

*Could God have created a universe in which beings who are less than Himself would never make a choice that was less than God-like or in which beings who could do what they wanted to do would never rebel against Him?*

A CALVINIST'S

# HONEST

*by Reason and God's Amazing Grace*

# DOUBTS

RESOLVED

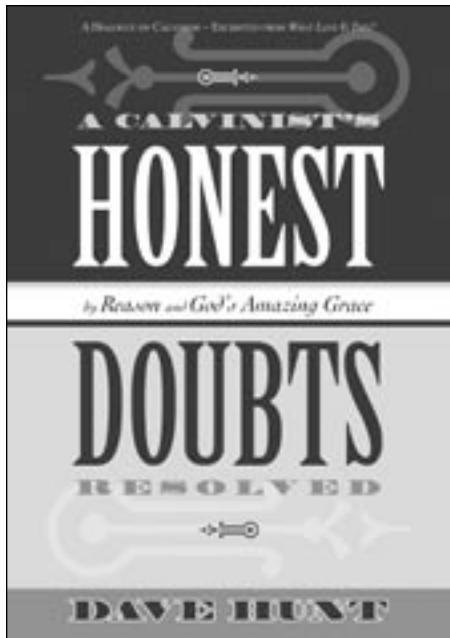
**The**  
**Berean**  
**Call**

JULY 2005

*IT HAD TO BE*

*by DAVE HUNT*

## NEW! LONG-AWAITED "USER-FRIENDLY" BOOK ON CALVINISM



*"We don't really know much about Calvinism," my dinner companions confessed. "But it was a strange experience. On the one hand, we had the impression that these people felt certain they were the elect. Yet there also seemed to be some insecurity, as though performance were a major evidence of one's salvation."*

**A**S WE GOT UP TO LEAVE, a young woman who had sat through the entire discussion in silence asked if she could have a private moment of my time. We sat down again, and she began a tale of grief. She was a pastor's wife. Their lives and ministry had been happy and fruitful until her husband and two close friends, also pastors, became interested in a new "truth." *All three were aspiring "intellectuals."* As a result of reading current Calvinist authors, they had been drawn to the writings of John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, John Knox, and others. *Their study, taking them all the way back to Augustine, eventually became almost an obsession.* Then each of them began to preach this new "light" from their pulpits. After being warned several times to desist, they were removed from their pastorates. Eventually, her husband began to worry whether he was really one of the elect. *The nagging questions grew into full-blown doubts* about his salvation. Calvinism, which had once seemed so satisfying, now began to haunt him with uncertainty. *Was he really one of the elect?"*

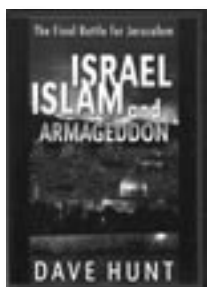
The above excerpt sets the scene for Dave Hunt's new 112-page paperback, created out of the need for a non-intimidating, easy-to-read "introduction" to Calvinism. Based on years of actual accounts and conversations, this "user-friendly" book is derived from material in Dave's much larger scholarly work, *What Love Is This?* In *Honest Doubts*, readers will become familiar with the key issues in a unique format that reads like a real-life drama, because the characters are composites of actual individuals, and the circumstances are equally real. Discover the heart of a Calvinist "seeker"—and the surprising result of his quest for truth

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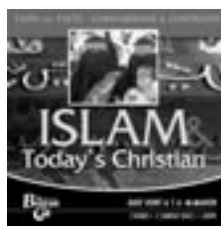
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## It Had to Be

*Dave Hunt*

Not only skeptics and atheists but also many who call themselves Christians often complain, “Why didn’t God make a perfect world without sin, suffering, or death? If He is all-powerful, surely He could have done that if He had so desired!” This common protest rests upon a very simple misunderstanding: the failure to recognize that God has given to all mankind the power of choice. It is self-evident that without this universal ability we could neither love God, nor one another, nor receive love—and compared with faith and hope, love is the “greatest” (1 Cor 13:13). Nor is it a question of God’s *power*. Love is a choice that must come from the heart; therefore, even God, with His infinite power, cannot force anyone to love Him or it would not be love. Choosing to love self and this world, instead of the God of infinite love who created us, is clearly the cause of all evil.

Yet many Christians offer no answer to this diatribe against their Creator. They hide behind God’s sovereignty and imagine they are pleasing Him when they attribute to Him loveless attitudes and actions totally contrary to their God-given conscience and to His character as revealed in His Word. Such misguided capitulation to irrationality by intelligent, morally accountable beings is dishonoring to God and is rightly scorned by sincere skeptics. “Sovereignty” is neither reason nor excuse for failure to love, much less for creating suffering and death that need not have been. How many evil tyrants have used this same excuse!

Could God have made a world inhabited by beings with the power to choose good or evil, to love or to hate, in which no one would ever have made the wrong choice and no one would have been hateful or vindictive, but unfailingly loving and kind? Obviously not, if they were truly free to choose for self instead of for Him and others. Could He have created a universe in which beings who are less than Himself would never make a choice that was less than God-like or in which beings who could do what they wanted to do would never rebel against Him? No, that would be impossible. Beings who were less than God (as are all created beings) could not

live up to God’s perfection—and to sin, for those made in God’s image (Gn 1:27), is to come “short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

Obviously, if God *could* have made moral creatures capable of loving Him yet never sinning, but *did not* do so, He would be to blame for creating a world vulnerable to evil, pain, sorrow, and death. No such world, however, could exist from an original creation. God is blameless for the evil that man has wrought upon earth. Yet how often has a grieving wife, husband, mother, father, grandparent, or child lashed out in anger to blame God for the death of a loved one? Blame Eve and Satan who deceived her, and Adam for going along, though he knew better (1 Tm 2:14), but don’t blame God.

It was inevitable that Adam and Eve would sin by a misguided selfish choice that could not be blamed upon their Creator. If they were to be able to love and be loved, this is the way it had to be.

“BUT THOSE THINGS, WHICH GOD BEFORE HAD SHOWED BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS PROPHETS, THAT CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER, HE HATH SO FULFILLED.”

—Acts 3:18

God did not *cause* them to sin, but He knew they would. Therefore, even before the universe was created, God’s Son, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, was prepared to come to earth as a man through a virgin birth and in love to die in man’s place in order to pay the full penalty for the sins of every person who would ever live.

It is beyond our comprehension, but inescapably true, that from all eternity Christ looked forward to the Cross, which He would one day endure “for the joy that was set before him” (Heb 12:2). Significantly, the book that decides the fate of the damned is called the book of life “of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rv 13:8). In the unthinkable but inevitable horror of man’s murder of God’s Son, the real face of evil was unmasked, the true heart of man—“deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9)—was laid bare, and God’s eternal justice and love were demonstrated beyond dispute for all eternity to ponder. In *the* crime of all ages, man

despised, rejected, humiliated, scourged, and nailed his Creator to a cross. Thus the rebellion of self hidden in the human heart—the raw passion to tear God from His throne if possible—was revealed, and God’s loving response silenced all legitimate complaint.

When mankind, incredibly, was venting its full hatred upon its Creator, God responded in love and forgiveness, submitting not only to the unjust treatment man imposed but also to the punishment of infinite justice against the sins of the world, interceding even for those who mocked and crucified Him: “Father, forgive them...they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34). Only by the full payment being made to satisfy God’s justice could God “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom 3:26). We cannot doubt God’s wisdom, nor can we fault His love. Therefore, we know that this is the way it had to be.

It is self-evident that without the God-given power of choice, no one could be held morally accountable for anything and the very terms “right” or “wrong” would be meaningless. Nor could anyone experience God’s love, or love Him or other human beings. Thus, no creature incapable of moral choice could possibly know God himself, for “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). Believers who have responded to God’s love through the gospel are likened to a “bride” that will be married to and become Christ’s wife (Eph 5:22-32; Rv 19:7-9), having from their hearts said “I do” to Him for eternity.

Christians who try to escape intelligent discussion of this most vital issue have forgotten, if they ever knew, that God welcomes sincere questions and has given us all the answers in His Holy Word. He invites all mankind, “Come now, and let us reason together” (Is 1:18); and He has commanded those who know Him to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh...a reason” for the eternal hope we have in Christ (1 Pt 3:15).

Every parent knows that each child is a unique individual with a mind of its own, who cannot be forced to behave in a certain manner but will inevitably, sooner or later, make free choices for its own selfish reasons. No one can live another’s life. Each person is morally accountable to choose good or evil—an inescapable responsibility that Eve imposed upon all of her descendants by disobeying God and

eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Nor can imperfect beings always make the morally good choice. Most tragic of all is the fact that even though a child has been well taught and knows right from wrong, it may still self-destruct, and there is nothing that could have been done to prevent that from happening.

What mother or father whose child dies of an overdose of drugs, or in a wreck caused by excessive speed under the influence of alcohol, or in the electric chair for murder, or is confined to prison for life (or even a day) wanted that to happen? Nor does God “take pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezk 33:11), but wants “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tm 2:4). He cannot, however, force Himself upon us any more than a parent can force a child to willingly make the right choice.

The God who created this world and mankind to live in it no more desires anyone’s doom than parents desire the suffering and untimely deaths that so many children bring upon themselves. Listen to God’s lament as He pours out His heart over disobedient Israel, His chosen people, as a father would weep for his children: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more...” (Is 1:2-4).

Every thinking person knows that God cannot honestly be blamed for the evil rampant in the world. It exists because of choices that its victims themselves have made—choices that in many cases parents faithfully warned against and as their children grew older pleaded with them to avoid. Yet Martin Luther wrote an entire book, *The Bondage of the Will*, denying that anyone has the power of choice. John Calvin, too, in his zeal for God’s sovereignty, also denied this essential human ability. Even many of today’s most popular Christian leaders deny free will to mankind—including the ability to make the most important choice of all: whether to believe the gospel, which alone saves the soul. Thus, in their view, God is ultimately to blame for everything, although they attempt to deny the obvious conclusion to which this unbiblical theory leads.

It is patently simple that to deny man free choice exonerates him from moral accountability and makes God the cause of evil. No matter how we try, we can never escape the fact that we each make genuine choices of our own free will when we decide to do or not to do this or that. This includes choosing whether to submit to God’s will or to take our own way, and whether to receive Christ as Savior or not. We all know this to be true; we choose of our own free will between conflicting options many times each day—and God can be blamed for none of these choices or their consequences.

When He made man, God knew that He would have a world of rebels on His hands, billions of little egomaniacs who would each want to willfully take his own way—billions who would need to be redeemed and who would each have to choose between self and God. When Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn 14:6), He was explaining

“FOR THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED  
WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY  
OF THE LORD, AS THE WATERS COVER  
THE SEA. —Habakkuk 2:14

the entire situation from eternity past to eternity in the endless future. Jesus alone could be the way back to God. This is the way it had to be.

God knew from the very beginning what was going to happen. He was not taking a risk by creating beings with the power of choice—He knew they would rebel against Him. And He knew that there was only one way for them to be redeemed from the penalty they would bring upon themselves: His “only begotten Son” (Jn 3:16), the Son of His love, must come to this earth as a man and die in their place, paying the full penalty that infinite Justice would exact against sin. And from all eternity, the Son knew that as well. It had to be.

We can’t imagine what it really means that the Son *always* knew that He would be born into this world as a babe, would live a perfect, sinless life as only He could, be hated without cause, be rejected and despised by His own people, the Jews, to whom He would come as one of them, and that they, with the willing cooperation of the Roman Empire, would crucify Him. Of course, the truth of our redemption goes far beyond our capacity to comprehend. We are told that “by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many” (Is 53:11). That seems a cryptic statement.

What could knowledge have to do with

paying the penalty for our sins? Obviously, without full knowledge of every detail (including motivation) of every shameful, violent, appalling sin that would ever be committed from all eternity—without full knowledge of the penalty His own justice required—God’s “righteous servant” could not pay the full debt that mankind owed for its wickedness and thereby “justify” all who would believe on Him. Indeed, He would be punished as though He were sin itself: “for he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, [he] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). What love, what mercy, what grace!

Christ’s triumphant cry on the Cross, “It is finished!” takes on greater significance when we understand that He had eternally anticipated that moment: “This man [Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God...for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified....Now...there is no more offering for sin” (Heb 10:12, 14, 18). At last, it was all behind Him—the penalty paid once-for-all and in full for all mankind!

And how clearly and blasphemously does the Roman Catholic “Sacrifice of the Mass” deny Christ’s triumphant cry, “It is finished!” Its priesthood claims to turn bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and to “immolate” Him millions of times on Catholic altars to be ingested into the stomachs of those who believe the lie that they are actually eating Christ. In fact, He is now in heaven in His resurrected, glorified body, exalted at the Father’s right hand!

The sins of the redeemed have now been forgotten, no longer to be remembered again (Heb 8:12, 10:17). Yes, books in which every sin is recorded will be opened at the Great White Throne judgment—but that is for those who rejected Christ and the pardon He obtained for their sins. At the final judgment, all who refused to accept Christ’s payment for their sins will be cast into the Lake of Fire to be tormented eternally by a conscience that can no longer hide behind the excuses with which it had deluded itself while on earth. The pain will include not only the full realization of the horror that their sins have wrought for themselves and others, but also the crushing load of audacious evil that they nourished in their rebellion against the God who created them. Sadly, not the least of the torment will be the eternally haunting realization that they could have been forgiven and in heaven had they not rejected Christ and the payment He made in infinite love for their sins. TBC

## Quotable

Life, life of love poured out, fragrant  
and holy!  
Life, 'mid rude thorns of earth, stain-  
less and sweet!  
Life, whence God's face of love, glori-  
ous but lowly,  
Shines forth to bow us, Lord, low at  
Thy feet!

Grief, grief of love that drew hate's  
every arrow!  
Grief that Thy suffering heart only  
could meet!  
Grief, whence Thy face of love, shin-  
ing in sorrow,  
Draws us, adoring, Lord, low at Thy  
feet!

Death, death of stricken love, wrath's  
sea exploring!  
Death, Life's mysterious death—Deep  
meeting deep!  
Death, whence Thy bursting heart fills  
ours outpouring  
All, all in worship, Lord low at Thy  
feet!

*Samuel Webbe (1740-1816)*

## Q&A

**Question:** Most pre-tribulationists believe that 144,000 Jews are protected by God during the seven years of tribulation (Revelation 7:1-8) by receiving "God's seal in their foreheads." If the seven seals of Revelation are part of the tribulation period, then why do the Jews have to wait until after the sixth seal to receive God's mark of protection?

**Answer:** The answer is fairly simple: they haven't been commissioned until then, so there were as yet no 144,000 chosen by God to seal "in their foreheads." Whatever disasters have happened on earth prior to this time, these 144,000 have been spared. It is only at this point that they are chosen (other than in God's foreknowledge), so there was no way to seal them for protection before. From that point on, they "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Rv 14:4).

**Question:** If all the demons were bound in the netherworld at the time they chose to follow Satan, where did the ones come from who are in the world today?

**Answer:** The ones "who are in the world today" are the same ones to whom you refer, the only demons of whom I have any knowledge—and that is very slim.

Clearly, demons were not "all bound in the netherworld at the time they chose to follow Satan." In fact, I don't think any of them are bound there yet. You remember that the legion of demons complained to Jesus, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time" (Mt 8:29)? That "time" is when they will be thus bound one day along with Antichrist, Satan, and the false prophet—but that time has not yet come.

Then what of the statement that God "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment..." (2 Pt 2:4)? I think "hell" refers to their ultimate end, not to where they are now.

"Chains of darkness," I believe, refers to their spiritual state rather than a condition of being bound in a particular place. That they are in "chains of darkness" means that there is no hope for them ever to know or to be delivered by the truth from their just condemnation.

**Question:** Because Moses had a wife from one of the Arab tribes while in his exile from Egypt, aren't some of his offspring of Arab heritage, or has that been mud-died by years of intermarriage? I read that Arafat was descended from Muhammad, an Amalekite descended from Ishmael. Are these people born to be unsaved if they come from those who are not from God's chosen? Many became Muslims. Do they have no opportunity to be saved because of their heritage?

**Answer:** The fact that Moses had a black wife (it doesn't say she was either an Arab or an Amalekite) would have been so diluted through the centuries as to be of no significance today in the genetic composition of the Jewish race. Yes, Arafat was distantly related to Muhammad. He dropped his real name, Hussein, to hide his relationship with his great uncle and mentor, Haj Amin Mohammed Effendi al-Husseini, vicious terrorist leader and partner with Hitler, appointed Mufti of Jerusalem by the British in 1921.

As for being "an Amalekite descended from Ishmael," I have never heard that idea. The Amalekites are first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 14:7, were in Canaan when the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt (Nm 13:29; 14:25, etc.), smote the Israelites when they presumed to go into the promised land without God's blessing (Nm 14:45), oppressed the Israelites in the days of Gideon (Jgs 6:3, 33), and are described in David's day as an ancient

people who "were of old the inhabitants of the land" (1 Sm 27:8).

The Lord through the prophet Samuel commanded Saul to destroy them all (1 Sm 15:3), which he failed to do and was slain by one of them (2 Sm 1:6-10). David smote most of them, and 500 men of the tribe of Simeon killed any survivors in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah (1 Ch 4:41-43). Thus Muhammad could hardly have descended from an extinct people!

Nor are there any "people born to be unsaved if they come from those who are not from God's chosen." This is one of Calvinism's darkest doctrines: it is unbiblical, irrational, and unjust, because it damns multitudes to eternal punishment before they are born and gives them no opportunity to accept or reject Christ, making it pointless to preach the gospel. To say that Muslims are not given an opportunity to be saved because of their heritage is not true.

Romans 1 and 2 make it clear that all mankind have the witness of creation and conscience. If they reject this witness, they would also reject Christ, even if they heard the gospel repeatedly—as many in America do, to their own destruction.

**Question:** I saw on CSPAN, May 21, a Muslim scholar who was lecturing to a large and receptive audience concerning a reformation he says is taking place within Islam today. He claims that there is a growing reaction among Muslims against the violence of extremists who are giving Islam a bad name. He likened this to the Christian Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries and pointed out that all religions have exhibited a violent streak on the part of fanatics from time to time so that Islam is no different from other religions in this regard. Have you noticed this reaction among Muslim leaders and wouldn't it be a good thing if Islam could experience a true reformation?

**Answer:** In my latest book, *Judgment Day: Islam, Israel, and the Nations*, I document a recent and growing movement within Islam that decries violence and is slowly gaining strength. It is, however, a movement among intellectuals and thus is unlikely to affect the masses of ordinary Muslims. It has been brought about by the embarrassment among primarily educators and the media, caused by the fact that so much of Islam is completely contrary to the conscience that God has given to all mankind and that even Islam cannot totally subdue or corrupt.

It is impossible, however, for Islam to experience a "reformation" like the

16th-century Christian Reformation. This is because the latter involved getting back to the true teachings of the Bible, which brings salvation and the “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance” (Gal 5:22,23) that it produces. Any “reformation” that would return Muslims to the true teachings of Islam would have the opposite effect and would only *increase* violence and terrorism.

In fact, such a “reformation” within Islam is already underway, involving a return to the fundamental teachings of the Qur’an and the example of Muhammad and his early successors, the “rightly guided caliphs.” It calls for exterminating the Jews and beheading all others who refuse to convert.

Terrorists are not extremists, as the Muslim reformers try to say, but they are fundamentalists who practice true Islam as Muhammad founded and practiced it and as the Qur’an requires. No “reformation” of Islam could possibly do away with terrorism. Islam itself would have to be changed completely by scrapping Muhammad as its prophet and the Qur’an and Hadith as its authoritative holy books. Any attempt to do that would pit Muslims against each other in a never-ending bloodbath.

As for all religions having a history of violence, that is true. But biblical Christianity is not a religion, nor has it been involved in violence. The crusaders could not have been true Christians or they would not, under the banner of the Cross, have killed innocent and defenseless Jews all along the way to Jerusalem and throughout the entire land of what was once Israel and had become known as “Palestine.”

Any violence done in the name of Christ is a violation of His teachings and example. Violence and terrorism done by Muslims, however, are in obedience to the teachings of the Qur’an and of Muhammad and the example he set.

**Question:** On Sunday, April 17, 2005, I watched Jack Van Impe’s program on TV and sent him a letter [of protest] because of some of his statements. I am enclosing a copy of that letter and of [his] reply....He states that over 100,000 Protestants were put to death by other Protestants because they were immersed [baptized], or because they proclaimed the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. Have you ever read from history such a claim?

**Answer:** No, but Jack is not known for his accuracy. He may be thinking of what became known as the “Peasants’ War”—a violent uprising by the peasants against the landowners, nobles, and clergy, seeking redress for a multitude of

wrongs. Luther addressed the lords on behalf of the peasants and urged the latter to avoid violence. The peasants, however, continued to commit so many outrages against the nobles and princes that Luther issued a further violent pamphlet, “Against the Robbing, Murdering Hordes of Peasants,” advising that they ought to be massacred like mad dogs. About 100,000 peasants were slain.

This was not, however, Protestants killing Protestants for practicing baptism by immersion or for proclaiming the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth as Van Impe says.

And what is the point Jack is trying to make? For years, although an ex-Catholic who ought to know better, he has been promoting Roman Catholicism as the true gospel and the Pope as an evangelical Christian. Yet the Pope looked to Mary, not to Christ, for salvation and wore the brown scapular all of his life, relying upon the promise made by an apparition of “Mary” that is written upon it (known as the “Sabbatine privilege”) to take from purgatory to heaven the Saturday after their consignment in that place of torment all who die wearing it.

If Van Impe is referring to Anabaptists killed by Lutherans and Calvinists, they amounted to a fraction of his 100,000. Nor would that persecution ever justify or cover up the slaughter of millions of true Christians by the Roman Catholic Church.

In his letter to you, Van Impe commends the Catholic Church again. He needs to be honest with himself, with the Lord, and with his audience, and acknowledge that Catholicism is a false promise of heaven that is sending hundreds of millions to hell—and that his approval thereof has only deceived additional multitudes and increased the numbers heading for the Lake of Fire. One day he will stand before the Lord and give an account for this duplicity.

**Question:** Is Isaiah 3:24-26 a dual prophecy, referring both to the destruction at the hands of Babylon and the Nazi Holocaust?

**Answer:** No. That could not be the case because, according to this passage, Israel would be in her land when this destruction took place, and it would come about through a war: “Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.” The six million Jews killed in the Holocaust did not die as a result of a war against Israel, which had no gates to “lament,” not having yet been restored to her land. In fact, it was probably the Holocaust that stirred a short-lived sympathy, which caused the nations to designate land for modern Israel.

## News Alert

**Der Spiegel, 6/9/05, NAZISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM REVIVED IN GERMANY [Excerpts]:** German young people, faced with liberal parents who are tolerant about sex, drugs and rock and roll, are increasingly rebelling by turning to right-wing extremism. Neo-Nazi fashion, music and ideology have become an ever-important part of German youth culture.

This defensive posture is referred to as *Deutschtümelei*, or sticking up for everything German. It’s an us-against-them attitude—us-against-the-Russians, the Turks, the Albanians. Young Germans no longer know how to differentiate between foreign thugs and peaceful foreign-born German citizens. And they are convinced that their generation should no longer be held responsible for Hitler’s crimes. Quietly and persistently, a new youth culture has developed in both the eastern and western parts of Germany. It’s Germanic and xenophobic and potentially explosive.

While the German government does its best to ban neo-Nazi demonstrations at memorials for victims of the Nazis, right-wing extremism is gaining new adherents in schools, concert venues and at youth gatherings. The “nationalist mood” has become “chronic and wide-spread” in former East Germany, says Bernd Wagner, an expert on extremism.

Many parents and teachers are completely perplexed by their children’s xenophobic tendencies. These are fathers and mothers who came of age in the 1960s, who provided their children with a liberal upbringing, and whose greatest fear was that their kids might be taking drugs. They have been completely taken by surprise by the right-wing sentiments of German young people.

The neo-Nazis have long since changed their tactics when it comes to young people, no longer relying solely on tired slogans to get their message across. Now they organize camping trips, soccer tournaments, hikes and concerts, as well as running youth clubs.

The federal government, whose chancellor has called for a “revolution of decent citizens,” plans to spend 180 million euros by 2006 for programs to combat right-wing extremist ideology. The main focus will be educational programs in schools. The result of many students’ lack of knowledge about Nazism can be devastating. According to youth expert Brigitte Kather, even upper-middle class students are becoming increasingly uninhibited when spreading anti-Semitic clichés.

[TBC: Without the gospel, a “revolution of decent citizens” is a mirage.]

## Dave & T.A.'s Itinerary

July 10 (TA)	Calvary Chapel Columbia Gorge Mosier OR (541) 478-3458
July 12-14 (Dave & TA)	Int'l Christian Retail Show (CBA) Denver, CO • Convention Center
July 17 (TA)	Calvary Chapel Bend Bend OR (541) 383-5097
July 20 (Dave)	Calvary Chapel Downey Downey CA (562) 803-5631
July 30- Aug 6 (Dave)	Word of Life Schroon Lake NY (Call for schedule) (518) 494-6222
Aug 27 (Dave)	Steeling the Mind Bible Conf Colorado Community Church Englewood CO (800) 977-2177 • (208) 762-7777
Sep 7 - (TA) 9-10 (Dave & TA)	Calvary Chapel Prophecy Conf. Appleton WI (920) 735-1242
Sep 11 (Dave)	
Sep 16-18 (Dave)	Amazing Fulfillm't of Bible Prophecy 2005 Charlotte Prophecy Conf Charlotte NC (800) 937-6638 • (800) 845-2420
Sep 30- Oct 2 (TA)	Men's Retreat, Wild Horse Canyon Antelope OR (541) 478-3458 • (541) 383-5097
Sep 30- Oct 2 (Dave)	Believers in Grace Fellowship Marion IA (319) 373-3087

## Letters

Dear Berean Call,

My church just finished a "40 Days of Purpose" campaign....I participated but I did not get a thing out of it. [When Jesus walked on earth] He spoke the Word, preached to the brokenhearted, healed, taught, and He got along very well. Why has the church decided He needs our help to spread the good news of who He is? Movies...plays—it just grieves me....I have the CDs on "40 Days" that you made, and I have listened carefully. There really isn't anyone at my church that feels the way I do....so I talk to the Lord about this....Your newsletter and books and tapes have helped me so much over the years. DG (NC)

Dear Dave Hunt and Staff,

I am a certified hypnotherapist—a non-active one, because I too am against suspending critical judgment and thought, leaving a void for other messages and messengers to take possession. I confess I have a degree in psychology and an MS in counseling, as well as a BA and MA in English. So I have been thoroughly seduced by humanitarian thought for over 30 years. Your books, *Seduction of*

*Christianity*, etc., have been very eye-opening, causing me to repent and submit my will and self to my Lord Jesus Christ. JD (NY)

Dear Mr McMahon,

Please, please do not take me off your mailing list. Your newsletter is very much appreciated and re-read many times over. We always look forward to receiving it. AM (Zimbabwe)

To all at The Berean Call,

Thank you for standing firm on the truth of God's Word. In this world, with everything starting to mesh together and good becoming evil and evil becoming good, there are times when I think, "Am I wrong for thinking this way?" Then one of your newsletters comes along and I thank God there are those who truly do stand on the truth. CH (CA)

Dear Brethren at TBC,

I would like to convey my deep appreciation and gratitude for continually sending your monthly newsletter....It has greatly helped me in my Christian life (2 Peter 3:18). I may not agree with all your views/comments in the newsletter (particularly on the issue of Calvinism) but I would like to have a noble attitude like the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17). Kindly extend my gratitude to the people who help you in producing and printing these kinds of materials. EV (email)

Berean Call,

The newsletter is like a gallon of cold, pure water in the midst of a desert of biblical and doctrinal confusion....I really enjoy the letters from other like-minded believers who can see how crazy things have gotten. Surely the Antichrist and one-world religion must be lurking right around the corner. However, we, as believers, look for our "blessed hope." Your work on Calvinism is great too. The Calvinists break the Bible down, take words and verses out of context, then put it back together with a manmade system: Calvinism. JP (TX)

Dear Sir,

A word of thanks for *TBC*. As I have been on your mailing list nearly one year, it's time I let you know, the articles are good. April's "Consumer Christianity" was excellent. I know you may be hard on us Calvinists, but the Lord's chosen were around long before John Calvin, and that message was preached by others long before he came on the scene. I believe you are a well-saved team of workers, as were John Wesley and John Calvin. We should all be working toward the one

end, "They shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." P.S. "Death of a Pope" by Dave in the May *TBC* is superb. TF (North Ireland)

To Whom It May Concern:

Our company just received a newsletter for the first time from your organization. Our staff read through the newsletter and, to say the least, they were appalled at some of your rhetoric. We are exposed daily to Christians (Protestants and Catholics) and the type of theology that you espouse is deadly to Christ's body the church. So please take our name off of your mailing list and do not darken our door again with your poison. JT (IN)

Dear Dave,

As a Christian [who was] raised Catholic, I enjoyed your May article, "Death of a Pope." You continue to clarify what I suspected after searching the Bible for decades. AZ (IN)

## TBC Notes

### Vacation Bible (Home!) School

Summertime traditionally has been the opportune time for churches to introduce neighborhood children (who don't attend church) to teachings from the Bible. Those in which I have participated as a volunteer seemed to me a nice mixture of biblical fundamentals and fun things for the children to do. I know from my own experience that seeds were planted that produced good spiritual fruit. Too bad those VBS programs that are truly biblically based only last for a week.

That thought gave me a "summer-time" idea for families who know the Lord. Why not try a "Vacation Bible Home School"—a VBS-type program that is incorporated as a continuing part of family summer activities.

Moses quite possibly had something like that in mind when he wrote: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..." (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

T. A. McMahon  
Executive Director

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# Pastor of 30,000 to Larry King Live viewers: ***"I don't know"***

On his live television show June 20, Larry King introduced Joel Osteen as "evangelism's hottest rising star, pastor for the biggest congregation in the United States." Osteen heads up Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, where he reports attendance of more than 30,000 per weekend. Mr. Osteen is the author of the number one New York Times bestseller, *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential*, which includes chapters titled "Enlarge Your Vision," "Develop a Healthy Self-Image," and "Discover the Power of Your Thoughts and Words." Excerpted below, a full transcript is available at: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0506/20/lkl.01.html>.

[Bold italics added for emphasis.]

**KING:** Is—have you always believed?

**OSTEEN:** I have always believed. I grew up, you know, my parents were a good Christian people. They showed us love in the home. My parents were the same in the pulpit as they were at home. I think that's where a lot of preachers' kids get off base sometimes. Because they don't see the same things at both places. But I've always believed. I saw it through my parents. And I just grew up believing.

[TBC: Believing what?]

**KING:** But you're not fire and brimstone, right? You're not pound the decks and hell and damnation?

**OSTEEN:** No. That's not me. It's never been me. I've always been an encourager at heart. And when I took over from my father he came from the Southern Baptist background and back 40, 50 years ago there was a lot more of that. But, you know, I just—I don't believe in that. I don't believe—maybe it was for a time. But I don't have it in my heart to condemn people. I'm there to encourage them. I see myself more as a coach, as a motivator to help them experience the life God has for us.

**KING:** But don't you think if people don't believe as you believe, they're somehow condemned?

**OSTEEN:** You know, I think that happens in our society. But I try not to do that. I tell people all the time, preached a couple Sundays about it. I'm for everybody. You may not agree with me, but to me it's not my job to try to straighten everybody out. The Gospel is called the good news. My message is a message of hope, that's God's [message] for you. You can live a good life no matter what's happened to you. And so ***I don't know***. I know there is condemnation but I don't feel that's my place.

**KING:** You've been criticized for that, haven't you?

**OSTEEN:** I have. I have. Because ***I don't know***.

**KING:** Good news guy, right?

**OSTEEN:** Yeah. But you know what? It's just in me...

\* \* \* \* \*

**KING:** So it's self-fulfilling. Billy Graham was here last Thursday.

**OSTEEN:** I saw.

**KING:** Might have been his last interview. Is he a hero to the evangelists?

**OSTEEN:** He is a hero to us all. His life of integrity. Somebody that can stick with it for that long and just stick with his message. What I love about Dr. Graham is he stayed on course. He didn't get side-

tracked. That's what happens to so many people today. It's a good lesson for me, a good example for me to say, you know what, Joel, you may have a lot now but I want to be here 40 years from now sitting with you.

**KING:** Do you share Billy's beliefs of life after death in a sense of going somewhere?

**OSTEEN:** I do. I do. We probably agree on 99 percent. I do. I believe there's a heaven you know. Afterwards, there's, you know, a place called hell. And I believe it's when we have a relationship with God and his son Jesus and that's what the Bible teaches us. I believe it.

[TBC: So that's the gospel?]

\* \* \* \* \*

**KING:** Is it hard to lead a Christian life?

**OSTEEN:** I don't think it's that hard. To me it's fun. We have joy and happiness. Our family—I don't feel like that at all. I'm not trying to follow a set of rules and stuff. I'm just living my life.

**KING:** But you have rules, don't you?

**OSTEEN:** We do have rules. But the main rule to me is to honor God with your life. To live a life of integrity. Not be selfish. You know, help others. But that's really the essence of the Christian faith.

**KING:** That we live in deeds?

**OSTEEN:** ***I don't know***. What do you mean by that?

**KING:** Because we've had ministers on who said, your record don't count. You either believe in Christ or you don't. If you believe in Christ, you are, you are going to heaven. And if you don't no matter what you've done in your life, you ain't.

**OSTEEN:** Yeah, ***I don't know***. There's probably a balance between. I believe you have to know Christ. But I think that if you know Christ, if you're a believer in God, you're going to have some good works. I think it's a cop-out to say I'm a Christian but I don't ever do anything...

**KING:** What if you're Jewish or Muslim, you don't accept Christ at all?

**OSTEEN:** You know, I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to heaven. ***I don't know...***

**KING:** If you believe you have to believe in Christ? They're wrong, aren't they?

**OSTEEN:** Well, ***I don't know*** if I believe they're wrong. I believe here's what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. But

I just think that only God will judge a person's heart. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. ***I don't know*** all about their religion. But I know they love God. And ***I don't know***. I've seen their sincerity. So ***I don't know***. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.

[TBC: Hindus love Jehovah God (Yahweh), and worship Him as Scripture commands? All sincere souls go to heaven? What about Christ's claim that "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6)?]

\* \* \* \* \*

*One thing is clear from Mr. Osteen's interview: He revealed more about what he doesn't know than about what he claims to know. Mr. Osteen joins a growing company of celebrity "evangelicals" who have appeared on Larry King Live and have failed "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..." (1 Peter 3:15). As evidenced by this transcript, Osteen seems a great deal less certain about the Gospel than the following New Testament saints:*

Paul declared, "I am not ashamed: for I ***know*** whom I have believed, and am persuaded..." (2 Timothy 1:12); he prayed, "that ye may ***know*** what is the hope of [Christ's] calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18); and wrote, "Now we ***know*** that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19); "That I may ***know*** him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings..." (Philippians 3:10); "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may ***know*** how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6); John declared, "These things have I written unto you...that ye may ***know*** that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And we ***know*** that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we ***know*** that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may ***know*** him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:13,19,20).

*And of course, the Old Testament also repeatedly states, "that ye may ***know***...." God certainly has conveyed the impression that He wants us to be certain!*



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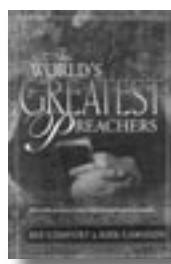
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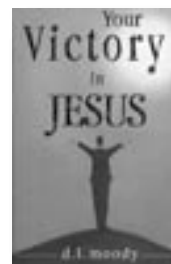
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