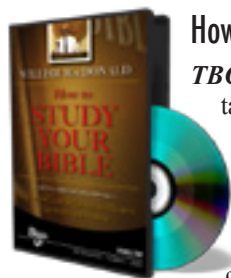
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CHAPTER 3  
NOW Peter and John went up all



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16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with  
11 When together, as

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*“All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord;  
and thy saints shall bless thee.”*

— PSALM 145:10 (KJV)



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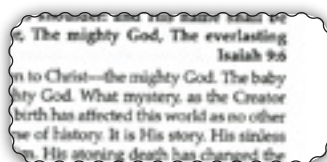
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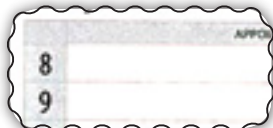
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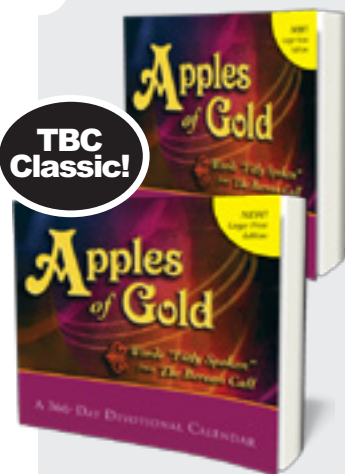
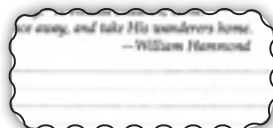
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