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Berean Gall FEBRUARY 2006

SHAMEFUL IRONIES! by DAVE HUNT

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THE BEREAN _____ CALL

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February 2006

Shameful Ironies! Dave Hunt

Martin Luther is remembered and widely honored today in much of the world-certainly throughout the West. The recent movie about his life was a Hollywood success that attracted large secular audiences in spite of its religious content. Luther stood up courageously against the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church despite Pope Leo X's determination to arrest and burn him alive at the stake. He had been disillusioned while visiting the Vatican and seeing the hypocrisy and open immorality among the clergy from priest to pope. The final straw was Rome's selling of indulgences for supposedly releasing one's dead relatives from purgatory to enter heaven. The infamous sales pitch that raised millions of dollars promised, "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs." The proceeds from this shameless scam paid for repairing and enlarging St. Peter's Basilica. That awesome structure stands today as a monument to the false gospel that Church still regularly preaches!

Disillusioned and furious, Luther wrote his *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* (known as "The Ninety-five Theses") and nailed it to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. Copies were widely distributed in several European languages, shaking Europe, inciting heated debate, sparking the Reformation and the exodus of millions from the Roman Catholic Church—and hopefully bringing salvation to many of them.

Although Luther retained some of his Catholicism, his bold declaration before the Imperial Diet at Worms (in stark contrast to the attitude of so many Christians today) has inspired millions: "I am bound by the Scriptures...and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything...here I stand; may God help me." That he really meant what he said is proved by the fact that it should have cost him his life had not some powerful German princes taken up his cause and protected him in protest against Rome—an event from which we get the designation "Protestant."

Desperate to maintain the Church's totalitarian authority, Catholic bishops and cardinals launched a counter-Reformation defining Church doctrines and demanding obedience thereto at the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Its Canons and Decrees (see

Resources) denounced the sole authority of Scripture affirmed by Luther, denied salvation by faith in Christ without Church sacraments and good works, and basically rejected everything the Reformers asked the Church to accept in submission to God's Word. Trent pronounced more than 100 anathemas (excommunication/damnation) against all who accepted any Reformation teaching. It was costly to stand for the truth of God's Word in those days, and many thousands would not compromise their convictions in spite of torture and death.

We are in great need of a revival of such unwavering conviction today. It will not come, however, without an awakening of an individual hunger and thirst after righteousness (Mt 5:6) and deep passion for our Lord and for His Word. Sadly, the truth of God is not only neglected and compromised today but is actually undermined by many whom millions of Christians look up to as evangelical leaders. Tragically, multitudes are being prepared to follow the great delusion that will befall those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thes 2:8-12).

Is the fifteenth-century Reformation and Rome's opposition to it at that time merely interesting history with little relationship to the church and world today? Hardly! The battle continues and has reached a far deadlier phase. A growing delusion has deceived multitudes into embracing ecumenical compromise while imagining that they are still on the Lord's side.

In 1962, at the opening of Vatican II in Rome, Pope John XXIII affirmed, "I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent." Vatican II itself "proposes again the decrees of the Council of Trent." On 12/31/95, honoring the 450th anniversary of the opening of Trent, Pope John Paul II declared, "Its conclusions maintain all their value."

Regardless of what a Catholic friend, a liberal priest, or a professor at a Catholic university may say, Trent remains the official teaching of Rome and has been reconfirmed many times since by the highest Church authority. Here are only a few of Trent's anathemas, all of which were renewed by Vatican II, The Code of Canon Law, and the current Catechism of the Catholic Church, and which remain today as the official teaching of Roman Catholicism, sustaining the inflexible dogmas of that "infallible" Church, regardless of statements by anyone to the contrary: • If anyone denies that by...baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted [or] denies that...[the] *justice, sanctification and redemption*...of Jesus Christ is applied both to adults and to infants by the sacrament of baptism...let him be anathema.... (Rome's emphasis)

• If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law [i.e., the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church] are not necessary for salvation...and that without them...men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification...let him be anathema....

• If anyone says that baptism is... not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema....

• If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out...that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema....

• If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass...wherein that life-giving victim by which we are reconciled to the Father is daily immolated on the altar by priests...is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one...offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema.

No bolder nor clearer rejection of the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ could be declared. This brief sample presents the actual teaching of Roman Catholicism as it is taught to and practiced by hundreds of millions of Catholics today. There is no disputing the fact that this is a false gospel, which, sadly, holds Roman Catholics in bondage on their way to the flames not of a "purgatory" invented by popes, but to the eternal Lake of Fire. How can those who profess to admire Luther and the Reformation defend Catholicism?

Given these indisputable facts, no evangelical could call Roman Catholics born-again Christians. The shameful irony is that so many evangelical leaders and their followers, while claiming to honor the Reformation and its gospel of salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ, at the same time close their eyes to the truth and act as though the Reformation never occurred and as if Catholics believe the biblical gospel. Have we forgotten that those who do not believe the gospel are eternally lost? Will their endless doom be on our hands?

Shameful ironies abound. Although the Roman Catholic Church no longer burns opponents at the stake (a practice now repugnant even to the secular world), it still maintains every false teaching and practice opposed by Luther and his fellow Reformers, thereby deceiving countless millions. It still teaches salvation through baptism, good works, and the other sacraments mediated by Mary as the "doorway to Christ"; it still offers indulgences at a price for release from purgatory to heaven; and it still rejects the final authority of Scripture! All of the anathemas pronounced by Trent against Protestant beliefs remain in full force and effect. Yet many of Luther's modern followers now embrace Roman Catholicism as the true gospel!

On 10/31/99, representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church signed a Joint Declaration (JDDJ) declaring that they had resolved the major differences that caused the Reformation. Not one doctrine or practice had changed in the Catholic Church. While Lutherans were congratulating themselves on this wonderful "agreement," Pope John Paul II was offering special indulgences unto salvation for the year 2000. Had Martin Luther been alive, he would have denounced the traitors leading the church that bears his name and would have nailed his "Ninety-five Theses" to the door of the Lutheran World Federation headquarters! How can we explain the blindness leading to this unconscionable betraval of the Reformation, and of Christ and His Word?

Five years earlier, no less shameful, evangelical leaders (Bill Bright, Charles Colson, Os Guinness, Richard Mouw [president of Fuller Theological Seminary], J.I. Packer, Pat Robertson, John White [former president of National Association of Evangelicals], et al.), had endorsed "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" (ECT). It calls for evangelicals to join Roman Catholics in evangelizing the world, and states, "We thank God for the discovery of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ."

Nor was ECT anything new, but the culmination of a compromise of truth that had been growing within the evangelical movement for a long time. For at least 40 years prior to ECT, Billy Graham had been declaring that his beliefs were basically the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics, and that he and the Pope agreed on almost everything, including the way of salvation! The same stance had long been adopted by evangelical universities such as Westmont and Wheaton, publications such as *Christianity Today* and *Charisma*, organizations such as Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With A Mission, and World

Vision, as well as by other evangelical institutions and leaders. Highlighting evangelicalism's schizophrenia, Wheaton, which has a large Center and Museum honoring Billy Graham and which hires short-term Catholic professors, last year fired a popular professor for "converting to Catholicism," while calling him "a gifted brother in Christ"!

Martin Luther and the other Reformers would have died at the stake rather than sign such documents as JDDJ and ECT! How do we explain today's denial of all that the Reformation stood for by those who claim to honor it and to follow in the faith of the Reformers? Attempting to fathom such spiritual schizophrenia, *The New York Times*, in its March 30, 1994, announcement of ECT, had written:

They toiled together in the movements against abortion and pornography, and now leading Catholics and evangelicals are asking their flocks...to finally accept each other as Christians. In what's being called a historic declaration, evangelicals... joined with conservative Roman Catholic leaders...[and] urged Catholics and evangelicals to stop aggressive proselytization of each other's flocks. John White, president of Geneva College and former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, said the statement was a "triumphalistic moment" in American religious life after centuries of distrust....

The gospel of Jesus Christ, by which alone one is born again (1 Pt 1:22-25) is being denied. That is the issue, with the eternal destiny of souls hanging in the balance. While they did not personally sign ECT, Bill Hybels and Rick Warren, like so many other evangelical leaders, give the appearance of full cooperation and agreement with Rome. In violation of the clear command of Scripture to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), neither Hybels nor Warren nor most other evangelical leaders, including Billy Graham, will use their huge influence to bring any warning or correction-to Rome or to anyone else!

Even Islam is defended as a valid "faith" that Rick Warren cooperates with in working (through his P.E.A.C.E Plan) for what he calls a "New Reformation." In its advancement, he says he "would trust any imam or priest or rabbi...." Do we no longer believe the gospel and that those who reject it are eternally lost?

John Paul II denounced everything the Reformation stood for, yet he, too, is highly honored by those who still praise Luther. How can we honor two diametrically opposed beliefs at the same time? Have "Christians" gone mad?! Words have changed their definitions, contradictory convictions are simultaneously professed, and truth is re-defined to suit anyone's taste. We are adrift on an ocean of meaninglessness without rudder or compass yet nearly everyone praises our "progress." Exactly like the world, the church ("rich, and increased with goods" – Rv 3:17) willingly blurs the essential differences between God's truth and Satan's lies. Oh, yes, evangelical leaders still claim to affirm God's Word, yet who stands up against the false doctrines made popular by today's "Christian" radio and TV or against the "mother of harlots" (Rv 17:5) as did Luther?

Though lip service is still given to the Reformation, the deep convictions that birthed it have been compromised. The hour grows late and the evangelical church desperately needs to face some honest questions: 1) What was the purpose of the Reformation? 2) Was its uncompromising affirmation of biblical truth appropriate in Luther's day but not now? 3) What did it stand for at that time, at the cost of so many martyrs and so much suffering, that should now be denied? 4) Have Jesus Christ and His gospel changed? 5) Has any belief or practice changed in the Catholic Church that would justify evangelicals embracing Catholicism as the biblical gospel?

While evangelicals are literally thumbing their noses at the Reformers, a powerful Reformation of Islam is gathering momentum in the Muslim world. Urgent calls go forth to abstain from the fleshly immorality of America, "the Great Satan." After the stunning defeats by Israel in 1948 and 1967, imams began to preach that Allah was not happy and that Muslims must get back to the Qur'an and true Islam. The result has been a growing awakening of fundamentalist Islam with its accompanying terrorism.

At the same time, the "Christian" West sinks into ever-deepening depravity. As one example, Howard Stern's foul mouth and glorification of immorality have made him the highest paid radio personality in the U.S. That movies, television, and radio shows continue to grow ever bolder in their mocking of biblical truth and promotion of homosexuality and other shameful perversions only reflects what the vast majority of Westerners, including Catholics and Protestants, want and enjoy.

The Bible hasn't changed. God hasn't changed. The gospel hasn't changed. Has our hope changed? Instead of "looking for that blessed hope...the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Ti 2:13), are we looking instead to "Christian" politicians for salvation? The evangelical church today is in the mood of accommodation, unity, compromise. Are these the "perilous times" (2 Tm 3:1) ominously foretold in Scripture? **TBC**

Quotable _____

The devil is but a whetstone to sharpen the faith and patience of the saints.

Samuel Rutherford

The church that sets out to spiritualize the world will soon find that the world will secularize the church. When wheat and tares compromise, it is the wheat that suffers. Light and darkness, right and wrong, good and evil, truth and error are incompatibles, and when they compromise it is the light, the right, the good, and the truth that are damaged.

> W. Graham Scroggie, born 1877, twelve times the Bible teacher at the famous Keswick, England conference, They Knew Their God, Vol 5, 194

Q&A _____

Question: Based upon 1 Sam 28:19, where are King Saul and his sons now?

Answer: The spirit of dead Samuel, apparently allowed to appear by God for a special purpose in this particular case, said to King Saul, "...and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." It is possible that by "with me" Samuel simply meant that Saul and his sons would die. On the other hand, Saul had once been the anointed king of Israel and he and his sons had served Israel well for a time. There had been much to commend Saul at first and indications that he knew the Lord God of Israel. Though he had sinned and was punished in being removed from the throne and dying because of that, Saul and his sons (especially Jonathan) may have been true believers in Yahweh and could be in Heaven.

Question: On 11/30/05, Pope Benedict XVI declared to 23,000 people in St. Peter's Square in Rome, "Whoever seeks peace and the good of the community with a pure conscience, and keeps alive the desire for the transcendent, will be saved even if he lacks biblical faith." Could this explain how pagans throughout history who never heard the gospel could be saved?

Answer: Everyone in every culture and time in history knows from abundant evidence that the universe was created by a God infinite in wisdom, power, and purity (Rom 1). God promises, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13). He will reveal Himself to everyone who truly seeks *Him*.

Not everyone, however, who claims to

seek God, is seeking the true God. Most "seekers" are seeking a false god of their own imagination that will give them what they want. This is a flaw in the "seeker friendly" church growth movement: giving people the "religion" they want instead of the convicting truth they need. The Athenians claimed to be seeking truth; but when Paul on Mars' hill revealed the true God to them, "some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." Very few believed (Acts 17:32-34).

The truth will never be popular. Many Jews, confronted by biblical proof, knew that Jesus was the Messiah but did not want their false view of the Messiah disturbed. So Jesus said, "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (Jn 8:45). Benedict XVI did not tell his fawning audience the truth but what they wanted to hear (2 Tm 4:3,4).

The Pope's words are unbiblical and misleading. Having a "desire for the transcendent," does not equal seeking the one true God. Nor can seeking "peace and the good of the community" be equated with receiving as personal Savior the One who "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). Nor has anyone a "pure conscience": "There is none righteous, no, not one...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ... " (Rom 3:10, 23). God has written His law in every conscience and every person knows that he has broken that law many times. When Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," the woman's accusers, "convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one..." (Jn 8:7-9). The Pope and his Church offer false hope to sinners.

Question: Do you know of the book, *Blood Brothers*, by Elias Chacour? The author is a Palestinian "Christian" (a Greek Catholic Priest), who's been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three or four times. The book states, "In 1948 after a United Nations resolution, the country of Palestine became the sovereign state of Israel."

Answer: Such are the kinds of lies that the world favors over truth. We document in Judgment Day! that both the land of "Palestine" and a "Palestinian" people are myths. The Promised Land was Canaan, given by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. At God's command, because of the wickedness of the Canaanites, the children of Israel conquered Canaan and it became the land of Israel. In A.D. 135, the Romans angrily renamed Israel, "Provincia Syria-Palestina."

For the next 1,820 years, Jews living there were called "Palestinians." Repeatedly evicted, the Jews always came back. Arabs never lived there in any numbers until the seventh-century Muslim conquest—and even then very few ever settled in "Palestine," which lay barren and largely neglected, as God had foretold. The 1917 Balfour Declaration, 1919 Paris Peace Conference, and 1922 Declaration of Principles by the League of Nations all designated the territory known as "Palestine" to be restored to the scattered and persecuted Jews as their national homeland. Britain was given the mandate to oversee this plan, but betrayed the Jews and favored the Arabs for oil.

We quote Arab leaders testifying at the UN and elsewhere into the late 1950s that "Palestine" was "a Zionist invention" and that Jews were the Palestinians. Then Arabs changed their tune and in 1964 founded the "Palestine Liberation Organization." For the first time in history, Arabs claimed that they were descended from the "original Palestinians" (a non-existent people) and that the Jews were occupying their land.

Yet during all the centuries that the Muslims through conquest controlled the entire Middle East (ending with the 400-year Turkish Ottoman Empire), there was never a word of a Palestinian State nor did any Arabs ever claim to be Palestinians. They had little interest in that barren place until the Jews began (with the "Zionist" movement) to turn swamps and deserts into farmland—then they moved in as Britain, violating its mandate, kept Jews out (even Holocaust survivors) and let the Arabs in by the tens of thousands. Britain created Jordan out of twothirds of the land promised to the Jews.

The so-called "Palestinians" are Arabs who claim descent from Ishmael, Abraham's first (but illegitimate) son. Ishmael's father was a Chaldean, his mother an Egyptian, and when Abraham arrived in Canaan (there was no such place as Palestine) it had already been settled for centuries by Canaanites. What a fraud for the descendants of Ishmael (half Chaldean, half Egyptian) to pretend to be descended from the "original Palestinians"!

Those who claim to be "Palestinians" today have no unique language, culture, religion, ethnic heritage, but are indistinguishable from their Arab relatives living in the nations around them. In contrast, there are many distinct ethnic peoples who have legitimate claims to a national homeland and to whom the world shows little sympathy. Consider the following:

The Basques...live in the northwestern region of Spain...a unique people with a language and culture that has no relationship to anything else in the world. They have been fighting to be liberated. But Spain—most vociferous in the promotion of a "Palestinian homeland"—refuses. An independent Basque homeland would not endanger Spain in any way....

The Kurds...are a distinct group [living] in a land that is part of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Armenia. They have been fighting for independence for centuries, but it has never been granted. An independent Kurdistan would not endanger the countries that now occupy it....

The Tibetans...are a distinct people, unique in language and religion. They have been annexed by China...an independent Tibet would not [threaten] China. Does the UN support the [Basques, Kurds and] Tibetans in their quest for independence? Of course not.(*U.S. News & World Report*, FLAME, April 11, 2005, 81.)

Yet the pressure continues from the United States, UN, EU and rest of the world (which will soon bring God's judgment – Joel 3:2) to squeeze Israel into an ever smaller territory and to expand at her expense the territory of enemies whom the whole world knows do not acknowledge Israel's right to exist (no Arab map anywhere shows Israel) and who have sworn to annihilate her. And the lies continue in support of this gross injustice, even from those who call themselves "Christians."

Question: Stanley Hilton, a former chief of staff for Bob Dole, has said he possesses documents showing Bush personally ordered the attack on 9/11. It was impossible for planes hitting the Twin Towers so near its top to bring it down, especially in an implosion. There had to have been explosive charges carefully set beforehand. I've seen a video that shows the planes in slow motion approaching and crashing into the towers, and there are no windows, these are not passenger planes with people aboard—it was a set-up.

Answer: I've watched that video. Those who love "conspiracy" theories and want to discredit Bush and the U.S. government hold it up as "proof." That it cannot be true, however, is so obvious that those using it to further their theories ought to be embarrassed, if not ashamed.

If these were not the scheduled American and United flights with passenger lists, what happened to those flights? Were the airlines in on the conspiracy, too? They have collected insurance for the destroyed planes, so were the insurance companies also part of this cover-up? And what of the missing passengers who were booked on those flights? Are they, too, part of the massive conspiracy, hiding somewhere? What of the families and friends who mourn their deaths?

And if these planes were empty of passengers but filled with explosives, and not piloted by Muslim hijackers eager to die in *jihad* in order to gain paradise and Allah's special reward of countless virgins for their pleasure, who were the pilots and what was their motive?! Who would have volunteered to commit suicide in this manner so that Bush could have an excuse for attacking Afghanistan and Iraq as alleged? I must conclude that this theory is an absurdity!

Question: You desperately need to study the Greek Bible, both Old and New Testaments. You undoubtedly know that the Passover at the Exodus from Egypt was "everlasting." Why, then, did it change at Christ's crucifixion? As for the "everlasting" covenant with Abraham... Christ was the "seed" of Abraham and the fulfillment of all Old Testament eschatology [and] Paul wrote that there is no difference in Jews, Gentiles, male or female, slave nor free, but in the Church all belong to Christ (Gal 3:28). Israel was ended! The old covenant became obsolete (Heb 8:13).

Your "faultless" doctrines come ultimately from Jewish thinking. Are you sure that you are not Jewish...? Your eschatological errors didn't significantly exist in Christendom until Edward Irving, John Darby, the Plymouth Brethren, et al., came along with Jewish ideas. Will Christ rule over Israel and the world from Jerusalem? Absolutely not! "Israel" has reemerged as the beast system in Revelation....

Answer: We must be reading different Bibles. The Passover did not "change at Christ's crucifixion." The "last supper" was not the "last Passover" because it was not the Passover at all but "before the feast of the Passover" (Jn 13:1). (The morning after the last supper Israel had not yet eaten the Passover nor had the lambs yet been slain -Jn 18:28.) The "last supper" was held the night after sunset marked the end of Nisan 13 and beginning of the 14th (the Jewish day went from sunset to sunset). The 14th was "the day of unleavened bread, when the passover [lamb] must be killed" (Lk 22:7) by all Israel before sunset in the "evening" (Ex 12:6), i.e., the afternoon following the last supper.

During the night that began the 14th the disciples started the lengthy preparation for the Passover in the upper room, where they ate supper together. All leaven had to be found and removed in preparing for the Passover supper to be held the following night. The main "preparation," of course, was the slaying of the lamb, which occurred the next afternoon (as prophesied) when Christ was being crucified (Jn 19:14). There was no lamb slain for the last supper as there would be the following afternoon for the Passover.

The Passover is a memorial of the deliverance of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, a historic event that nothing can change and that will be commemorated forever. That it is still kept by Jews alone proves that it was their ancestors, not Arabs', who were slaves in Egypt for 400 years then delivered—irrefutable proof, therefore, that they, not Arabs, are the "seed" of Abraham who inherited the land of Canaan (Gn 15:13-16) that became Israel, and which belongs to them to this day.

News Alert ====

WorldNetDaily, 01/06/06: [EXCERPTS]—Mahmoud Ahmadinejad [President of Iran] has been making headlines lately by questioning whether the Holocaust actually happened, by suggesting Israel should be moved to Europe and by demanding the Jewish state be wiped off the face of the earth, [but] his apocalyptic religious zealotry has received less attention.

In...Tehran, Ahmadinejad discussed candidly a strange, paranormal experience he had while addressing the UN in New York last September. He recounts how he found himself bathed in light throughout the speech...."I was placed inside this aura," he says, "and for those 27 or 28 minutes, all the leaders of the world did not blink....They were looking as if a hand was holding them there, and had just opened their eyes...."

He sees his main mission...to "pave the path for the glorious reappearance of Imam Mahdi...." According to the Shiites, the 12th imam disappeared as a child in the year 941. When he returns, they believe, he will reign on earth for seven years, before bringing about a final judgment and end of the world.

Ahmadinejad is urging Iranians to prepare for the coming of the Mahdi by turning the country into a mighty and advanced Islamic society and by avoiding the corruption and excesses of the West. All Iran is buzzing about the Mahdi...and the role Iran [is] playing in his anticipated return.... According to reports, [Ahmadinejad] lives so modestly that declared assets include only a 30-year-old car, an even older house and an empty bank account.

Ahmadinejad and others in Iran are deadly serious about the imminent return of the 12th imam, who will prompt a global battle between good and evil...Shiite writings describe events surrounding the return of the Mahdi (known as "the Savior of Times") in apocalyptic terms. ...According to Shiite tradition, Imam Mahdi will appear on Judgment Day to herald a truly just government.....

Missed by some was [Ahmadinejad's] call to the "mighty Lord" to hasten the emergence of...the one who "will fill this world with justice and peace."

Who stands in the Mahdi's way?

[According to] Hamidreza Taraghi, head of the conservative Islamic Coalition Society. "...the U.S. is trying to place itself as the new Mahdi." This may mean no peace with Iran, he adds, "unless America changes its hegemonic...thinking, doesn't use nuclear weapons [or] impose its will on other nations."

Dave & T.A.'s Itinerary

Feb 6-7 (TA)	Fellowship of Bible Churches Men's Retreat Mercersburg PA (301)739-4245
Feb 24-25 (Dave)	Bible Skeptics Conference Whitby ON (905)655-8381 www.bibleskeptics.org
Mar 3-5 (Dave & TA)	Word of Life Winter Wrap-up Schroon Lake NY (518)532-2289
Mar 8-10 (Dave)	Prophecy Conference Allentown PA (610)395-3613
Mar 19 (Dave)	Bayside Community Church Tampa FL (813)837-6007
Apr 21-23 (TA)	Calvary Chapel Yakima Valley Yakima WA (509)249-1464
May 12-28 (Dave)	Prophetic Witness Ministries UK Tour 01772 452846

Letters ===

Dear Dave and Tom,

I was listening to an old radio program from 6/20/04 in which a letter was read as follows: "Don't you guys realize that you are trashing many good brothers in the Lord by your attacks on Calvinism and The Passion of the Christ? Your judgmental approach is part of the reason nonbelievers have such a low view of Christianity." I could not disagree more. I do not find [you] to be judgmental at all. I think it takes a great deal of boldness to present the facts and contend for what you believe. I am a 22-year-old woman and I have a very sinful past....I know for a fact that the most repulsive thing to a non-Christian is a Christian who tries to be cool. People have more respect for what you believe if you are not willing to compromise it-even if they disagree and even hate you for it. If you are wishy-washy, they see you as pathetic and not confident about what you claim to believe. SW (South Australia)

To those faithfully serving at TBC,

It is true to say that the Holy Spirit reveals the depths of the Son, but sad to see the growth of ignorance in the minds of many. We were created to be a thinking people, yet many are happy to be entertained into slumber. Children are often more open to the truth than adults, but due to the rise of entertainment and occultism taking the place of real education, many young minds are dulled and hearts hardened early on....Many of your analogies have served as a framework to carefully explain the Gospel of God, glorifying God and His Word, allowing even youngsters to make an 'informed' decision not merely based upon some emotional or pressured response. CH (KY)

Dear Sir or Madam,

In early August, my mother suddenly became very ill and unable to read, talk or eat....In September she died....Mother was a devout and extremely generous Christian who gave to many...nonprofit organizations. Thus, in early August, when medical bills began mounting and Mother was unable to open her mail or be read to, I wrote to each of her charities asking that she be removed from their mailing list.... Only "Jane" of the The Berean Call sent me a sympathy card. [We] will be forever grateful for this card and thoughtfulness.... Mother was an....avid Bible scholar. She sent me literature published by TBC and we spent many hours discussing the views expressed therein. TBC helped shape her positions on many issues hotly debated among Christians today....In some cases, her opinions differed from those expressed in TBC literature. In other cases, it was "This is all very interesting, but evidence is way too weak to reach any conclusion one way or another. Perhaps the passage of time and additional biblical research will help me make up my mind." Whether she agreed with TBC or not, she liked the research and reasoning that went into its opinions on matters. MM (MN)

Dear TBC,

I've been following the ongoing debate on Calvinism. I use John MacArthur's study Bible daily and feel compelled to add one of his statements from notes on John 6:40: "Intellectually harmonizing the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man is impossible humanly, but perfectly resolved in the infinite mind of God." Is it possible that we many not be able to fully put our arms of understanding around God's election and our choice? In these days of "a dry and thirsty land" in most church pulpits, I am thankful for teachers and writers like John MacArthur, RC Sproul, and Piper. BP (TX)

Greetings in His Name,

As I read *The Berean Call*, I am reminded that in Psalm 138:2b it says God has magnified His Word "above all thy name." Yet all know that in most of "Christendom" this is far from true. While not always in complete agreement, I appreciate your writings that exalt our God and Savior Jesus Christ and His precious Word, speaking the truth in love. BW (MO)

Dear Friends,

Please cancel my subscription to the paper edition of *The Berean Call*. Dave's

continued rant about "Calvinism" is so inaccurate (dishonest?) and misguided that I can no longer trust the accuracy of his reports concerning other subjects like Catholicism and Islam. CL (MO)

Mr. Hunt,

You are truly a beacon of light in a dark world. I eagerly anticipate your weekly radio show and your monthly newsletter. My family and I do not currently attend a church. For the last few months, we have met at home. We are praying that God will join us with other families and begin a New Testament assembly. The churches in my area have fallen away. Our former church has become ecumenical and has joined Catholics and others in evangelization. They have rock music in the children's and vouth ministries. Richard Foster and Rick Warren have been embraced in the last few months-and there are many more things too numerous to mention. And it is often viewed as the most conservative church in its Southern Baptist Association. JA (KY)



Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good." —Psalm 122:6

In all of our writings informing about the dangers and distress taking place in Israel, Jerusalem, and among Jewish people throughout the world as they are subjected to increasing acts of terrorism and international anti-Semitism, we've failed to entreat our readers to pray diligently for God's chosen people.

Let us determine from this time forth to pray daily and earnestly for "the peace of Jerusalem," that Israel's enemies will be confounded and defeated in their determination to destroy her, and that the chosen people will realize that their Messiah has already come and been "cut off" (Daniel 9:24, 25) and open their hearts to Him in faith.

> T. A. McMahon Executive Director

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TBC Extra

SAME SONG, SECOND VERSE: a little bit louder, and a whole lot worse!

"SOLA SCRIPTURA!" was a major cry of the Reformation. It was all about getting back to the Bible alone as the only authority for life and conduct. Had the Roman Catholic Church agreed to only that one tenet, it would have been out of business because most of its doctrines and practices are condemned in Scripture. The argument was and still is that only the Magisterium (bishops acting together with the Pope) could interpret the Bible, and those interpretations became the "tradition" that Vatican II says is of equal authority with Scripture. The Bible cannot be allowed to oppose Church dogma or practice. The practical effect is that tradition is considered of greater authority than God's Word, making it impossible to correct..

It was inevitable, therefore, that the Church would categorically reject Sola Scriptura and every other concern the Reformers based upon the Bible and would damn them to hell for daring to question its dogmas. That stance has been consistently maintained to this day. We have recently documented in these pages, however, that evangelicals have done something worse: they have deliberately changed the meaning of the text itself in paraphrases and new "translations" such as Eugene Peterson's The Message. No less evil is the denial of divine inspiration by a host of "evangelical scholars" such as in Richard Foster's *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*.

Satan is a very clever strategist. Much Catholicism (infant baptism for salvation, real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, replacement theology, etc.) clung to the Reformers and remains to this day in most Reformed churches (Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc.). "Protestant" state churches replaced Roman Catholic state churches in various areas, and the existence of state churches plagues Europe today. There, large cathedrals of both persuasions see more action from tourists than from members, and "Christianity" is taken seriously by hardly anyone. The marriage between church and state, imposed by the popes and carried into the Reformation by their critics, has been deadly. This successful satanic strategy is not confined to "Christianity" but is found in other religions as well, including Islam.

We saw what happened in Afghanistan. It was the same satanic ploy of a state church all over again. We gave billions of dollars to the Mujahadeen (jihad "freedom" fighters) to repel the Soviets —but when the jihadists took over, they proved to be even more ruthless enemies of freedom. We rescued the Afghan people from Communist totalitarianism only to subject them to an even more vicious and restrictive Islamic dictatorship under the Taliban. Afghanistan became a breeding ground and training center for a terrorism that spread its violence worldwide and had to be stopped. Eventually, the Taliban used its weapons against the very "friends" who had supplied them.

The same double-cross had already happened in Iraq; yet we had not learned our lesson. We gave billions of dollars to Saddam Hussein to fight against Iran and its Shi'ite government. Then we had to fight Saddam, and, of course, he aimed at us the weapons we had supplied.

The gravest danger in Iraq today is that after all the blood that was shed to bring "freedom," we may find that we have merely traded Saddam's secular dictatorship for an equally ruthless Islamic Shi'ite government. The plague of the "state church" is endemic to Islam—nothing else is allowed. That fact makes the establishment and survival of genuine democracy in either Afghanistan or Iraq almost impossible. It will take a miracle of God if it occurs.

Something similar happened during the Reformation. In Geneva, under Calvin, a new form of "Protestant" totalitarianism replaced the Catholic hierarchy that had controlled even the secular world. Calvin is known in history as Geneva's "Protestant Pope." Calvinist Reconstructionists take Geneva as their model of the world they intend to create "for Christ." The open survival of true biblical Christianity (scarcely established by the Reformation) in the Western world seems at this hour as doubtful as democracy's survival in the East. We have no shortage in America (even in high places in both the secular and religious areas) of those who claim to be Christians but who betray the Christ whom they call Lord by unholy alliances with His enemies who, by the way, cleverly pose as His friends. President Bush's persistence not only in the lie that "Islam is peace" but in calling this pagan and viciously anti-Israel and anti-Christian religion "the faith of Abraham," and calling the Qur'an and its author Muhammad "inspired of God," cast almost conclusive doubts upon his profession to be a Christian. We have had reason to question the similar claims of three previous "Christian" presidents: Nixon, Carter, and Reagan.

Christians have forgotten Christ's very clear and uncompromising declaration, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you...if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you..." (Jn 15:19-20). Jesus never suggested that the world would vote any of us into high political office. He drew a clear line of separation between church and state when He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). The two cannot be partners.

Evangelicals have become increasingly involved in the world. Earning a living is one thing; entering into unequal yokes in violation of Scripture (2 Cor 6:14-18), no matter how good the cause, is something else. As The New York Times insightfully said, it was the unequal yoke of working together with unbelievers of various religions in social and political action in order to improve the world that set up evangelicals for a religious partnership with Rome. Sadly, Rick Warren's P. E.A.C.E. plan does exactly that!

We credit Rick with compassion for Africa's victims of poverty, hunger, AIDS, and other diseases. But Jesus not only healed the sick and fed the hungry but *preached the gospel* to the poor (Lk 7:22). That is difficult to do when joined in partnership with Muslims, Catholics, et al., as Rick does. Could he be partial to Peterson's The Message because it so often focuses on improving this earth rather than being ready for heaven? For example, in The Message, "that the world through him might be saved" (Jn 3:17) becomes, "He came to help, to put the world right again." It sounds like the political and social action of the old social gospel, a major emphasis for Rick. "Hath called us unto his eternal glory" (1 Pt 5:10) becomes "will have you put together and on your feet." Rick shows little concern for correcting false doctrine. Instead, he says he is working for a "new Reformation" based not upon doctrine but deeds.

One recalls the fervent zeal of the 15,000 evangelicals who met together at the "National Affairs Briefing Conference" in Dallas in September 1980. Reagan had just accepted the Republican nomination for president with an inspiring speech at the national convention on July 17. There was confidence that the new president would fill Washington with Christian appointees, abortion would be overturned, and America would soon become a Christian country. Of course, it didn't happen—and it won't.

Present at the Conference was Reconstructionist Gary North, who boasted, "the word 'rapture' was not used once." The focus had subtly turned from heaven and rescuing souls from the wrath to come, to making a better world for our grandchildren to inherit. In their zeal to "Christianize" the secular world, even those who believed in the Rapture began to live as though they had forgotten that they were citizens of Heaven.

The phrase "a new Reformation" exploded enthusiastically from the lips of many. After 450 years, will the Reformation, which in many places like Geneva and in Luther's area of Germany had replaced one state religion with another, finally create one new state religion worldwide? Will an ecumenical blend of Catholicism and Protestantism cooperating together (and even with Islam) to make a new world of peace eventually prepare the world for the final unity of all religions under Antichrist? We are gathering momentum in that direction.

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