

WHY THE WORLD HATES CHRISTIANS

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PREFACE

This study not only addresses a very difficult issue, it addresses a very provocative one — “*Hating Christians.*” It wasn’t a pleasant study to write because it required a significant amount of time reflecting upon the various issues involved — one can’t just give shallow consideration to such a hostile issues... you have to give very careful attention as to why they really exists, and why they are so troubling to both the believing and non-believing world. One of the challenging aspects of dealing with subjects like this, is that you have to be extremely open and transparent... you can’t hide your thinking or much of what you say may be seriously lacking in integrity, and *integrity is the foundation under which all truth exists*; you can’t play games with a subject like this, and ignore certain aspects of it; you have to be straight forward and call an Ace an Ace, and a Spade a Spade. My concern is that some of you may misinterpret some of what I have written (especially those of you who are speed readers), so give careful consideration to what is stated, and try not to pass judgment on it before you carefully reflect upon it... just as it took considerable contemplation on my part to write this study, so it will take *considerable contemplation* on your part to judge it properly. Throughout this study you will find a number of “*biblical references*” that expand upon the various thoughts expressed (you would do well to read them; sometimes they are highly significant). Since “*spiritual truth*” (or any other truth) does not settle in our hearts without careful reflection (it doesn’t come through casual, momentary thinking), therefore take the time to quietly sit in God’s presence and let His Spirit give understanding to your heart — though they may not be absolutely perfect, they come close to defining reality. Remember, you don’t speed-read spiritual truth or lightly consider significant realities; though I may express them in a way that differs a little bit from what you heard in the past, take the time to contemplate them so that they might settle in your heart. On the next page I have placed a “*Table of Contents*” that identifies each of the various issues that are covered in this study, and list the page numbers where they are located.

INTRODUCTION

Having grown up in a Christian family and being indoctrinated into the standards of Christianity, I often found the world’s thinking a little confusing and bewildering. As was probably the case with most of you, I often heard people on television say things that didn’t coincide with Christian thinking. I remember one time when Billy Graham was being questioned by Johnny Carson about his faith — he said something like this:

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“But how do you know there is a God?” That was not an uncommon question... I had actually heard it on numerous *“talk shows,”* including *Larry King’s*. The questions they often posed always *“expressed doubt;”* obviously they were not men of faith, but neither did they *express anger* with those to whom they were talking. Nevertheless, you always sensed that there was significant distance between them, that they were not of the same stripe. The French enlightenment philosopher *Voltaire* (1694-1778), believed in the existence of a God, but not a personal God who was concerned with the affairs of men. He coined his thinking this way in his work *“Traite de Metaphysique”* — *“In that there is a God, there are difficulties; but in the contrary opinion there are absurdities.”* At least his thinking reflected integrity of thought. The American philosopher *William Hocking* in his work *“Human Nature and Its Re-Making”* (1918) stated the following, *“The socialized human being looks with natural skepticism upon any proposition to the effect that there is a wholly good God”* — many people struggle with the fact that God is *“good”* because there are so many negatives in this world (evil, disease, suffering, and death); thus

they refuse to acknowledge Him. Julian Huxley, the Darwinian English biologist and gifted exponent of science, stated in his work “Religion Without Revelation” (1927) — “For my own part, the sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a supernatural being is enormous” — once Huxley determined that God did not exist, he apparently experienced great relief in his soul; obviously, God had given him over to a “depraved mind” (cf. Rom 1:28). Like his grandfather, Thomas Henry Huxley, he doubted all things not immediately open to logical analysis and scientific verification. Lastly, Nikolai Lenin, a Russian evolutionary who was probably related to Vladimir Lenin (the founder of Bolshevism and the major force behind the Soviet Revolution in 1917), stated in his work “New Life” (Dec 16, 1905), “I hate God as I do my personal enemies.” What it was that led him to arrive at such a conclusion, God only knows; obviously the father of all evil (Satan) had done a significant work in his heart. Though the expressed aim of Communism was to overthrow the capitalist order by revolutionary means and to establish a classless society in which all goods were socially owned, it also denied the existence of God, thus making man the sole determinant of reality. The denial that there is a God was taught in all of the schools in the Soviet Union. It is one thing to not believe in God and Jesus, but it is quite another to intensely hate Him.

Why the world hates Christians is obviously puzzling to most people when one considers that the Christian world has made more “positive contributions” to society than any other group of people — aside from being the Founders of our country and establishing the Freedoms we enjoy, they constructed the Constitution and devised the Bill of Rights (it was the spiritual constructs of thought by Christians that governed the thinking of our nation’s forefathers; only the Christian world embraces all the standards as set forth in our nation’s Constitution and the Bill of Rights; if might be good for some of you to study it in depth). Furthermore, it was the Christian community both here and across the sea that delivered blacks from slavery and liberated women from oppression... that fought for justice in the world... that invented hospitals and established thousands of them worldwide... that established thousands of orphanages... that built thousands of schools and educated people... that invented the world of science (much to the chagrin of the unbelieving world)...that put the majority of the world’s languages into written form... and that originated colleges and universities and erected thousands of them (nearly all of the Ivy League schools were established by Christian churches; yet today these same diabolical institutions have an “intense hatred for God & Christianity,” as if Christians are nothing but radical narrow-minded idiots who can’t think past their own ears). In addition to the foregoing it was the Christian community that established food banks & homeless shelters & thrift stores for the poor... assisted living centers for the sick and the elderly, and retirement centers for the elderly. It was the Christian community that built thousands of medical centers and hospitals and care centers all over the world (modern medicine has its origin in the Christian community), crisis pregnancy centers, thousands of Christian Schools, Day Care Centers, Suicide Prevention Centers, hundreds of Adoption Agencies, Legal Aid Services, Christian Radio and Television Stations, Worldwide Mission Organizations, YMCA’s and YWCA’s, the Salvation Army,

and Union Rescue Missions; the list goes on and on. The truth is, the rest of the world has done very little in comparison to what the Christian community (i.e., God) has done. In contrast, “unbelievers & leftist ideologues” have killed more than 60,000,000 babies since Roe vs. Wade became law, and have promulgated divorce, profanity, homosexuality, crime, lack of accountability, welfare dependency, and numerous other societal negatives. Can you imagine the anger and frustration the foregoing information would produce in the mind of some diabolical extremist who would read it — the reason being, the diabolical world cannot satisfactorily argue against such thinking, because they have no integrity of thought — the diabolical world always begins its thinking with “a presupposition that cannot be proven,” and then proceeds with its circular argumentation — as God would say, “That is a very stupid platform upon which to build your life.” Incidentally, their premiere presupposition is that “God does not exist,” in spite of the fact that the entire philosophical world believes that a negative cannot be proven (because one would have to know all things; acknowledging that one doesn’t come close to understanding the fullness of truth/reality is “very humbling”... but the proud diabolical fool disregards absolutes — cf. Ecc 1:13-18; Prv 1:7; 9:10). In addition to that, all of creation gives evidence to the fact that “God does exist” — nothing in the universe suggests that “God does not exist.” The foundational principle upon which all science exists is that anything that possesses form (design) and function was made (i.e., nothing that has form and function exists without cause; hence science is always seeks to identify the “cause” of everything); just as an automobile requires a cause (a creator), so also does everything else that has form and function — thus evolutionary thinking denies the laws of thermodynamics; they simply believe that “somehow” things just exist — do you like brainless thinking? let me suggest that you become a fan of evolution; you’ll find a home there. Incidentally, Albert Einstein said the design of the universe is so brilliant, the thinking of men at best is “an utterly insignificant reflection” (Ralph L. Woods, *The World Treasury of Religious Quotations*; Garland Books, 1966, p. 898). I cover this subject in depth in a study I did on “Ultimate Reality,” you can access it on my website: www.thetransformedsoul.com — In addition to the foregoing, “God has placed eternity in man’s heart” (Ecc 3:11), and “has made His own transcendency evident to man” (Rom 3:19), so “man is without excuse regarding the nature and power of God” (Rom 3:20); thus he’ll never be able to say, “I didn’t know that!” Denying God is diabolical foolishness.

Why are Christians more prone to serve and generously give to those in need in our country? “Because the love of God has been poured out in their hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5); it is the indwelling presence of God’s Spirit in a person’s life that “moves him” to be the hands and feet and voice of Jesus in this world — genuine love is not a human trait — the unbelieving world has proven that. Believers are “naturally” more inclined to serve and give to others, not because of their own inherent goodness or selfish gain (Lk 18:19), but because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. All of the incredible work that’s been done in our world by the Christian community, is a work that “GOD” has done through His people. By comparison, those without God’s presence in their lives, are far less loving and caring, and far more self-centered. Is it not ironic to

you that the proud unbelieving world is very *selfish* with its own money? that its record of *personal giving* is much lower than that of the believing world? Various studies have shown that about 85% of all charitable giving and serving in our country is done by the Christian world — if the genuine Christian world comprised 85% of the world’s population, that would be one thing, but they only comprise 13-15% of its population. Though there are a number of wealthy unbelievers who give large endowments to various organizations, *most of them give “to be seen by others” or “to get their name put in lights” or “have a building or project named after them”* (cf. Mt 6:1-4) — that is very popular in the entertainment industry; you can hear their heart saying, *“I don’t want to give in secret!”* Of course not, they want the whole world to see how wonderful they are... just like the Pharisees (cf. Mt 6:2, 5, 16; 23:5). I find it interesting that very little giving in the Christian world is done with such motives (read those verses in Matthew).

Since the beginning of time the unbelieving world has *hated* the believing world... the first two children saw one child (Cain) kill the other child (Able) — Cain was a tiller of the ground, and Abel was a keeper of flocks (cf. Gen 4:2). The time came when each child brought an *“offering”* to God — the Lord had regard for Abel’s offering, but not Cain’s offering (Gen 4:3-4). Though the book of Genesis does not explain how the practice of sacrificial worship began, there must have been a time when God instructed them that sinful man can approach the holy God only on the ground of *the blood of a substitutionary sacrifice* (cf. Heb 9:22) — Cain had obviously rejected this revelation and came with a bloodless offering of fruits and vegetables; on the other hand, Abel believed the divine decree and offered slain animals, thus demonstrating his faith and the fact that he was justified before God (cf. Heb 11:4). *The resultant effect was, rather than being repentant, Cain became very angry and killed his brother Abel* (cf. Gen 4:5-8) — Jesus spoke of this ghastly event as a historical fact (cf. Mt 23:35). The point here is this — *Cain rejected the wisdom spoken to him by God* (cf. Gen 4:7), *because his deeds were evil and Abel’s were righteous* (1 Jn 3:12); obviously he became very angry and jealous of his brother, so he killed him; though his brother had done absolutely nothing wrong. Said the apostle John, *“Brethren, do not marvel if the world hates you”* (1 Jn 3:13) — *when evil reigns in a person’s soul, he will hate the righteous*. Throughout the entire Old Testament the unrighteous Jews rebelled against the righteous Jews — over and over again they persecuted and killed the prophets. Carefully reflect upon the words of Jesus to the Pharisees (cf. Mt 23:29-36) —

Wow to you hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, “If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.... Behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from

the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, whom you murdered... Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.

The scribes and Pharisees pretended to honor the Old Testament prophets by building their tombs and putting wreaths on their monuments... and claim that they would not have participated in shedding their blood... yet Jesus knew that even as they were decorating the prophets' graves, they were plotting His death! The reality was, they were all sons of their fathers (*i.e.*, they were no different than their fathers – cf. Mt 23:31); thus, they would not escape the sentence of hell (cf. Mt 23:33). It is important to remember that these words of condemnation were spoken to Israel's religious leaders, not drunkards & reprobates. Jesus not only foresaw His own death, He foretold the scribes and Pharisees that they would murder some of the messengers whom He would send; as such, a torrent of punishment would be poured out on the nation that hated its Messiah without cause and nailed Him to a criminal's cross (cf. Mt 23:36). Read the following passages as well – cf. 2 Chron 36:15-16; Mt 5:10-12; 21:33-46; 22:1-14; Acts 5:28-42; 7:51-53; 22:22-24; Rom 11:3). Some of you might be struggling with processing the degree of “hatred” that exists in the minds of fallen men – their hatred is so intense they will “murder” people! They murdered the Messiah of God... they murdered the apostles... they had intense hatred for the light (cf. Jn 1:4-5, 9-11; 3:19-20). The reality is, unbelievers refuse to own up to the fact that they are sinful creatures... that they are not good... their proud hearts simply refuse to accept God's assessment of who they really are; thus leading them to hate such a God and hate those who propound His message. It's important to note, Christianity is not just about a few forensic truths (*i.e.*, religion), it is about believing that we are fallen creatures whom God has redeemed – therefore the Christian life a life of sin renunciation (cf. Rom 6:12) and righteous living (cf. Rom 6:13, 19; 14:17; Phil 1:11; 1 Tim 6:11; Jam 3:17-18; 1 Pet 2:24; 1 Jn 3:7); it is a life of faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 1:17; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 11:6; 12:2) that has nothing to do with self-righteousness (cf. Lk 18:19; Rom 7:18)... on the contrary, it has to do with self-crucifixion (*i.e.*, dying to one's sinful self) because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us (*i.e.*, credited to our account); this occurred when we placed our trust in Him (cf. Mk 8:34; Rom 8:13; Col 3:5; Rom 3:21-28; 4:3-5; Phil 3:9; 2 Pet 1:1). The problem many believers have is that they simply live in the now and not with eternity in view (cf. Jn 14:2-3; Col 1:5; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet 1:3-4; 2 Pet 3:13; 1 Jn 3:2-3) – eternity is such a distant reality to them, they don't make it a significant part of their life... which causes them to live in the moment... the truth is, they simply want to feel good about themselves and enjoy life... thus they will pretty much do anything to maintain a false peace and avoid confrontation and conflict. But such an attitude contradicts God's call upon our lives as His children – as believers we are to be dedicated to working, serving, sharing, and helping others... “so rather than laying up treasures for ourselves upon this earth that have no lasting value, we are to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven that never fade away” (Mt 6:19-20); Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (cf. Mt 6:21; also Prv 23:4; Mt 19:21; Lk 12:21, 33; 1 Tim 6:9-10, 19). Due to the fact some of the foregoing may be a little troubling to some of you, take the time to prayerfully reflect upon the various passages listed. Ultimately the question is: What is the most important thing in your life?

As Scripture states, “we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart” (cf. Mt 22:37) — Jesus went on to say, “If you love Me, you will obey Me” (cf. Jn 14:15, 21, 23, 1 Jn 5:3). Our problem as His creatures is that “we inhabit sinful flesh,” thus we frequently run amuck in life. Perhaps one could compare believers to a computer with a glitch in it — hence, we continually need to be “re-booted” — incidentally, the glitch is “our flesh” that is continually causing problems in our lives. Now the believer who fails to love God by doing His bidding in this life, is not fulfilling his duty and owning up to his responsibility; as such, he will “suffer loss” and not receive a “reward” on the final day (cf. 1 Cor 3:10-17) — in addition to that, he will not have “the peaceful assurance of salvation in his heart,” there will always be a significant degree of spiritual restlessness in his soul, because one cannot disobey God (*i.e.*, walk in sin) and experience the assurance of faith. God does not give peace to those who walk in sin (*i.e.*, in disobedience; cf. Phil 4:8-9). Conversely, John says, if one fails to abide in Christ and walk with Him in life (Jn 15:5, 10), he will shrink away from Him in shame at His second coming; literally it means, “one will not be able to look Jesus in the eye when He returns” (1 Jn 2:28) — can you imagine, being so ashamed, you cannot even look at Jesus when He comes back, because you failed to humbly walk with Him in this life? Give very careful consideration to that construct of thought; don’t make light of disobedience. Even though you will be saved (if you truly have been born-again), you will be significantly humiliated when Christ returns should you live a selfish life here on earth; so either you humble yourself now in this life by walking with Him in obedience... or you will be painfully humbled at His coming prior to entering into His eternal glory — there is no alternate route to the glory of heaven; either one humbles himself in this life, or God will humble him before he enters into the eternal realm. Fellow believers, that is a very sober reality, so humble yourself before the Lord and strive to walk with Him and obey Him in this life; make the Christ-life the premiere ambition of your life (cf. Phil 1:21; Col 3:3-4).

WHY THE WORLD HATES CHRISTIANS

Why does the world hate Christians? Obviously it doesn’t matter how generous they are, how sacrificial they are, how servant they are, or how compassionate they are... the people of God are hated because the world hates the One we love (Jn 15:21-24). Why does the world hate Him? “It is because they are of their father the devil that they do the things their father desires... he has been a murderer from the beginning... there is no truth in him whatsoever... he is a liar, and the father of lies” (cf. Jn 8:44). It is not that the unbelieving world disavows the existence of a god, or that they are irreligious... the reality is, they have created their own god and have simply made Him what they want Him to be; thus He is a god who not only doesn’t exist, he is simply a god of their own making (not at all the God of the Bible). Because man is a fallen creature, he will continually defer to his own fallen humanistic thinking; it is just such thinking that defines reality to him; fallen human logic is the measuring stick of his life. The secular world

refuses to accept the fact that there is a “holy God” in the heavens who will one day hold the entire human family accountable for its moral rebellion and disobedience; that does not at all define the god they believe in. They don’t believe there is a supreme magistrate who has authority over them, or that He has very specific standards as to what is right and wrong... they don’t accept the fact that sexual intercourse before and outside of marriage is sinful, or that homosexuality is sinful, or that drunkenness is forbidden, or that anything they value or honor or worship or serve other than the God of the Bible is idolatry and worthy of eternal death (*i.e.*, eternal separation from God). They reject the idea that there is a place called hell; they cringe at the suggestion that they are not the final authority as to what they can or can’t do (*i.e.*, that they are not autonomous creatures) — that is simply the way fallen human minds work. Fallen man sees his behavior as being meritorious to who he thinks God is; thus he sees himself as good or reasonably good. They don’t want to be told that they must repent (*i.e.*, turn from their wickedness and ungodly ways). They find the thinking of Christians absurd when they are told that the only way to be reconciled to God and forgiven of their sins, is through faith in Jesus Christ alone — they simply refuse to accept the fact that they are fallen sinful creatures; that kind of a degrading thought doesn’t mesh with their thinking. The reality is, it is man’s innate sinfulness that is his problem. Again, they may believe in a supreme being of some kind, but not one who would ever consign one to hell... or tell them that they cannot marry someone of the same sex — the divine deity in which they believe accepts anyone who is true to what they believe. The reality is, they want nothing to do with the God of the Bible — that God is an offense to them; they hate that God with intense anger. Jesus said another reason they hate Me and My Father is that I came to this world to “expose their sin” (cf. Jn 1:4; 3:19-21; 7:7; 8:12; 12:46)... as such, “they cannot excuse their sins” (Jn 15:22-24; 9:41). Again, it is man’s sinfulness that is the issue; denying it is complete foolishness to God. Jesus essentially said the following to His disciples, “They hate Me and the One who sent Me because I exposed their hypocrisy and their self-serving religiosity... and once they recognize that you love Me and follow Me and believe the same things I believe, they will hate you too. Once they recognize that you don’t belong to them, that you are ‘not of the world,’ you will find yourself the object of their disdain” (Jn 15:19). Sam Storms of Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City, in his study, “When the beloved of God are hated by the world,” identifies four other reasons why our refusal to be identified with the world will provoke their contempt —

1. Jesus told His disciples, “You are not of the world” (cf. Jn 15:19); though we are in the world, and are citizens of an earthly nation, and are faithful in paying our taxes, we do not derive our basic identity from the world. As the apostle Peter stated, we reside as “aliens, exiles & sojourners” on the earth (cf. 1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:11); likewise, Paul said, “Our citizenship is in heaven” (cf. Phil 3:20). Our primary identity is not that we are Americans... it is that we are Christians (first & foremost). Our value system is not dependent on Congress or the Supreme Court, but on the revealed, moral will of God in Scripture. Jesus said, “You are not of the world,

*I chose you **out** of the world”* (cf. Jn 15:19) — so the ultimate reason we are not of the world is because of God’s sovereign choice (cf. Jn 6:37-39).

2. Jesus said to His disciples, “Whoever **hates Me hates My Father also**” (Jn 15:23). To hate Jesus is to hate God. That’s why Muslims don’t worship the same God we do; they hate the God we worship because they hate the Jesus we worship — though they honor Him as a prophet, they deny that He is more than a prophet... they deny that He is the Son of the Father... they deny that He is the incarnation of the second person of the Triune Godhead... they deny that the Father even has a Son... they deny that Jesus died on the cross as the all-sufficient atonement for our sin and was raised again bodily from the dead... they deny that Jesus alone is worthy of worship and honor... and they deny that faith in Jesus alone is the only path to forgiveness of sins — to deny all of this regarding Jesus is to “*hate*” Him. So Allah is not the same god as the God and Father of Jesus. When people make Jesus into something He is not, like cults and liberal theologians do... they hate Jesus and the Father.
3. Jesus said repeatedly, “The world will **hate Christians and persecute Christians**” (cf. Mt 5:10-11; 10:22; 24:9; Lk 6:22; Jn 9:22; 15:18-20; 16:2; 21:12, 17; 2 Th 1:4; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:13-14). Scripture states unequivocally that “those who choose to live a **godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted**” (cf. 2 Tim 3:12) — the expression “*godly life*” is emphatic in Greek. “Faithful believers will be persecuted” — as **John Stott** states it in his commentary on Second Timothy, “The **godly** arouse the antagonism of the worldly; it has always been so. It was so for Christ, and He said it would be so for us” (cf. Jn 15:18-20; 16:33). Those who *withdraw* from the world and keep their mouth shut, don’t suffer persecution; only those who *assimilate* into the world and speak the truth of Christ to others, experience persecution — so only those who are both in the world and in Christ simultaneously experience the inevitability of persecution.
4. Ultimately the question is, “What is the believer’s **response to hatred and persecution, and the world’s rejection of Jesus**?” Jesus told His disciples that hatred, persecution, and opposition would happen “so that they wouldn’t be caught off guard when it did occur” (Jn 16:4). The apostle John said the same thing in his first epistle: “Don’t be surprised that the world hates you” (1 Jn 3:13). The faithful followers of Jesus will have the same affect on the world of *rebellious unbelievers* that Jesus did — why? because we will be out of step with the trajectory of society... we will refuse to embrace the changing ethics of our day... therefore our rebellious world will not respond with kindness. When Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, He immediately followed it up by saying that “the Holy Spirit (i.e., the Helper) would teach them and empower them and encourage them to stand firm in the face of opposition, so that they can testify and bear witness to this world about who I am” (Jn 16:7ff). Jesus foresaw that when He left His disciples and ascended into heaven, they would not find life easy. The gospel they would be propagating would cause

them to collide with those who are worldly-minded, and with the religious men of the day; thus for the true Christian, opposition is inevitable. Since the first century, more than 43,000,000 believers have been martyred for their faith (some recent studies put that number as high as 70,000,000) — how did these people endure the hatred and persecution of the world? It is only by the indwelling presence and power of “*the Helper*” (i.e., the Holy Spirit) whom Jesus promised to all of His followers; it is the Spirit who equips God’s people and gives them the grace to bear witness about the gospel of Christ (cf. Jn 14:12-21; 15:8).

THE WORLD HATES THE MISSION OF CHRIST

Jesus told His disciples, “*I have chosen you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain*” (cf. Jn 15:16). Though man tends to think that he is the one who initiates everything... that is not at all what Scripture teaches — God is the one who initiated our salvation and appointed us to the task of *bearing fruit*; in short, we are to be *Christ’s emissaries & representatives* in this world. The word “*fruit*” means doing the work and ministry of Christ here on earth. Essentially Jesus said, “*You are not here to do your own will in life, but to do the will of My Father who is in heaven*” (cf. Mt 7:21; 4:19; 6:10; 12:50; 16:24; 26:39; Lk 6:46; Jn 15:8; Eph 6:6; 1 Pet 4:19; 1 Jn 2:17). “*You are not your own, you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body... whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (cf. 1 Cor 6:19-20; 10:31). “*Your life is a letter written by the Holy Spirit on your heart... and is being read by all men*” (2 Cor 3:2-3)... “*when someone asks you about the hope that you have, you are to share it with them*” (cf. 1 Pet 3:15) — the message is clear, when your life reflects Christ in the midst of persecution, people will often ask you why you are being so kind and tolerant to those who are being unkind to you; such questions naturally open the door for us to speak to them about the Lord... as Peter says, “*share it with them with gentleness and reverence*” (1 Pet 3:15) — there should be no trace of harshness, bitterness or flippancy when we speak of our Savior and Lord.

The problem with *many churches* in our world today is that they aren’t much different from the world around them. **David Wilkerson** (1931-2011), one of the great evangelists in our world in the 20th century, as well as the founder of “*Teen Challenge*” and “*Times Square Church*” in New York City, and the author of one of the most popular Christian books worldwide, “*The Cross and the Switchblade*” (which sold tens of millions worldwide and was translated into thirty languages), in an article he wrote on “*Why the World Hates Christians*,” he said the reason some churches are *loved by the world* is that they are *not* of Christ — it should be noted, over half of the churches in our world are not of Christ. Though one-third of the world’s population say they are Christians, the number of those who are truly born-again is no more than 15 percent — the majority of those in the Catholic world are not born-again, and about half of the Protestant world are not born-again. **Pope Francis** (the present Roman Catholic pope) has caused many in the Catholic world here in America to question the integrity of his faith for a few reasons —

first, he does not believe in hell; in spite of the fact that Scripture and Jesus taught far more on hell than heaven – in Scripture, hell is seen as “eternal punishment” (Mt 25:41); “everlasting destruction” (2 Th 1:9); “everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2); “damnation” (Mt 23:33); “Unquenchable fire” (Mt 3:12; 5:22; 18:9); “fiery furnace” (Mt 13:42:50); “blackest darkness” (Jude 1:13); “an eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt 25:41); “a lake of fire and brimstone” (Rev 21:8); and “the eternal destiny of the unbelieving world will also be in the lake of fire; it is referred to as the second death” (Mt 25:41-46; Rev 21:8). It has been fairly common down through the ages for the Roman Catholic Church to interpret Scripture “allegorically,” *i.e.*, it doesn’t see Scripture as a literal, grammatical, historical revelation of God to man... instead it believes some of it employs symbolic, fictional figures to give understanding to divine truth; in that sense it is more inclined to see Scripture as a mystical revelation. When you travel that road you are not giving credence to the exact words and the language that God chose to communicate divine truth to the human family. For example, most Roman Catholics see Adam as simply “man,” not as the very first human being God created; yet Jesus and the New Testament confirm that Adam was the first human being created by God (cf. Lk 3:38; Jude 1:14; 1 Tim 2:13-14; Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22, 45; Mt 19:4-6). In addition to the foregoing, Pope Francis seems to believe in “liberation theology,” a theology of human origin, rather than divine origin, which is very popular in South America where he was born (Argentina). Let’s take a moment and look at the storied history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Since Catholics view the head of the Roman Catholic Church as “the successor of Peter and the vicar of Christ,” and refer to him as “pope” (which is a derivative of the Greek word “pappa,” in ancient Greece it was an endearing term for “father”). For Catholics the papacy represents an office divinely instituted by Christ, and therefore something to be revered and obeyed as a part of Christian faith and duty... but the papal role has significantly varied over the years; throughout the early Middle Ages (600-1050) papal claims remained lofty and papal power diminished greatly. In the middle of the eighth century the papacy broke with the Eastern Roman Emperor – remember, in the fourth century the center of the Roman Empire shifted from Rome to Constantinople (present day Turkey) under Constantine the Great (after whom the city was named) – it was Constantine who made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire; being as the western world was divided into two sectors (the Latin West and the Greek East), over the next two centuries numerous heresies began to divide the church; as such the bishop of Constantinople began to compete with the bishop of Rome for the primacy of the Christian Church – the Greek East considered itself equal to the Latin West. As more Germanic influence penetrated Rome, and since paganism still dominated much of Roman life, the Eastern church felt less and less loyal to the authority of the Roman papacy; thus the Latin West aligned itself with Western royal powers – ultimately this burdened them with political responsibilities and severely damaged their spiritual mission. It has never been the church’s responsibility to govern the world; it is her responsibility to inspire the world with the good news of Jesus Christ; once we get out of our domain, we are going to lose our effectiveness. The papacy in Rome emerged during

the High Middle Ages (1050-1500) as the real leader of Western Christendom — during this time, the Church at Rome adopted a new title as head of the church: that of “vicar (placeholder) of Christ.” With the advance of Islam during the 12th and 13th centuries, the Greek East began to lose influence, and the Latin West began to take center stage... seven major crusades (and numerous minor ones) were launched during this period by Roman papal authority for religious reasons. Remember the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire after the fall of Rome in 476; though the Dark Ages that followed in Western Europe saw numerous barbarians fill the gap, it wasn't long until the Catholic Church came to power over the Western world; the creation of the Holy Roman Empire showed how much vitality was left in the imperial ideal; that was how significant the Roman Catholic Church became in the European world — it started ruling; though the crusades did not destroy the enemy, it did quell much of its advancement. The papacy in Rome had once again become the most influential element in the Christian world. It was also at this time that the Church of Rome established something known as “Inquisitions” for the purpose of investigating and suppressing heresies; in the Middle Ages the growing threat of heretical groups led to the acceptance by the church of the use of secular authority, physical penalties, and an inquisitorial method as the means for suppressing the guilty. Essentially the church dispatched Dominican friars to conduct inquests... the verdict and sentence of the inquisitor was enforced by local rulers; so heresy was not only considered a spiritual offense but a civil one as well — burning at the stake was thought to be the fitting punishment for unrecanted heresy; obviously lesser punishments were far more common — be it penance, fine, confiscation of property by the civil ruler (who might turn over part of it to the church) and imprisonment. “Torture” of the accused became customary and notorious, despite the long-standing papal condemnation of torture by Nicholas I.

In the early modern period the Roman Inquisition, established by Paul III in 1542, was used to combat witchcraft and the Protestant Reformation. However, the early modern papacy (1517-1789) was not successful in doing so and began with a staggering defeat — Protestant reformers were persuaded that the papacy had corrupted the gospel beyond all hope of reform; thus they revolted (that's why it is called the Protest). The leadership of the Catholic Church then made decrees on papal primacy and infallibility at Vatican Council I (1869-1870); as if that made them the ultimate authority on Christian doctrine. It was not until Pope Pius XII took the throne (1939-1958) that he used the papacy's infallible authority for the first time to define the bodily assumption of Mary as Catholic dogma (hence that doctrine is a fairly recent one). Vatican Council II back in the 1960s brought about some very significant reforms; thus Protestants were very pleased to see a return to Scripture in the papacy's conception of the church's mission and the priest's office, together with a far greater openness toward other Christian churches — they no longer declared themselves to be the monopolizing influence of the Christian Church. Though popes have been careful to distinguish between fallible from infallible statements, and have in fact made only one of the latter (their Petrine authority; i.e., a characteristic of the Apostle Peter and his teachings), their frequent modern pronouncements

did tend to generate new laws and obscure the freedom of Christ. The truth is, Roman Catholics have never uniformly revered the papacy to the degree that most Protestants believe. The so-called Old Catholics split away after the infallibility decree, and a small conservative group has denounced the changes wrought by Vatican Council II... but in the last generation some theologians have openly questioned the church's doctrine of *infallibility*, and many Catholics have rejected the stand on *contraception* enunciated in Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* (1968). However, since Vatican Council II, evangelical Christians have come better to understand and appreciate the pope as a spokesman for Christ's church, yet most Protestants still consider the notions of "*a primatial Petrine office*," instituted by Christ and conferred upon the bishops of Rome, to be scripturally and historically unfounded (cf. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Baker Academic, 2001, pp. 888-891).

Let's return to Pope Francis and this thing called "*Liberation Theology*;" essentially what liberation theology does is make a *political value* (such as the liberation of the poor) the supreme construct of one's faith; not Christ. That doesn't mean the issue is corrupt or lacking in virtue; but it is not the "*supreme value*" of the Christian faith. Pope Francis is viewed by many as the "*Pope of mercy*," the "*Pope of the poor*," and the "*Third World Pope*;" his premiere mandate is to society's most underprivileged and disenfranchised; though caring for the poor has characterized the Christian world since the first century, that is not the foundation of our faith; in other words, we don't make something other than Christ the *premiere object* of our faith, nor do we attach Christ to some precept we may value and make Him its chief object. When one makes a *secondary issue* the *primary issue*, he is distorting reality; *i.e.*, he is putting the cart before the horse — in such cases, good becomes the enemy of best. That is precisely what black liberation theology is also doing — they know what they *want*, and that is by far the most significant element of their faith (not the Christ of Scripture, but *their own liberation*), contrary to what any of them may say; there is no hiding this fact.

In addition to the preceding, Pope Francis is the first Pope to take the name "*Francis*;" thus evoking images of the iconic 12th and 13th century *St. Francis of Assisi* (a priest who renounced his worldly possessions, embraced apostolic poverty, and founded the Franciscan Order); St. Francis' heart for the impoverished made a significant impact upon Pope Francis. With that in mind, Pope Francis is very outspoken *against capitalism*, as if that is the root of the problem of the poor in our world; in that sense he differs very little from Marxism (that will make more sense to you in the next section of this study). Furthermore, capitalism has effected our world for good more than any other economic structure; not that it is perfect, but there is nothing close to its effectiveness. Five years ago in 2013, Pope Francis delivered "*Evangelii Gaudium*" ("*The Joy of Gospel*"), a 50,000 word statement that attacked capitalism while calling for church reform; he cautioned against the "*idolatry of money*" — it was precisely because Trump is a wealthy capitalist that he came out against him during the election; all the while supporting the diabolical left! Though *politics* is of great importance in our world, it is not to be the supreme issue of life; again, here is a guy who passed judgment on someone simply because he has

significant wealth, in spite of the fact that he knows nothing of the man himself — so here he was supporting an unbelieving leftist who hates Christians (how's that for an oxymoron?), just because of his own disdain for the wealthy in this world. Regarding the issue of "capitalism" — essentially it is an economic system characterized by private ownership of property, as well as the means of production, and the motive of profit; by the way, private ownership of property dates back to ancient Israel when God allocated specific property to each tribe prior to entering the Promised Land (cf. Josh 13-19) — obviously God knew the importance of ownership for fallen man. In contradistinction to capitalism, "socialism" is the government's attempt to regulate a nation's economy... along with "communism" it has proven itself to be far less productive than capitalism. Why is that? Because the profit motive and personal motivation is significantly lacking. God's ways aren't without merit. By the way, it is at this point where "the role of taxes" comes into the equation; will such be implemented with integrity or stupidity? *i.e.*, will they end up being a genuine positive or simply cause more problems? (the truth is, theft is a major problem in many governmental bureaucracies... greedy hands always find a way to grab some of the money; in some countries it is downright disastrous. I always find it interesting that most people enter into politics without much money, but they end up pretty rich once they retire (do the math). With that in mind, the ramification of taxes needs to be carefully examined — it is not a matter of just recklessly using the money. The question is, is its allocation really helping or is it hurting? Is genuine need being met, or is it getting into the hands of the undeserving? *i.e.*, does integrity rule or does stupidity rule?

It is also important to note that Jesus and the apostles didn't make "fighting the Roman Empire" the premiere issue of the Christian faith; in spite of the fact that it was horrifically ugly. They didn't even make "fighting slavery" the premiere issue of the Christian faith (cf. Eph 6:5-6; Col 3:22-23; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10); incidentally, if that particular statement bothers you a little bit, let me encourage you to read a study I did on it titled, "Enslaved to Christ;" you can find it on my website (that is a very provocative study, that will open your eyes to some incredible reality). Life is not about creating a better world or making it into a little utopia... yet that is precisely what liberation theology is all about; it makes a significant "earthly value" the most important issue to them; regrettably, it does so by "associating Jesus Christ with that issue" (which is sheer heresy). The premiere issue of the Christian faith is "the sinfulness of man and the righteousness of God" — "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (not just the rich and the powerful, but the poor and the weak as well), "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (cf. Rom 3:23; 6:23) — every human being desperately needs God's love and grace; none of us are righteous creatures who merit God's kindness. There have been numerous popes down through the ages who have not been men of faith; the political world governed their thinking — many popes in the church of Rome actually murdered true born-again Christians. The predecessor of Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II, was a humble man of the faith who shared the good news of Christ with the world. Just when it appeared as though Roman Catholicism was on the verge of making some significant advances spiritually, along came a man who was far more humanistic and secular in his thinking. No matter

how sweet and nice a person might appear to be, ultimately the issue is whether or not he embraces *divine truth*. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: “**Broad is the way that leads to destruction... Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Beware of the false prophets**” (cf. Mt 7:13-15; Prv 16:25). Unless one humbles himself before God and acknowledges the waywardness of his soul, he will never experience the new-birth; many religious leaders in our world are *proud men* who have not humbled themselves before God (thus their message is false (*i.e.*, not what it should be); above everything, they want to be *liked by the world* (cf. 1 Tim 4:1-2; 1 Th 2:3-4; Jam 3:15; Jude 1:18-19) — hopefully that does not define Pope Francis; the problem is, he is not being vocal about the foundations of the Christian faith, and that is what is troubling. Due to the ignorance that exists on the issue of “*Liberation Theology*,” I expand upon it in more depth in a side study on the next page —

The Issue of “Liberation Theology”

The idea behind Liberation Theology is that of “*being set free from some negative in this world*,” be it oppression, economic exploitation, or some other societal issue. Obviously, we all have “*wants*” in life — some of us have “*desperate wants*” — but that doesn’t mean our wants are going to be met simply because we make God our deliverer. According to Scripture, Jesus Christ has “*set us free from the law of sin and death*” (Rom 8:2); *i.e.*, as Christians we are no longer subject to the law of sin and death — “*death*” is no longer our eternal destiny because we sin; “*eternal life*” is now our destiny! (Jn 8:36). Remember, “*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom 6:23). Liberation Theology is a theology of God that makes deliverance from some societal matter the foundation of one’s faith... it attempts to *unite theology and sociopolitical concerns*. This theology of liberation developed in Latin America in the twentieth century — it was primarily a movement that took place in the Roman Catholic Church; though it did not gain papal acceptance early on, it seems to have positively impacted Pope Francis to some degree (remember, he was raised in Argentina). Years ago, a number of Latin American leaders within the Roman Catholic Church turned to Liberation Theology as the theological voice for the Latin American Church; principally, *it was to set poor people free from economic exploitation*. Basically, it appealed to Israel’s liberation from Egypt in the exodus as its prototype... believing that God is not indifferent to the evils of our world. In so doing, *they have made Jesus the zenith of the evolutionary process, because of His compassion for the poor and the oppressed*. It is interesting to note how the minds of men “*reinterpret Scripture*” to make it say what they want it to say; they grab hold of a construct and make it the centrality of their faith. It is not as though the issue is an evil one, but it does not coincide with what Scripture teaches. Again, we all have “*wants*” in this world that we desperately want to see met, but that may not be God’s plan for yours and my life — this life is not about creating a pleasant little utopia on earth, where we are able to remove all of the “*negatives*” in life... it is about living for Christ in the midst of tribulation and suffering (Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Cor 4:7ff; 6:4ff; Eph 6:5-9; Jam 1:2-3; 1 Pet 4:1, 12). We don’t have the option of politicizing the gospel. The reality is, *God is able to give peace and contentment to us regardless of our lot in life* (Phil 4:4-13).

Said Jesus to His disciples, *“If you were of the world, the world would love you; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hates you”* (cf. Jn 15:19). David Wilkerson said his own life was greatly influence by the writings of **George Bowen**, a Presbyterian missionary who labored in India from 1838 to 1879. Bowen had given up all of his missionary support to move into a slum and live as the natives there did. He led a very frugal existence in near poverty; in so doing, he left behind a testimony of the true power of living in Christ. Bowen warned the world of a coming antichrist spirit; he identified this antichrist spirit as being *“the spirit of modern society.”* He said this antichrist spirit would infiltrate the Protestant church with the mindset, methods, and morals of the larger society. The antichrist spirit would continue its influence until society and the church could not be differentiated; that over time the world would lose its hatred for Christ’s church and true believers, that it would stop its persecution, and the church would be loved and accepted by the world. Once that happens, Bowen wrote, this antichrist spirit will have taken the throne. That is precisely what happened in the liberal mainline churches in our world — they abandoned the truth of Scripture for the acceptance and ways of the world. Said Jesus to His disciples, *“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market place”* (cf. Lk 20:46) — proud men love to be admired by others; sadly, many pastors suffer from this malady and need the affection and praise of others — if there is something many of them fail to do, it is teach the fullness of the truth; they simply aren’t comfortable doing that because they are not in full agreement with it. Be cautious of church leaders who want the approval of society; they won’t preach the fullness of the truth — *humility* is foundational to an effective, fruitful relationship with Christ (cf. Ps 25:9; Is 66:2; Mic 6:8; Mt 23:12; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5-6).

States Wilkerson, *“The closer we get to the mission of Christ (i.e., to preaching the gospel that He has ordained), the more we will be hated and despised by the world.”* We will find *enemies* everywhere — people will oppose us on our job, in our neighborhood, even in some churches — because we are fulfilling Christ’s mission. Said Jesus, *“Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets”* (cf. Lk 6:26). As Jesus said, *“the church is going to be hated and persecuted by the world”* — the church will be hated by ungodly politicians and the ungodly leaders of society... in addition to that, it will also be despised by homosexuals, pornographers, and most of all by the secular religious leaders who are spiritually dead. Yet Jesus tells the church: *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”* (cf. Mt 5:10-12).

Why does the world hate people who obey God’s Word and are truly loving, peaceful, forgiving, caring, and self-sacrificing? Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you... if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (cf. Jn 15:18-20). Why is that? Because “the diabolical world hates the church’s mission.” Simply put, our mission as Christians is to take back from the ungodly what is most precious to them: “their self-righteousness.” And it is to separate them from their damning sins; a so-called blessing the unbelieving world perceives as being restrictive, enslaving, boring, and dissatisfying. The most precious thing to any worldly person is his self-righteousness — think about it... he has spent his whole life forming a good opinion of himself; he has built an idol to his good works; he praises himself that he is really good at heart and kind to others; and he is sure that he is good enough for heaven and way too good for hell. This ungodly man has spent his entire life shutting down the voice of his conscience, and has taught himself to still every voice of conviction that comes to him... and now is somewhat satisfied and enjoys a false peace — he has become so deceived, he actually believes God admires him! And now “divine truth” is presented to him by a believer, and it speaks more loudly than his dead conscience — “Unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven” (cf. Jn 3:3, 16, 36). It’s at this point, where the believer becomes a threat to this man’s mind — the believer wants to deprive him of his assurance that all is well with his soul... up until this time, he thought he was okay; Satan had deceived him (cf. Gen 3:3; Is 44:20; Mk 4:14-15; 2 Cor 11:3, 14; Col 2:8; Titus 3:3; Heb 3:13; 1 Jn 1:8; 2:18; 2 Jn 1:7; Rev 12:9). But now he’s being told that his good works are like a filthy garment (cf. Is 64:6; Rom 3:10-18), so he doesn’t see you as someone bringing good news to him... in his eyes, you’re a tormenter who is out to rob him of his peace. Now should we dilute the gospel by bringing the world into the church (that is what mainstream liberal churches have done), we will not offend them with the truth... instead we will make ourselves “friends to the world” — to which James warns us, “Friendship with the world is hostility toward God” (cf. Jam 4:4). Let’s give definition to this thing called “liberal theology” — in a word, it is the desire to adapt religious ideas to modern culture and modes of thinking. Because liberals insist that the world has changed since the time of Christ, the biblical terminology used back then is incomprehensible to the modern day mind. In addition to that liberals maintain that “all beliefs must pass the tests of reason and experience, and one must be open to new facts and truth regardless of where these may originate.” No questions are closed or settled, and religion must not protect itself from critical examination. Just as the Bible is the work of human beings who were limited by their times in antiquity, it is neither supernatural nor an infallible record of divine revelation; thus it does not possess absolute authority. Back to the issue we were covering — it is one thing to be in the world and associate with people in need of Christ, it is quite another to be in the world and let its worldliness wrongly influence us. As the theology professor Eugene Peterson said in his book “The Message” — “When we flirt with the world, we will end up being enemies of God and His way.” By the way, James goes on to say, “God jealously desires His Spirit to dwell in us and control us” (cf. Jam 4:5).

Sadly, millions of people in our churches actually think they are in God's good graces simply because they show up at church — they see that as “*identifying with Christ*,” yet they have created their own concept of who Christ is (this is precisely what the ancient Jewish world did — they created their own concept of God; as such, the vast majority of people in ancient Israel did not truly believe in the God of the Bible; they were not truly a people of faith); thus the Lord brought *great judgment* upon the nation of Israel over and over again. In like manner, many professing Christians have adopted a god of their own making... and rather than being in God's favor, they will also be under God's wrath, should they continue in their own way. God has placed *moral conviction* in the hearts of men — but they revise it and rework it and emend it until those things are more *acceptable* to them (that is precisely how liberal theology works in our world; they emend Scripture until it corresponds with their humanistic thinking). Every culture establishes *arbitrary levels of morality* that they believe serve their higher purpose; as such, people are acceptable to them... by satisfying themselves and the masses with “*cultural norms*,” they feel good about themselves. So here we come preaching the blood of Christ, a new birth, separation from the world, and a life of submission and obedience... yet we are saying this to people who are convinced “*they are in need of nothing*;” furthermore, they can't conceive how such changes could possibly bring them peace and happiness — too them, it doesn't coincide at all with reality; that we are simply far too radical in our thinking. As David Wilkerson says, “*No suave, soft-spoken, half-truth gospel is going to break down the walls of their wickedness... it is our responsibility as ministers of the gospel of Christ to convince men and women of their sin... and warn them of the danger that awaits them if they continue in their ways*.” Though we are to preach the mercy, grace, and love of Christ, we must declare their need of *cleansing & redemption*; common man rebels against the message that he is a sinner. The truth is, *millions of so-called believers* in our country (*i.e.*, professing Christians, but not true born-again Christians) are far more *hardened* than the drug addicts, alcoholics, and prostitutes that are out on the streets (cf. Lk 14:16, 18, 21, 23) — as such, those on the street are far easier to reach with the gospel than the hardened self-righteous person. The problem with the world is *its unwillingness to surrender to the lordship of Christ*; in short, *worldliness includes those who co-mingle Christ and their own self-will (that's liberal theology)*; such people are not under any spiritual authority; they have been *disillusioned* and simply live by their own standards (pretty much all levels of moderate human behavior is acceptable to them).

People need to understand that their self-will and self-reliance and stubborn insistence on doing everything their way will ultimately *destroy them*. Therefore we must bring people face to face with the message of being *crucified to their own independence*, and bring them out of their deluded world of “*self-goodness*.” In order to bring even *more substance* to this reality, imagine telling someone's young daughter that she is sinful and is going to hell — how do you think the girl's father would respond to you if he knew what you had told her (knowing that his family had its own religious values, and that she was highly esteemed by her family)? Obviously, he wouldn't respond very kindly— that particular scenario is a difficult one to imagine, but it does open the door to understand the

“anger” that can develop in someone’s mind when they feel they have been violated. In the same way, when you tell someone who “thinks he is a genuinely good person,” that he is a sinner and in need of salvation, it can be a rather violent attack on him if he feels strongly convinced of something to the contrary. Obviously “relative goodness” does exist in our world; when people compare themselves with others, many see themselves as being “good” (their parents may have told them they are “wonderful,” and that they are “very proud” of them; so this relative goodness may be strongly implanted in their mind). But the goodness that God demands is “absolute goodness” – and no man possesses that (cf. Lk 18:19; Rom 3:12; 7:18). When we attack the internal character of another person’s soul, it can result in a very ugly response – we see this being demonstrated by the diabolical left over and over again... when Christians speak in some public forums (*i.e.*, colleges, universities and the like), the liberal element becomes very loud and angry and insists that Christians not be permitted to speak... the reason being, they absolutely despise Christian thinking, because it is an attack on their values, and they are not about to abandon those values – the reality is, “religion is a curse to the unbelieving world, so the narrow-mindedness of Christianity is absolutely disgusting to them;” when in fact, they are the one’s who are narrow-minded. The apostle Paul says, “We are to be lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation” (Phil 2:15). I expand on the concept of “hate,” because many in the Christian world don’t see how people can hate the truth that much – after all, it is one thing to disagree with someone else’s thinking, but quite another to go ballistic over another person’s thinking... but that is precisely how the “godless world” responds; the ungodly and the unrighteous “hate God’s message!” As Jesus said, “Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil” (Jn 3:19). Conversely, says John, “When the light shines in the darkness, the darkness does not comprehend it” (Jn 1:5). Since that is the case, you need to be mindful that not everyone is going to “kindly respond to you” when you share the truth with them. Now should a person get angry with you, “simply shake the dust off your feet and move on” (Mt 10:14); don’t just continue to aggravate the person and make him more angry. It’s important to note, if we fail to bring the whole message to people, in effect, we will be misleading and deceiving them. With all of the foregoing in mind, remember the words of Jesus – “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?” (Lk 14:27-28). The cross the believer must bear is reproach, suffering, self-renunciation and persecution; that’s the cost of true discipleship, and that’s the price Jesus paid. As believers, Jesus urges us to “prayerfully consider the cost,” and see if we are really ready to whole-heartedly abandon our lives to Christ... if we don’t, we will ultimately fizzle out.

WHY COMMUNISTS HATE CHRISTIANITY

Karl Marx (1818-1883), the renowned German social philosopher and chief theorist of modern socialism and communism, and co-author of the famous “Communist Manifesto”

with Friedrich Engels, stated in “*Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*” — “*Religion is the **sigh** of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the **opium** of the people.*” Marx believed the abolition of religion as the *illusory happiness* of the people is the demand for their real happiness... as such, he believed “*Communism begins from the outset with **atheism**.*” Keep in mind, human, secular thinking had already been making its way through the entire western world, and that religion was already becoming subordinate to human reason. Karl Marx must have concluded that “*religion*” was too prominent in the minds of people, that it was the controlling influence in people — thus it was the root cause of societal problems; therefore it needed to be eradicated from society. Once again, *circular reasoning* determined the ultimate direction Communism would go. Furthermore, for Communism to truly be effective, “*everybody must be totally subordinate to and supporters of the state*” (which is completely unrealistic; as history has shown, many will *pretend* to be ardent supporters, but deep down that does not at all define who they are). **Vladimir Lenin** (1870-1924), the Russian revolutionary and the founder of Bolshevism and the major force behind the Soviet Revolution in 1917 said, “*A Marxist must be a materialist; that is, an enemy of religion*” (i.e., this physical world must be of supreme importance to the person; not an invisible spiritual world). **Vitalij Ginzburg**, a Soviet physicist, said that “*Bolshevik communists were not merely atheists, but militant atheists;*” in other words, there is nothing the Bolsheviks won’t do to eradicate religion. In 1955, the Chinese Communist leader **Zhou Enlai** declared, “*We Communists are atheists.*” In 2014, the Communist Party of China reaffirmed that members of their party *must be atheists*... they were letting their members know that the party’s official adherence to *militant atheism* had not changed; that party members are not allowed to be Christians or hold any other religious belief. With that in mind, that’s why there is growing persecution of Christians today by the Chinese government. The persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union was the result of the atheistic government; in the first five years after the Revolution in 1917, 28 bishops and 1,200 priests were murdered; many on the order of **Leon Trotsky**. When **Joseph Stalin** came to power in 1927, he ordered his secret police to intensify the persecution of Christians — following his order, 50,000 clergy were murdered in the next five years; many were tortured, including crucifixion. Said **Father Gleb Yakunin** of the Russian Orthodox Church, “*Russia turned red with the blood of martyrs.*” According to Orthodox Church sources, as many as 50,000,000 Russian Orthodox believers may have died in the twentieth century from Communist persecution. **Dr. R. J. Rummel**, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Hawaii, has estimated that worldwide communism caused the death of 110,286,000 people between 1917 and 1987. The incredible numbers that have been mentioned above ought to awaken you to the *perverse nature of man* — he is of his father “*the devil*” (Jn 8:44); don’t make light of it. In addition to the foregoing, 44 anti-religious museums were opened in the atheistic Communist Soviet Union, and the largest was the “*Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism.*” Yet in spite of all of their efforts to destroy religion, their efforts were not effective in converting the masses to atheism — more than one-third of all the people in Russia today still possess *religious beliefs*. Though the role of religion in the lives of

Soviet citizens varies greatly, two-thirds of the population is irreligious, and of that number, a little over half of them profess atheism (*i.e.*, about 35% of the Soviet world), though not ardently.

As Mikhail Gorbachev aptly stated, “The Soviet communist state carried out a comprehensive war on religion.” He lamented that the Bolsheviks (his predecessors) even after the civil war ended in the early 1920s, during a time of peace, had continued to tear down churches, arrest clergymen, and kill them — “this was no longer understandable or justifiable... atheism took rather savage forms in our country at that time.” The Soviet state had taken the position that “there is no God” — this continues in various forms in communist countries today, from China to North Korea to Cuba. The roots of this hatred and intolerance of religion lies in the essence of communist ideology. Stated Lenin, “There can be nothing more abominable than religion” — thus along with Trotsky, Lenin was involved in the creation of groups with names like the Society of the Godless, and the League of Militant Godless. This institutionalized bigotry continued to thrive under Lenin’s disciples, most notably Stalin and Nikita Krushchev. Whether the despot was Fidel Castro, Pol Pot, Stalin, or Mao Tse-Tung, the sentiment was the same: “Religion is poison.” Moscow was the source and summit for much of this effort; repression took place in varying degrees throughout much of Eastern Europe; anti-religious indoctrination of school children was especially rigorous in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s, and the most religiously repressive nations in the communist empire then was Romania. Communist states published and widely disseminated “counter-Christian literature.”

Richard Wurmbrand, a pastor who endured 14 years of earthly hell in a Romanian prison, later detailed some of the cruelty he witnessed in testimony before the U. S. Congress — he testified to the fact that thousands of believers were imprisoned (not only clergy but peasants & children); that the prisons were completely full in Romania. Many of those imprisoned were tortured with red-hot iron pokers and knives... one man’s son was brought into the prison and whipped before him in an attempt to have him recant; ultimately the child was beaten to death and his blood spattered over the walls of his father’s cell. Wurmbrand recalled story after story about the torture he witnessed. He himself had 18 holes burned into his body; many people’s bodies would be frozen, and within minutes of death would be unfrozen... and then refrozen again — this process was repeated over & over again. Stated Wurmbrand, “What the communists have done to Christians surpasses human understanding.” In 1966, Wurmbrand gave testimony before the Internal Security Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate, where he described crucifixion at the hands of communists. Christians were tied to crosses for four days and nights, with the goal of making Christians suffer greater humiliation than Christ did. After being driven nearly insane with tortures, a priest was forced to consecrate human excrement and urine and give Holy Communion to Christians in this form. Said Wurmbrand, “My heart would fail if I should tell all of these stories again; they are also too terrible and obscene to put in writing. If I were to tell all of horrors of communist tortures and all the self-sacrifices of Christians, I would never finish.” The fact that

the communist state devoted so much time and effort shows its remarkable devotion to the goal of eliminating religious faith... it also reflected the communist conviction that religion truly was an incompatible threat to Marxism-Leninism. Ultimately this vicious persecution backfired — for every Richard Wurmbrand and others, it also produced an Albanian named *Mother Teresa* (who prayed for their souls), *Karol Wojtyla* (Pope John Paul II), who worked with the likes of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Lech Walesa, and Vaclav Havel (among others), to seek the peaceful collapse of their atheistic empire. Sadly today, Pope Francis is the antithesis of Pope John Paul II.

Why does this information matter to us now that the Cold War is over and the Soviet communist empire is no more? At a human level, it is very important to those who suffered the persecution — many are still alive and want this tale told; they want the world to know what they endured, that history for history's sake needs to be set straight and not repeated. Regrettably, the diabolical left could care less about what transpired in our world during the 20th century... today's Cold War scholars have *very little knowledge* of the crucial role of religion in the Cold War experience; they do not even appreciate how the institutionalized atheism of the Soviet Union helped fuel America's bipartisan opposition to Moscow in the early Cold War. Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, John Foster Dulles and Ronald Reagan all decried the scourge of "*godless Soviet communism*," as did many others. Religiously speaking, the eventual effort to undo atheistic communism was a bipartisan effort of American Protestants and Catholics. Tragically, much of this information remains *unknown* to not only the public at large but also to the scholarly community. *To be sure, there are academics who are aware of this information, but are dismissing it as paranoid curiosity of the "Christian right,"* whom they view with absolute contempt — remember the diabolical godless element in our society "*hates God.*" If you are of the mindset that this is just a bunch of political rhetoric, stop reading this. Harvard Professor Emeritus of Russian History *Richard Pipes* states, "*It is quite true that the subject has received little to virtually no attention from scholars.*" The truth is, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists were all tortured by the communist world... and many of them are bitter and frustrated that this vast web of brutal bigotry *has never been fully exposed.* High-school history texts are rich with accounts of the *Crusades*, but *completely silent* on the infinitely more repressive *Communist War on religion.* It doesn't take a genius to figure out why that is the case — again, *the liberal diabolical left in our country hates God!* Just to keep you posted, in 2004 the atheistic, Communist government of *China* had an internal document which directed the Chinese media to "*promote atheism*," and instructed internet media to remove user comments that advocate alternative spiritual views, and called for a ban on publications that disseminate religious material out of step with Marxism or Atheism; in spite of this action, the number of Christians today in China is explosively growing (obviously when God moves in the hearts of people, no one can stop Him). China's state sponsored atheism has been a failure — a 2007 religious survey in China indicated that only 15% of Chinese identified themselves as atheists. *North Korea* is officially a repressive Communist atheist state where public religion is not only discouraged but persecuted — the North

Korean government under Kim Il-sung practices brutal repression & atrocities against Christians and all open religious activity.

The distinguished black professor of Economics at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, Walter E. Williams, has been the recipient of numerous awards, and the author of several articles in the Wall Street Journal, American Economic Review, Newsweek, and Social Science Quarterly... and has spoken on numerous TV and Radio shows — including “Face the Nation,” “Nightline,” “Cross-fire,” William F. Buckley’s “Firing Line,” and Milton Friedman’s “Free to Choose.” Williams has been an outspoken voice on the corruptness of the twisted diabolical elements in our culture. In an article he wrote on “Fascism and Communism,” he begins it by saying, “the 20th century was mankind’s most brutal century” — 16 million people lost their lives during World War I... 60 million died during World War II... that all of the wars during the 20th century cost upwards of 116 million lives (<http://tinyurl.com/ya62mrqa>). He goes on to say that the number of war dead pales in comparison with the number of people who lost their lives at the hands of “their own governments” — the late professor Rudolph J. Rummel of the University of Hawaii documented this tragedy in his book, “Death by Government: Genocide & Mass Murder since 1900.” The People’s Republic of China tops the list, with 76 million lives lost at the hands of the government from 1949 to 1987. The Soviet Union follows with 62 million lives lost from 1917 to 1987. Adolf Hitler’s Nazi German government killed 21 million people in twelve years between 1933 and 1945. Then there are a number of lesser regimes that have slain millions of others. According to Rummel’s research, the 20th century saw 262 million people’s lives lost at the hands of their own governments (<http://tinyurl.com/lu8z8ab>). Though Hitler’s atrocities are widely recognized and condemned, with thousands receiving the sentence of execution because of their involvement... why have the greatest murderers in mankind’s history been ignored? *i.e.*, the Soviet Union’s Josef Stalin and China’s Ma Zedong? Incredible as it may seem, some “leftists” saw these communists as “heroes” — The American Educator and Writer, W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963), stated in the National Guardian in 1953, that “Stalin was a great man; few other men of the 20th century approach his stature.... The highest proof of his greatness was that he knew the common man, felt his problems, followed his fate.” The British born American Journalist, Walter Duranty (1884-1957), who served as the “Moscow Bureau Chief” of the New York Times for 14 years following the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War (1918-1921), called Stalin “the greatest living statesman” and “a quiet, unobtrusive man” — though Duranty received a “Pulitzer Prize” for a series of reports he wrote on the Soviet Union, it was later determined that he distorted some of what he had written; at that point many sought to take the Pulitzer Prize away from him. There was even leftist admiration for Adolf Hitler and fellow fascist Benito Mussolini. When Hitler came to power in January, 1933, the British author George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) described him as “a very remarkable man.” And then there are the words of President Franklin Roosevelt, who called the fascist Mussolini, “admirable.” In 1972, Michel Oksenberg, President Jimmy Carter’s expert on China complained, “America is doomed to decay until radical, even revolutionary, change fundamentally alters the

institutions and values.” He urged the U.S. to borrow ideas and solutions from China. Harvard University professor **John K. Fairbank** believed that America could learn much from China’s Cultural Revolution: “*American’s may find in China’s collective life today an ingredient of personal moral concern for one’s neighbor that has a lesson for us all;*” it should be noted, an estimated 2 million people died during China’s Cultural Revolution.

It is actually surprising at how “*shallow*” the thinking is of many of our world’s esteemed leaders... we put our trust in them and want to respect them, yet many of them are seriously lacking in *integrity of thought* (i.e., there is very little depth to their thinking). Because many people travel down one avenue of thought, all they do is look for reasons to justify their thinking; never do they give serious consideration to issues that run contrary to what they want to believe (that’s precisely why the diabolical left is *atheistic* in its understanding; they simply refuse to *consider* anything that does not coincide with their innate bias). The renowned twentieth century atheist at Cornell University, **Carl Sagan**, used to arrogantly proclaim on his national television program, “*There is no God!*” His argument went something like this: “*How can anyone believe in a Creator when everything has always existed? that is really stupid! If what ‘is’ has always been, then it was not created! Why some people can’t think beyond their nose is absolute lunacy!*” By the way, it was only a few years later when science discovered that the universe has only existed for 13.8 billion years; thus it has not always been! It was at this point where the world of science introduced “*the Big Bang Theory*” — that somehow everything exploded into existence 13.8 billion years ago (what they admittedly don’t know is “*how*” it occurred). It should be noted, Carl Sagan now awaits the execution of his eternal sentence... he now knows how absolutely stupid and idiotic his judgments were (cf. Rom 1:18-32). Remember, “*there is enough information out there in the world to satisfy one’s ignorance on any subject*” (be it religion, politics, racism, philosophy, etc.); the problem is the *innate bias* of the individual — few people have the integrity to let reality speak its full message (their emotions quickly grab hold of their mind and dictate reality to them, so they close the door on anything to the contrary). In addition to the foregoing quotes, more recent praise for some of the murdering tyrants of the 20th century came from **Anita Dunn**, President Barack Obama’s acting communications director in 2009, who said, “Two of my favorite political philosophers are *Mao Zedong* and *Mother Teresa*.” As incredible as it may seem to some of you, leftist ideological thinking was the driving force behind the words of many of those that are listed; they were simply expressing confidence in the values of fallen man, and their disdain for Christians; the God of Scripture played no part at all in their lives; their god was simply “*a god of their own making*.” In addition to those listed above, there were the campus demonstrations back in the 1960s (during my heyday), in which campus radicals, often accompanied by their professors, marched around *singing the praises of Mao & waving Mao’s Little Red Book*, which probably explains some of the campus mess today; some of those campus radicals are now tenured professors and administrators at many of our nation’s universities and colleges. The fact that Christian thinking is “*hated*” by the diabolical left shouldn’t come as a surprise to any of you; that is simply reality. Do any of you really think that Satan is

asleep in our world? How can you possibly think that after all Satan went through to destroy God (*i.e.*, Jesus Christ)? The diabolical left is the most significant voice of Satan in our world today.

I find it amazing at how “*humanistic thinking*” can cause one to embrace an ideological construct like “*communism*,” without understanding the “*structures and the ideals*” that need to be in place if their goals are to be met; the reality is, they must reason that the “*structures*” really aren’t that big a deal, that what is of ultimate importance is “*their human dream*” — it is like believing that you will *be rich* if you desire to be rich... that you will *be happy* if you desire to be happy... that you will *be successful* if you desire to be successful. Due to the fact that it is nothing but a dream (nonsensical reasoning and wishful thinking), it is not significantly concerned with having all of the structures in place that are needed to accomplish those goals/dreams; those structures were simply of secondary importance to the communistic world. With that in mind, the communist had no idea as to how this thing called “*Communism*” could be positively effectuated in our world; they simply believed that being sold out to it was sufficient. They didn’t understand the necessity of the structures that needed to be in place back then, and many still don’t understand the necessity of them today (I expand upon those structures in the following paragraph). As incredible as it may seem to some of you, this is precisely how the “*anti-Christ*” is going to function in our world at the end of the age; what matters to him is simply being in the driver’s seat and running the show (exerting absolute authority)... but little does he know, his efforts are going to be a miserable failure, and God is going to “*completely destroy Him*.” The reality is, fallen man and the demonic world are “*diabolical fools*” — they are so stupid, they actually think they are smart; God calls such people “*FOOLS!*” (cf. Ps 14:1; Prv 1:7; 14:8-9; 18:2; Rom 1:22; 1 Cor 3:19). Fallen man and the demonic world do not have the capacity to turn this planet into a wonderful little utopia... yet most of them are absolutely convinced that they know what they are talking about and that they have the wherewithal to accomplish it. If man simply understood how *inherently corrupt, deficient, & delusional he is*, he would turn from his wicked ways (*i.e.*, stop removing God from the equation) and submit to his Creator... or would he?... man’s complete unwillingness to deny his autonomy is extremely profound.

So why are leftists soft on communism and hard on capitalism? Remember, Communism was a movement that aimed to overthrow the capitalist order by revolutionary means and to establish a classless society in which all goods and property are socially owned. Because some excel in the capitalistic order, and some do not, the Communist blames the one who succeeds for the economic deficiencies that exist in society — rather than getting everyone into the workforce, they simply blame the successful one’s for causing the problem. The goal of Communism was to establish a world of communal bliss and harmony (that was their grand & glorious dream), but the structures that are necessary to make that goal a reality were continually being violated by the masses. Ultimately, the problem with Communism was that it removed *motivation and accountability* from the workforce; there were no *consequences and repercussions* for idleness

and laziness. The lack of accountability by the masses spread throughout the entire communist world; there was *no motivation* for people to own up to their own responsibility in life — after all, *whether a person worked hard or hardly worked, made no difference, because everyone received the same benefit*. Because one could not positively effectuate his own personal world for the better, all motivation was removed. I find it ironic that of all the people groups in the world that could make “*communism*” work, it is the Christian world, *because only true born-again Christians genuinely care for the well-being of other people*; but that was not at all what defined the communist world — it hated Christianity! It actually thought it was better fitted to accomplish a wonderful little utopia than was the Christian world; how’s that for an oxymoron? By the way, of all the various labor forces in the Soviet Union that failed to perform well, the worst was the agricultural industry, so “*food*” (the absolute necessity of life) became a very restricted commodity in the marketplace — because they couldn’t get people to do *the hard work* out in the fields, agricultural goods were very limited. By the way, it wasn’t until the Soviet Union “*gave ownership of land to farmers in the agricultural world*,” that things started to turn around, and food became plentiful. For those of you who are believers, this is exactly what God did with the Jewish world — they were each given a piece of land that they were to *work* (cf. Joshua chapters 12-19); though the unbelieving world doesn’t like the ways of God... God has far more wisdom than they do; He understands the deficiencies of fallen men. Though the Communist world seeks everyone’s best interests, it simply doesn’t understand the *foundational structures* that are necessary to achieve those interests; *due to the lack of motivation and accountability, Communism failed miserably*. Since its demise, many leaders in the communist world have acknowledged that, including **Mikhail Gorbachev**, the former president of the U.S.S.R. Thus numerous capitalistic structures have been *reinstated* in varying degrees throughout the Soviet Union and China. Sadly, a significant number of people in the Soviet Union became “*alcoholics*” during the communist era (that’s where they found their joy), and that had a very negative impact upon the beautiful society that Communism had sought to build — *Vodka*, not Coffee or Coke, became the beverage of choice to the masses in the Soviet Union. I find it interesting, that when “*religion*” is disparaged and denigrated in a society, the culture becomes one that is *far more vulgar and perverse... and far less productive*. In spite of these truths, there are still some in our world today (in particular the western world, of all places) who *despise religion*. By the way, there are only 150 million atheists in our world; the sad part is, they pretty much all reside in the western world, the most arrogant element in our world — and the diabolical left thinks that’s what makes them so smart! How’s that for mindlessness? I’ve always been a fan of **Albert Einstein** because of the integrity of his thinking — one of the most profound statements he uttered was this: “*The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation... His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection*” (Ralph Woods; *The World Treasury of Religious Quotations*; New York: Garland Books, 1966, p. 898). Einstein was well aware of the deficiency of human thinking; yet those who worship at its altar actually think they are smart — ☺ — how that’s for

an oxymoron? Though the “*intent*” of Communism may have had a commendable goal, due to the fact that people “*are not inherently good*” (cf. Lk 18:19), “*or smart*,” the system failed. For those of you who are believers, it ought to be very clear: *man does not have the ability to make our world a pleasant little utopia* — though we all try (to one degree or another), none of us are able to bring it about. Only the unbelieving world denies that reality; in other words, they are completely deceived. Let’s return to the question that was asked at the outset of this paragraph —

The “*left*” believes that it is “*inherently good and smart*,” and that those who are not of like mind are “*inherently stupid and not good*”). That juvenile thinking was the same with the Communist world; those who opposed them were considered bad. By nature, *fallen man* is always motivated by his own passions and seems completely oblivious to his own deficiencies and owning up to his own responsibilities; therefore he is always into blaming someone or something else. He completely rejects the idea that he is “*inherently evil*” or that “*his relative goodness*” is not really that good. The reality is, “*relative goodness*” is simply the by-product of one’s own self-evaluation; when one sees himself as good, *pride* rules in his soul... on the other hand, when one’s focus in life is on “*divine goodness*,” *humility* reigns in his soul, because he sees how lacking he is in true goodness. Those who are relatively good will pretty much do anything to gratify and please themselves; after all, “*they believe they are autonomous creatures, and that life is all about them and what they want*.” Because the teaching of Scripture contradicts what our godless world thinks and believes, they hate Christians and give the world’s most horrible murderers a pass — they never blame the ugly self-righteous unbelieving world for the problems in our world, they simply blame the believing world (the only positive element in our world). The unbelieving world actually thinks the believing world is so gullible and stupid that it “*throws away its mind and believes some religious nonsense*” — little does it know, God has given believers a “*deep conviction*” of the truth (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Th 1:5; Heb 11:1); as such, their thinking far exceeds the “*shallow diabolical thinking*” of the unbelieving world. The reality is, many unbelievers actually argue against the will of God for man — man insists on trying to make life as easy and pleasant as he possibly can. Since the fall of man at the outset of human history, *God’s purpose for him is that he is to work hard and be productive in life*. God said to Adam, “*Because you have eaten from the tree which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. The ground shall produce both thorns and thistles, and you will have to work very hard for your food*” (cf. Gen 3:17-18) — so man would no longer “*freely eat*” of the produce of the land; instead he would have to “*work hard for his food*.” By the way, it has only been a very few short years since the “*urban world*” finally displaced the “*farming world*” as the number one world for the majority of our population; back in the 19th century, only about 10% of our world’s population lived in cities — most people lived out in the country. It was over the issue of “*eating the forbidden fruit*,” that the tempter (Satan) raised doubts about God’s goodness... because they partook of the forbidden fruit, henceforth they would have to work very hard for their food — God had abundantly provided man with

everything he could possibly need, but man stubbornly wanted even more; the resultant effect has been “*a life of labor.*” With that in mind, the apostle Paul said to the church at Thessalonica, “*If one will not work, neither let him eat*” (2 Th 3:10); society is not to be tolerant of the sluggard, the lethargic and the lazy — there are no free rides in this world; it is incumbent upon each person to own up to his own responsibilities in life (cf. Prv 6:6-11; 13:4; 20:4; 21:25; 24:30-34; 1 Tim 5:8); obviously, these values must be embraced by society and taught to children... yet the diabolical world will try and reason out of such demands; that just shows how empty-headed they are — “*they not only believe they are smarter than God, they believe they are kinder than God!*” Again, they think with absolutely “*zero integrity!*” Paul went on to refer to those who didn’t work as “*leading an undisciplined life;*” i.e., they live without a sense of rules, submission to authority, self-control, character or orderliness (2 Th 3:11) — the popular slogan of most diabolical fools is this: “*Nobody is going to tell me what to do!*”

The wise man Solomon (1 Kg 3:7-12) said the following about “**work**” — “*Idle hands bring poverty, but hard work leads to wealth*” (Prv 10:3-5); that didn’t mean abundant wealth, it meant sufficient wealth to meet all the needs of one’s family; one would not be lacking in physical needs... “*He who works his field will have plenty of food, but the one who chases empty dreams is not wise*” (Prv 12:11-12)... “*Prosperity comes from hard work, but those who only talk will be poor*” (Prv 14:23)... “*Whoever is lazy regarding his work, is a brother to the master of destruction*” (Prv 18:9-10)... “*The craving of a sluggard will be the death of him, because he simply refuses to work*” (Prv 21:25); it might be helpful to remember that **God determines what we reap**, and He does so in accord with what we sow (cf. Gal 6:7; Hos 8:7; 10:12); if you don’t like deferring to our Creator, you and the diabolical world better find another planet on which to live, because this one’s ruled by God. ☺ Conversely said Paul, “*Do not steal; instead work*” (Eph 4:28)... “*Lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands*” (1 Th 4:11)... “*If someone does not provide for his own in life, he has denied the faith; he is worse than an infidel*” (1 Tim 5:8)... “*Whatever you do in life, do it with all your heart as unto the Lord*” (Col 3:23). There are many in our country who can work, but won’t work; they simply take advantage of the state (i.e., governmental welfare), as if the state somehow owes them a living — by the way, you and I as tax-payers are the state, so we are the ones who are paying their way in life. *It is one thing to help those who are truly in need (i.e., the disabled and the hungry), it is quite another to extend gratuity to those who are capable of working, but who are not willing to do so — according to Scripture, such are undeserving.* Being a parasite and living off of the government was never the original design; such is sheer lunacy, not kindness. Every human being has the obligation of *being responsible and owning up to his God-ordained duty in life*; likewise, the state’s responsibility is to make sure things are done with “*integrity.*” *It is the economy of God that is to give definition to our world, not the diabolical thinking of men.* Now if we had no measuring stick by which to make these judgments, we could not claim “*integrity*” — but God has provided us with the measuring stick. If there was no measuring stick, we would have to appeal to the laws of logic and historical evidence; but if that were the case, many diabolical men would constantly argue to the contrary. Re-

garding jobs, the state can easily find jobs for people... that's not a problem... or is it? Years ago when cities tried to provide jobs for people like cleaning public property and help with public maintenance for a limited period of time (until permanent jobs could be found), the labor unions went berserk and argued against the government letting people work in their communities, because they were robbing the unions of more employment opportunities; once again, leftist ideologues upset the applecart; they always find a way to create more problems than they can solve. Furthermore, the left accused the state at that point of being "*unkind*" for making people work for some gratuity (as if work was evil) — keep in mind, these were people who were capable of working, and in need of a little income. Obviously, there is nothing the left won't say or do to demonstrate its lack of integrity; it will argue to the contrary until the sun stops shining; by the way, one day the sun is going to stop shining (cf. Rev 21:1, 23-24). The reality is, as long as the unbelieving world dwells on this planet, there will never be peace and prosperity for all (Mt 26:11). Satan and his cohorts simply don't have the ability to make it a reality... all they do is constantly screw things up. Regarding this thing called "*work*," it should be clear, God only honors those who work, not those who don't work; again, we are not autonomous creatures; God is the one who determines what we "*reap*" (cf. Is 54:15-17; Prv 3:34; Ps 138:6; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5). At this seemingly late stage of the game, it is almost impossible to imagine once again "*living in a reasonably disciplined world*;" it is too late. As is often stated in the Christian world, "*Idleness is the devil's workshop*;" God meant for man to work and be occupied with the responsibilities He has been given; when he violates God's order, Satan will do a significant work in him and significantly damage his inner core. With all of the foregoing in mind, guess what is ultimately going to happen? Our world is going to completely self-destruct because of the *diabolical rulership* of men... it is only a matter of time. When God pulls the plug on our world's economy, it is going to come crashing down in a very short period of time — for those of you who think you are brilliant, "*no one in our world fully understands why the economy of our world keeps on working*;" all they know is that it keeps on working. Beloved, *GOD* is on the throne. My undergraduate degree in college was "*Finance*," and this subject was one that was very interesting.

By the way, "*welfare dependency*" has had a horrific impact upon black families in our country; most blacks are now raised without a father because of the easy accessibility of governmental welfare; such has had a devastating affect upon the black world. Many black men abandon their family, thus causing black moms to simply collect welfare and not work; that is now a huge part of black culture in our country — the resultant effect of such living is extremely negative for both the mom and her children; what a deplorable role model for children. The distinguished black professor of Economics at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, *Walter E. Williams*, in an article he wrote titled "*The True Black Tragedy: Illegitimacy Rate of Nearly 75 Percent*," begins it by saying that, "*People with little understanding want us to believe that today's black problems are the continuing result of a legacy of slavery, poverty and racial discrimination. The fact is... most of the social pathology seen in poor black neighborhoods is entirely new*

in black history.” He goes on to report that 85 percent of black families in New York City back in 1925 were “*two parent families.*” In contrast, today’s black illegitimacy rate is nearly 75 percent; *i.e.*, 75 percent of black children are born to unwed mothers. In 1940, black illegitimacy stood at 14 percent, but rose to 25 percent by 1965 — it was at this time when the Democratic Senator **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** wrote, “*The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,*” and was widely condemned as *a racist* — of course, if the majority of blacks don’t like what you have to say, they call you *a racist*... conversely, if some white people reject what the majority of blacks believe, they are called *racists*. Contrary to the integrity of the issue, blacks call people *racists* who don’t defer to them across the board. Being condemned as a *racist* will make more sense to you in the paragraphs that follow. This is a very ugly issue that has to be addressed with integrity. Back to the subject at hand — in 1980 (just fifteen years after Moynihan’s writing), the black illegitimacy rate had more than doubled, to 56 percent, and it has been growing since. As Walter Williams states, “*Both during slavery and as late as 1920, a teenage girl raising a child without a man present was ‘rare’ among blacks.*” He then goes on to say that, “*much of today’s pathology seen among many blacks is an outgrowth of the welfare state that has made self-destructive behavior less costly for the individual. Having children without the benefit of marriage is less burdensome if the mother receives housing subsidies, welfare payments and food stamps. Ignored in all discussions,*” says Williams, “*is the fact that the poverty rate among black married couples has been in single digits since 1994*” (thus one cannot attribute all of the ugliness of the black world to poverty). Regarding the *unemployment rate*, Williams says, back in 1948 the unemployment rate for black teens was essentially the same as their white counterparts (about 10%); “*during that same period black youths were just as active in the labor force as white youths.*” Says Williams, it was not only the minimum wage law and other labor regulations that cut off the bottom rungs of the economic ladder, but “*their rotten schools, dysfunctional families, and crime-ridden neighborhoods.*” Pulitzer-prize winning journalist **George Will**, in an article he wrote titled “*Black Single Mothers Are ‘Biggest Impediment’ to Progress,*” attributed a large portion of Black America’s plight “*to the number of single-mother households in the community.*” He pointed out that “*Moynihan’s report made the argument that the relative absence of nuclear families (i.e., those having both a father and mother present) in Black America would greatly hinder further Black socioeconomic progress.*” Due to the diabolical left’s politicizing of “*racism*” in America today, there is no way that we will ever rightly resolve the matter; all the left will do is destroy and pervert our culture. It is just such humanistic thinking that *completely destroyed* one nation after another down through the course of history — when a nation becomes perverted, the end is not far off. What the disgustingly stupid diabolical world *refuses to acknowledge* is that God is “*GOD,*” and if you do not defer to His ways, He will destroy you (cf. Prv 14:12; 12:15; Rom 6:19-23) — if there is anything the diabolical world refuses to believe it is that. By the way, it made no difference whether it was Egypt, Babylon, Israel, Assyria, or Rome — God destroyed them! Said the prophet Isaiah, “*The nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales.... all the nations are nothing before God, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless... to whom*

then will you liken God?" (Is 40:15-18). The only ones who will ever believe that are those who will ***"humble themselves before their Creator,"*** without doing so, one will never believe, until the day of judgment (cf. Phil 2:10-11). ***It is the arrogant diabolical left that is destroying our world.***

THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

The Greek word for "*sin*" in Scripture is "*hamartia*," it literally means "*to miss the mark.*" As fallen creatures "*we all fail to meet God's standards of holiness and righteousness,*" whereas God is *perfect*, we are not... whereas God is *holy*, we are not. Scripture tells us that "***all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God***" (Rom 3:23). Through the holiness of the Law, God revealed to man that he is "*sinful*"... but man misinterpreted the Law, and believed he could make himself acceptable to God through his own self-righteous actions — "***There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way of death***" (Prv 14:12). Again, the way that seems right to man is "*his own way*" — when man rejects the way of God, his life is a disaster and ends in spiritual death. Since the beginning Satan has *deceived* man — rather than believe what God said, man chose to believe Satan's deception. The Hebrew word "*saw*" is translated "*deceit*" in English; basically it means "*deception,*" "*malice,*" "*falsehood,*" "*vanity*" and "*emptiness.*" The Greek word "*apate*" refers to that which is "*deceptive*" and gives "*false impression.*" The "*crafty*" serpent (Satan) ***deceived Eve with his rhetoric*** and she bought into it, in spite of the fact that it did not correspond with what God had said; it was a complete deception and nothing but sheer falsehood (cf. Gen 3:1-6, 13). Satan *questioned* what God said... then *misrepresented* what God said... and then completed *contradicted* what God said. So Eve yielded to all three aspects of temptation: *the lust of the flesh* (good for food), *the lust of the eyes* (pleasing to the eyes), and *the pride of life* (desirable to make one wise); which is precisely how the apostle John defined it (cf. 1 Jn 2:16). Though Eve was deceived (cf. Gen 3:13; 1 Tim 2:14), that did not absolve her of the responsibility for her distrust and disobedience toward God... to Adam's discredit, he willfully and deliberately rebelled against God. Sadly, diabolical human thinking perpetuates the lie of Satan, "***You will be completely autonomous and be like God;***" thus, "*it is a quest for 'wisdom' apart from God.*" Like the Ecclesiastical Preacher "*Solomon*" said, "***they sought wisdom but found only vanity and grief***" (cf. Ecc 1:12-18). The reality is, sin is extremely deceptive... it not only fails to yield the "*fruit*" that one desires, in the end it brings forth nothing but "*death*" (cf. Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23). God told the prophet Jeremiah, "***The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick***" (Jer 17:9). The reason the children of Israel "***turned away in continual apostasy, was because they held fast to deceit***" (cf. Jer 8:5). Said the Lord regarding His people Israel, "***through deceit they refuse to know Me***" (cf. Jer 9:6); *i.e., they believed a lie.* Some of their prophets actually "***prophesied falsehood in God's name, and prophesied the deception of their own minds***" (cf. Jer 14:14; 23:26); here was a group of men who were absolutely convinced that what they were saying was *true*, when in fact it was nothing but a *lie* — such also were the leaders of Israel who crucified Christ. The reason they

believed that which was “not true,” was because they had a “proud heart,” pride keeps us in the dark and makes us easily swayed by deception.

“True reality” is only dispensed to the humble heart by God’s Spirit; it is not the product of proud human thinking. Though all men have been given the knowledge of God, the vast majority of them “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” and “exchange the truth of God for a lie” (cf. Rom 1:18-25); in so doing God withholds all other revelation from them (cf. Mt 13:10-15; 7:6; Acts 16:14; Jam 1:21) — “thinking themselves to be wise, they become fools” (cf. Rom 1:22). Said Solomon, “The thoughts of the righteous are just, but the counsels of the wicked are deceitful” (Prv 12:5) — the “wicked” are proud and do not defer to God and His wisdom; instead they embrace their own fallen thinking. Incidentally, the word “wicked” in Scripture has to do with “not embracing God” (not necessarily a particular evil action); the wicked does not seek God (Ps 10:4); he forsakes the way of God (Prv 28:4); he oppresses the righteous (Ps 17:9)... in short, the wicked person is completely deceived; thus, he is a proud, godless, impious person. States Solomon, “Those who hate you may try to fool you with their words, but their minds are full of deceit” (Prv 26:24). With the foregoing in mind, David said, “I do not fellowship or partner with deceitful men” (Ps 26:4); likewise said the apostle Paul, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Cor 6:14-15). David goes on to say, “Blessed are those in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Ps 32:3)... “There is no fear of God before those who are ungodly... the words of their mouths are wickedness and deceit” (Ps 36:1-3)... “Lord, deliver me out of the hands of aliens, whose mouths speak deceit and falsehood” (Ps 144:11). Stated Paul, “Those whom God has given over to a depraved mind (because of their unwillingness to bend their knee before Him), their lives are filled with unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, murder, strife, deceit, malice, slander, insolence, pride & hating God” (cf. Rom 1:28-29). Likewise he said, “Men’s hearts are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13); *i.e.*, “their own way.” Thus he said, “Do not be deceived, for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” (Gal 6:7). Remember, “the serpent of old (Satan) is at work deceiving the whole world... and looking for someone to devour” (cf. Rev 12:9; 1 Pet 5:8). Said Paul, “Beloved, see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men and the elementary principles of the world” (cf. Col 2:8). The reality is, there are two schools of thought in this world — self-centered diabolical thinking, and God-centered divine thinking; *i.e.*, the thinking of this world and the thinking of God. The unbelieving world refuses to accept such thinking; it hates it with a passion! Contrary to what fallen men might believe, “there is no middle ground!” Though some of you may struggle with such thinking, that is what God’s Word teaches. Our problem as human beings is that we all have fallen minds, and have been raised in this fallen world — thus, the majority of thoughts that have been placed in our minds are of human origin... not divine origin.

One of the most significant voices of deception in our world over the last fifty years has been Jesse Jackson — once he replaced Martin Luther King as the premiere leader of the black community in the late 60s, the black world began to self-destruct. Before I go any

further, this was the work of Satan in our world — it appears, Satan has chosen to use “*race*” to finally destroy Christians; that’s a *very clever* strategy. Though the believing community won’t be destroyed by the diabolical left (God will ultimately intervene and take us to our home in glory), believers are going to be rudely persecuted against... it is already well underway here in America; unless you have been asleep at the wheel, you must have noticed it. Sadly, the majority of blacks in our country have made “*race*” the number issue in their world; as such, it has now become the foundation of their faith (that’s the essence of “*black liberation theology*” here in America); many in this movement have even made Jesus “*black*.” Let’s return to this fellow named Jesse Jackson — Martin Luther frequently questioned the integrity of Jackson because of his anger and profanity, but once King passed away he no longer had control over all that would transpire. Whereas King was “*a minister of the Christian faith*,” Jackson was not — though he was also a minister of sorts, he was not a Christian minister of the gospel... he was simply a man with a *political agenda* who conformed his religious beliefs to his political ideals; in that sense, he was much like the majority of the religious leaders in ancient Israel — they all differed from what Scripture taught. The reality is, *if God’s Word does not define one’s thinking, that person is being deceived... and should he speak those thoughts to others, he will be deceiving them as well*. Regrettably, Jesse Jackson was wild with his rhetoric and frequently made statements like this: “*If you don’t vote for this legislation, you are a racist*” (the truth is, those two constructs did not equate; one had nothing to do with the other); it was that kind of sleazy political nonsense that ended up causing incredible division in our country. Because his rhetoric was so hateful and illogical, all white America did back then was “*shut the door and keep quiet*” — to give voice to Jackson’s thinking would only have divided our world more. For argument’s sake, let’s say some radical racist was totally against the legislation, that doesn’t mean the legislation was “*good*” just because some racial idiot thought it was “*bad*” — one can’t make those kinds of statements based upon the thinking of some empty-headed moron who hates you; anybody with half a wit knows there is “*no correlation between those two positions*.” Just because Adolf Hitler liked a *Maserati* doesn’t mean that is a terrible car. Being as the black world apparently bought into that kind of thinking, in the long run it ended up causing significant damage to our world.

Though everyone knew there were “*racial problems*” in the South, those problems did not define the vast majority of America (certainly not to that degree). For instance, I was raised in Pasadena, California (a suburb of LA and the home of Jackie Robinson; we both played sports at Pasadena City College, and then he went on to play at UCLA)... well, we didn’t have the kinds of problems there that existed in the South. In *High School*, one of my best friends was black (Sam McWorter); we sang together in a Glee Club... when I was in the *Army*, the battalion I served in had a number of blacks (we slept in the same dorms, served together, ate together, and played games together)... when I played football in *College*, there were just about as many black on our team as there were whites (again, we lived in the same dorms, ate together, and took some classes together)... when I was in *Seminary*, one of my best friends (Isaiah Jones) was black — he was a musician and

composer who years earlier had sung with the music group, “*The Temptations*,” I invited Isaiah to share in my ministry in Arizona a number of times; we were good friends... when my wife developed her Interior Design Business (BAI Design Group), one of the five ladies we hired was a young black gal from Togo, Africa (Elom Ketoglo); she also assisted me in doing some artwork that became a significant part of my college textbook, “*Christianity: The Pursuit of Divine Truth*” (all of the *maps* in that book we designed by her). So it isn’t as though my life was completely without black input; though there may have been “*cultural differences*” between us, that didn’t mean our relationships were strained and that we didn’t get along. Aside from the foregoing, there were a few black people in nearly all of the churches I served in; but due to the fact that most racial groups live in communities of “*like stripe*,” it stands to reason that most churches reflect the majority of people in their community (be it White, Black, Asian, Mexican, whatever), but that doesn’t make those racial groups “*racists*.” In addition to that, most people live in communities that reflect their own *values* (if you have traveled around the world, you know that is what defines the various *cultures*). For the majority of people, “*it is the character and personality and values of people that makes a particular culture acceptable to them in this world*” — regardless of one’s race. The reality is, people of high character don’t embrace lifestyles and cultures that lack high character; likewise, people of low character don’t embrace people who exhibit a much higher character. Though I am attracted to some people, some people I am not — generally, their personality is the difference maker; if a person doesn’t have a likeable personality, I’m not interested in hanging around them; why would I be? Obviously, there has to be some “*commonality*” between us if we are going to be friends; that’s just the way this entire world operates. It has nothing to do with *racism* — if I happen to be approached by two men: a proud diabolical white man, and a humble godly black man, I am going to connect with the black man, not the white man. Period. I want nothing to do with proud diabolical people (this will make more sense to you later on in this study). By the way, if the black man is a proud diabolical person, and the white man is a humble godly person, I want nothing to do with the black man.

Probably “*the biggest negative*” that Jesse Jackson promulgated in our society, was his radical interpretation of the word “*racism*” — according to Webster’s Dictionary “*racism believes in the inherent superiority of a particular race*,” but thanks to Jesse, that is not at all the way many in the black world define it today. To them, *anyone who does not agree with them and their thinking is a racist* — regrettably, nearly every black child in our country has been taught this growing up, to the point where it is implanted in their soul as an absolute. By the way, any ethnic group could easily take that definition and apply it to their own people: “*If you don’t agree with us, you’re a racist*” (if you don’t align your thinking with our thinking, you are a racist). So what are some whites going to do? Accuse blacks of being racists because they don’t agree with their white thinking? That is a very reckless way of dealing with “*the differences that exist between people groups*.” When people use the term “*racist*” that recklessly, they are naturally going to *alienate* people, and rightly so, because most people want nothing to do with that kind of

accusatorial nonsense. According to Scripture, we are each “*unique creatures*” made in God’s image — if that is where it all ended, we wouldn’t have any problems, but that is not where it ends... our problem as human beings is that we are each “*fallen creatures*” who now reflect very little of God’s image. Due to man’s sinfulness, fallen man refused to disperse throughout the world as God intended (read Gen 1:28; 9:7; 10:5); instead, they sought to proudly build a tower for themselves that would reach up to the heavens (called “*the tower of Babel*”), as a monument to their glory and fame (cf. Gen 11:1-4). Due to the fact they were so united in their disobedience, the Lord forced them to *scatter* throughout the entire earth by *changing all of their languages*; so collectively each group immigrated to a region where their own language was spoken (cf. Gen 11:5-9) — *in God’s economy it was necessary that fallen men not be the same, lest they live to their own glory*. So we are all now fallen creatures living in “*fallen cultures*,” God has so decreed that no particular group of people control the entire world — though the “*anti-Christ*” will attempt to rule over it all, God is going to destroy him before the entire created order. It is only when man aligns his thinking with *God’s thinking*, and aligns himself with *God’s people* that he will reflect more of God’s image; when he does, he will be far more humble, gentle, kind and respectful; when he does not, he will be far more proud, boisterous, demanding and disrespectful. The truth is, no one has a right to *insist* that everyone else’s thinking conforms to their thinking... Jesus Himself didn’t even do that — man is free to believe whatever he wants to believe in this life. *One thing is certain, the believing world will never cow-tail it to the unbelieving world*. Ultimately the reality is this: “*One day all men are going to bend their knee before their Maker, and confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil 2:10-11). The truth is, the diabolical element in our world is going to spend eternity separated from God in the confines of hell; in spite of the fact that it has been convinced to the contrary by Satan (their diabolical father). Just because you are black or white or any other color does not make you special; all men were created equal — what makes you special is being a born-again child of God.

Due to the fact some blacks have erroneously misinterpreted the biblical command to “*love God and love others as we do ourselves*,” they may think Christians are really not a “*loving people*,” because they don’t see white Christians entering into their community and embracing it with joy; thus they question the integrity of their love. There are a couple of problems with that kind of thinking — first, if that particular community is not a kind, respectful one that reflects Christian values, they are not going to joyfully embrace that community; second, is the fact that most people don’t understand the word “*love*” — to them it is a corollary of the word “*like*,” but that is not what the word means. The word “*love*” in Greek is the word “*agape*,” literally it refers to one’s “*actions*,” not one’s feelings or emotions. The Bible speaks of love in far more active terms — love is a duty or action we are obliged to perform. God commands us to love our neighbor, to love our spouse, and even to love our enemies. Furthermore, love is patient and kind, it is not boastful or proud or rude or self-seeking or unforgiving. The calling of the Christian is not primarily to develop feelings of love for others; that is outside human control. So when love is used of Christians, it is an action that seeks the welfare of the other person; *i.e.*, it seeks the

other person's highest good (cf. Jn 13:35; Rom 13:10; 15:2; 1 Cor 13:1-13; Gal 6:10; Col 3:12-14; 1 Jn 4:7-8). It should be clear, to love someone does not necessarily mean you like them; sometimes parents don't like their own children when they do something wrong, but that does not mean they don't love them (*i.e.*, greatly care about them). Remember, feelings come and go; they are up one moment, and down the next. I may not "like" everyone of you, and you may not "like" me, but that doesn't mean we can abrogate God's command to love each other. Should very negative feelings dominate what goes on in our minds (and they can if all we do is dwell on the negatives; feelings are effectuated by our thoughts, thus we are to control our thinking – cf. Phil 4:8-9), we need to prayerfully ask God to see the good in someone, and not just the bad... and pray for them and seek their highest good. It is important to note, no where in Scripture is a person ever commanded to "feel something," because our feelings cannot be instantly effectuated; if we don't feel good about something, we don't feel good about it; likewise, if we don't like something, we don't like it; our problem here in the western world is that "we have made love an emotion," but since our emotions change from one moment to the next, that's not a good way to define love. The truth is, we are not to let "our feelings and emotions" control our lives; we are to let "divine truth" control our lives. So it isn't as though we have "warm fuzzies" for everyone we come in contact with in life; but regardless of our feelings, we are to "love them and not be ugly toward them" (*i.e.*, seek their highest good – read Matt 5:44), and "do good to them, not bad to them;" that is what God asks of us (cf. Gal 6:9-10; Heb 10:24; Mt 5:44).

The truth is, there are a thousand cultures in this world that differ from yours and mine... inside our own country, there are a number of different cultures; and not all of them are supra-desirable or multiethnic. Just because I was born in a different culture than you, doesn't make me bad; neither does it make me good; it simply makes me different from you (if you were raised in a different culture). Just as I don't insist that you "like" my culture, you cannot insist that I "like" your culture – if our cultures are radically different, neither of us will like the other person's culture as much as our own. To take this a step further – we all reflect some level of character, if you happen to reflect a diabolical character, I am not going to be attracted to you; that is just the law of common sense for a believer; conversely, if you have diabolical values, you are not going to be attracted to me, because my values won't be your values – however, should God be doing a work in your life to bring you to Himself, you may be somewhat attracted to me so that God can use me to introduce you to Christ. On the other hand, if you are sold out to the diabolical world, you will hate divine values as much as I hate diabolical values. Let me shed more light on this thing called culture – some of the agricultural regions in our country were established by various ethnic groups from Europe that migrated to our country back in the late 1800s (many of these small subcultures didn't speak English for 20-30 years (their own schools and newspapers were in their mother tongues; that was my father's history). My father's family migrated to America back in 1901, and homesteaded some land in a small Scandinavian community that was adjacent to a German community. These people were not racists just because they lived in small ethnic communities; they lived in those communities because of language barriers and cultural preferences that

they brought with them from Europe — it isn't easy to live in completely foreign environments; that's why we have all kinds of "small ethnic communities" scattered all over our country. Many of us were raised in a specific environment that had a unique culture; for someone to call us racists simply because the culture in which we were raised didn't include every other racial group is ridiculous; no culture is that inclusive. There are little tiny towns and cultures all over our country, but that doesn't make those groups of people racists... yet that is now recklessly being preached by the liberal elite here in America — there is nothing they won't say to satisfy their political mindsets. By the way, one could also apply such frivolous nonsense to a person rather than a group: "If you don't agree with me, you're a bigot" — it makes no difference that they have no understanding of the other person, they simply throw out some stupid jargon to satisfy their innate bias (as if they are the bottom line on reality). That is extremely juvenile thinking, but that is what many in our country now believe — so what are we going to do now, have a war? That is precisely the road the ancient world traveled over and over again.

I am not excusing "wrong behavior" — if there is anything I despise it is wrong behavior; be it black, white, or anyone else. If a person's behavior does not coincide with "divine truth," it is wrong — that is precisely the line of thinking that God expects the Christian world to embrace; regardless of what the diabolical world believes. Ancient Israel was severely judged by God for its failure to live a godly life — He said to them: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness... Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight!" (cf. Is 5:20-21). The problem with the diabolical left is that "it perverts the truth;" i.e., it turns away from what is good or true or morally right — in a word, it is totally corrupt. King Solomon said, "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord" (cf. Prv 17:15). Either one lets Scripture (God) define reality, or his arrogant heart will lead him astray. It is only when a person humbles himself before the Lord that he is convicted with full assurance of the truth — that is God's work in the heart; it is not the product of human thinking (Acts 16:14). With that in mind, because the "Spirit of truth" dwells in us as believers (cf. Jn 14:16-17, 26; 16:13), it is pretty easy for the believing world to judge the unbelieving world; we are not easily fooled. Sadly, when all of Jesse Jackson's reckless rhetoric came to the forefront back in the 60s and 70s, the political world didn't take the initiative to correct his erroneous thinking; in large part, because of the volatility of the issue back then. If there was one thing the political world didn't want to do, it was to alienate the black world; they not only didn't want to cause more problems, they wanted their support and their vote (that's just the way politics works). The vast majority of people back then simply hoped that the issue would die down, but it didn't. When Jesse Jackson ran for President after being on the world-stage for a few years, very few Democrats got behind him and supported him — instead they remained silent, somehow hoping that he wouldn't become their candidate; yet many in the black world accused fellow-democrats of being racists. The problem was not the Democratic Party, "it was Jesse Jackson and his ugly racial rhetoric" — it dominated his speech... the sad part of it was that it got passed on to the

entire black world in our country. Regrettably, when diabolical garbage is stubbornly promulgated by the media over and over again, people with a diabolical disposition actually believe such thinking. I write extensively on this subject in a study I did titled, “*Racism, Liberation Theology, and Liberal Elitism.*” Should those particular subjects be of interest to you, you can access it on my website. By the way, it was not at all a joyful study; as is often the case in our world, addressing reality can be very painful.

So what happened that turned the black world upside-down in just a few short years and cause it to self-destruct? Jackson’s insistence on creating a welfare state didn’t help the situation at all... it wasn’t as though “*governmental welfare*” was a bad idea, it was the “*misuse of it*” that clearly became the problem (even Bill Clinton stated that) — it is one thing to “*help the needy*” (the Christian community leads the world in helping the needy; it’s not even close — and it is not because of some “*religious order*” that the Christian world is obligated to obey, as some brainless leftists want to believe)... but it is quite another to “*create a culture of dependency,*” which is precisely what governmental welfare has done; it is this element that has nearly destroyed the integrity of much of the black community in our country. By the way, the average amount of a welfare check in our country in 2014 was this — *in eleven states, government aid paid more than the average pre-tax first year wage for a teacher*; the state with the highest total value of welfare benefits was Hawaii, at \$49,175... the lowest was Mississippi, at \$16,984; since the economies of each state differ significantly, so does the amount of welfare paid in each state. The question that is often raised is this: “*Why work? You’ll make far more not working than working! And should you have a number of children, the state will even give you more money!*” Sadly, many black women in the ghettos have children by numerous men, and receive incredible amounts of money from the government to support them. Incidentally, most of the fathers of these children don’t own up to their own responsibility to provide for their children; in many cases they actually abandon them. It is precisely this *destructive attitude* of many in the black community that has been causing so many problems in the black world — the *character* of many blacks has become so juvenile that “*marriage*” is becoming meaningless, and simply a cultural phenomenon that they want nothing to do with; it is important to note, there are some diabolical leftists who are actually talking about outlawing marriage, because they think it is now more problematic to human happiness than it is helpful (leave it to the progressives to argue mindlessly on one topic after another — divine truth is anathema to them; they despise it)... very few blacks are pro-marriage; to them it is simply a meaningless cultural value. The reality is, most blacks value “*sex*” far more than “*marriage*,” thus many relationships that blacks have with other people are seriously deficient and shallow — even with their children! Sex is the order of the day in our diabolical world... those who call it immoral outside of marriage are deemed immoral by the diabolical left. Once again, the godless left is doing everything it can to destroy the moral integrity of our world; somehow it brainlessly thinks it is better to have “*no morality*” than to embrace biblical morality; if there is anything it despises, it is biblical morality; *to them it is so restrictive, it is repulsive.* Before we go back to the topic at hand, stop and reflect

upon *the influence “culture” has upon our children* — our culture is sending a non-stop message to every child in our world (be it through TV programs, school, the internet, or social relationships), and doing everything it can to *convince* children of the integrity of its diabolical values (that’s how Satan operates; if there is one thing he is doing it is *“deceiving”* children with his lies and thinking)... with that in mind, how strongly must we *protect our children from this perverse culture* that is grossly dictating reality in our world? Remember, this stuff is nothing but stupidity to the diabolical left. My suggestion is that you teach your kids, pray for your kids, spend significant time with your kids, support your kids, love your kids, commend your kids, and get them involved in a strong children / youth ministry. *This will not be very effective unless you spend a lot of time with your children; if you minimize time spent with your kids you will hurt them...* the same goes for *marriage*; if you don’t spend significant time with your spouse, your marriage will be seriously lacking in intimacy, transparency and love, which will negatively impact your marriage; that’s a given in marital counseling. There is something about time spent that is *transformational*; be it in the human family... the divine family... or with God Himself; if you don’t spend time with God, your relationship with Him will be seriously lacking. Back to the topic at hand —

It shouldn’t take much genius to understand the lack of integrity *“government welfare”* as had on our country — our government not only created a problem, it created a monumental problem! Once again, good intentions didn’t justify governmental decisions — civil actions must possess *internal integrity*; yet in this stupid world in which we live, they could care less about integrity; integrity to them is a mute point; all they care about is *“getting their way in the moment.”* By the way, *the word integrity implies wholeness, soundness, and completeness* — in other words, does the fullness of a particular idea actually measure up? or is there something lacking in it? Stated the renowned British moralist and sayist, **Samuel Johnson** (1709-1784), *“Knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.”* Regarding the matter of black illegitimacy and the negative impact that it has had on the black community here in our country, **Dr. Natalie Carroll**, a highly respected black leader at the OB-GYN center in Houston, TX, said — *“A mama can’t give it all. And neither can a daddy, not by themselves — part of the reason is because you can only give that which you have; a mother cannot give all that a man can give. A truly involved father figure offers more fullness to a child’s life.”* She went on to say, *“When influential blacks like Bill Cosby spoke out about the level of black illegitimacy in the black world, they have been all but shouted down by liberals saying that a lack of equal education and opportunity are the true root of the problem... that even in black churches, ‘nobody talks about it;’ it’s like some big secret.”* Regrettably, said Carroll, *“Part of our black community has lost its way.”* The foregoing was stated in an article by *Jesse Washington* of the Associated Press titled, *“Rate of African American Unwed Mothers Soars to 72%”* (ca 2010?). What many in the diabolical black world hate is the fact that they have not been able to drag the entire black world into their way of thinking; *those who are truly born-again Christians reject the values of the liberal black world.* The following few paragraphs are not pleasant, and were not a joy to write; when

you write about a subject, you must reflect upon the various constructs over and over and over again to insure integrity; and when the topic is anything but pleasant, that's no joy-ride... the material that follows simply reflects some of the ugly realities in our world.

WHY MOST BLACKS HATE WHITE CHRISTIANS

The black world back in the 40s & 50s when I grew up, was a far more kind and gentle and humble and respectful world than it is today — the ugliest war in human history had finally ended, and peace was established worldwide; people everywhere were embracing each another. Those who were raised during that time period were extremely fortunate; it is very unlikely that any other time period in history was as peaceful and cordial as that one. The majority of blacks back then were “*believers*,” or at least went to church every week — many of the songs they wrote and sang were sung in virtually every church in the Christian world in our country. My father used to take our family to a large black church in downtown Los Angeles a couple of times a year; he loved their music and preaching (our dad sang in quartets and church choirs for years); as kids we always loved going to that church. *Regrettably, once the younger generation aligned with Jesse Jackson and the diabolical left, much of the black world began to change and self-destruct* (even in California); though the diabolical left wasn't that pronounced in those days... it wasn't long though until it began to take off. The attitude of Jackson and younger blacks was that “*the older black world was stupid and naive, and had been duped by whites*,” so rather than seeking out the righteous wisdom of the aged, they simply let their own *juvenile thinking* dictate reality; in a word, they told the older generation to “*button it!*” Scripture has much to say about “*the wisdom of the aged*” and “*the shallow, superficial thinking of young people*” (cf. Job 12:12; Prv 16:31; 20:29; 1 Pet 5:5; Job 36:13-14; Ps 25:7; Prv 1:2-5; 2 Tim 2:22; Ex 4:29; 12:21; 17:5-6; 18:12; 19:7; 24:1; Lev 9:1; 19:31-32; Num 11:16; Deut 21:1-6; 22:18; 29:10; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5; Jam 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Rev 4:4; 11:16; 19:4), but Scripture to Jackson and the young black world back then was simply “*a smorgasbord of thought*” — you just pick & choose what you want to believe, and ignore the rest. So Scripture did not play a significant role in their minds; they not only abandoned the truths of Scripture that their parents believed, they made their religion a “*political one*” — thus making “*black liberation from white dominance*” the foundation of their religion (not Christ); “*liberation theology*” has since dragged a large part of the black world here in America into the mud. Since political and cultural ideals often conflict with divine truth, it is not uncommon for people to reject what Scripture teaches — if people are not truly followers of Christ, their political and cultural values will easily sway them into *secular humanistic thinking*. Since many in the black world back then were genuine Christians who got along well with white Christians, “*politics*” was not the hot button issue in their life; like the white world, the black world was essentially divided between the Democrats and Republicans... but due to the fact that the political ideals of most Christians were not the same as those espoused by Jackson and the black liberation movement, many blacks started “*hating white Christians*” & “*hating fellow-blacks who were of the same spiritual stripe as white Christians*” — keep in mind,

the Holy Spirit dwells in every believer (regardless of race), thus believers share a lot in common with other believers, regardless of their ethnicity; *essentially all believers are of the same stripe*. Since the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the lives of unbelievers, much of the black world back then became antagonistic toward Christianity, because their values did not equate with the divine values of Scripture; they simply made them out to be what they wanted them to be. What mattered to a significant number of blacks back then was that *they wanted their own societal values to define the world in which they lived*, regardless of how it would impact others. Since we live in a multi-ethnic world here in America with cultural differences, none of us can insist that all of the various ethnic groups conform to our way of thinking; to do so shows no respect for other people who don't share the same values that you do. None of us have a right to invade another person's culture and destroy it simply because it doesn't mesh with our thinking. If there is anything a multi-ethnic country must value, it is "*civil obedience, mutual respect for others, and honoring the differences that exist in our world*" — with that said, one is not free to impose his thinking and culture on other people. Since these values govern most multi-ethnic countries, one must abide by them or pay the consequences. The problem that besets our nation today, is the absolute refusal of the diabolical left to accept these standards... so these warmongers are actively looking for ways to destroy the enemy of their thinking — it has no respect whatsoever for true born-again Christians.

Though some four million blacks here in America still embrace biblical Christianity today, the number of blacks that do is significantly less than it was 50 years ago; since the unbelieving black world hates fellow-blacks who align themselves with born-again white Christians, the number of blacks that do is far less today. Here's an oxymoron for you: essentially it was the white Christian world that liberated blacks and brought them out of slavery (it was not the diabolical left!), yet the liberal black world today "*hates white Christians*" — the problem is, they have embraced a theology of thought that has nothing to do with the Christ of Scripture. Due to the fact that true biblical Christianity does not embrace the "*diabolical standards*" of the liberal left, the liberal black world "*hates true born-again Christians*." If the hatred of the diabolical left wasn't so ugly, that would be one thing, but it is so *intense*, ultimately it is going to be that element that is going to "*destroy our world*" — therefore, it is critically important that the Christian world understand what is really going on in our world; the diabolical left is a very ugly "*anti-god*" reality in our world — remember, Satan is the *master deceiver* of fallen man. Just as God acted in history past, so also is He going to act in history to consummate this age — at the end of the age, there will come on the world stage a person known as "*the Antichrist*" — he will be one who not only opposes Christ, but who seeks to usurp the rightful place of Christ. This "*man of sin*" will come in accordance with the working of Satan, and will have his seat of power in the "*temple of God*," thus displaying himself as being God (cf. 2 Th 2:1-12); *i.e.*, acting as a god who is to be worshiped (many leaders in history have called themselves *gods* — the Antichrist is the final declaration of that blasphemy; *the entire world will behold his power and worship him* (Rev 13:6-8; Mt 24:24; Rev 13:11-18; 16:13-16; 19:20). *The coming of the Antichrist is linked with a great*

apostasy in the church; perhaps an alliance between secular government and religious institutions is in view. *The goal of the Antichrist is to make war on the people of God and to seek the destruction of Christ and His kingdom*; so the man of sin will attempt to divert the church's true worship of God to himself (cf. 1 Jn 4:1-6; 2 Jn 1:7). The Bible assures us, however, that despite the tremendous power and influence of the Antichrist, his defeat, judgment, and doom are sure — in the end he is no match whatsoever for the true and living Christ. Beloved, there is an extreme diabolical presence in our world today that did not exist 50 years ago; the truth is, things are moving very quickly.

Regrettably, much of the black world in our country today is loud, profane, demanding, ugly and extremely disrespectful of those who don't agree with leftist thinking — those who do not embrace their thinking are deemed "*racists*;" that's just the reckless language of the diabolical left. Though blacks comprise 13% of our population here in America, and Latinos 17%, and Asians 6%... over 43% of those in prison are blacks — there are more than 1,000,000 blacks in our prisons today (and they are not there just because they are black)... though there are five times more whites than blacks in our country, yet there are 100,000 more blacks in our jails than whites — this was not the case 50 years ago (*i.e.*, prior to the juvenile thinking of the diabolical left). By the way, 5,000,000 whites would need to occupy our prisons for there to be equal representation between blacks and whites. Regarding the television & entertainment industries, blacks have far greater representation on television today than any other race; being as 13% of our nation is black, the Latino community should have greater representation than blacks (remember, 17% of our nation is Latino) — do we not believe in "*equality*" in America? Aside from the foregoing, one would hardly know there were any Asians living in our country by looking at television — to have proper representation, the Asian community should have half as much exposure on television as the black community does, yet that is not the case — *why the inordinate representations?* The black world on television is more than double what it should be; again, why the inequality? In addition to that, 90% of all *interracial couples* on television are that of a white woman and a black man, not a black woman and a white man. Again, why is that? When one looks at all of the racial couples on television, the black man will *always* be coupled with a woman of lighter skin color (unless they both have lighter skin color); *never* is a lighter skinned black man coupled with a darker skinned black woman. One can't help but sympathize with dark black women; after all, even their own black world shuns them; yet black men are not regarded as "*racists*" — why is that? The reality is, it is *very popular* in our black world today for black men to want "*a trophy woman*;" *i.e.*, *be hooked up with a woman of lighter skin color* — this past year this particular issue was aired on Oprah's TV station, OWN, on a program called "*Light Girls*." In spite of all the foregoing, black leftists actually claim integrity... obviously we live in a world gone amuck.

It should be very clear to everyone — there is nothing the diabolical left won't do to "*eat the forbidden fruit*" (*i.e.*, have their own way in life — cf. Gen 2:16-17)... they will lie and cheat all the way to the bank to get what they want; that is simply the way the devil oper-

ates. Since God “restricts certain behaviors,” the left simply refuses to defer to God in life; thus Christianity is an “absolute negative” to them... therefore it accuses Christians of being “racists,” simply because they don’t endorse their values. That is much the same as the ancient Roman world — if you didn’t embrace “their god,” you were an enemy of theirs! So the majority of the black world accuses white Christians as being “racists,” simply because we don’t buy into their thinking; but rather than calling black Christians racists, they call them “fools.” I find it interesting that they don’t call their own people who side with white Christians “racists,” when in fact they both believe the same thing. That’s the way the diabolical left operates, they will say anything to demean & degrade those who don’t embrace their thinking — it makes no difference to them if there is any integrity to what they have to say, they will make false accusations, lie, distort and cheat to make themselves look “good” and make Christians look “bad/evil/wicked.” The vast majority of black children in our country have been taught that white Christians are bad people (*i.e.*, “racists”); once that kind of diabolical thinking gets implanted into a child’s mind, it will be extremely difficult for him to reject that thinking; unless he humbles himself before God he will not reject that thinking. The Lord Jesus said, “Whoever causes a little child to stumble, it is better for him to have a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and be drowned in the depth of the sea” (cf. Mt 18:6). That is a pretty poignant statement — when demonic thinking prevails in the mind, ultimately it will destroy a person. Though no man is perfect in this world, many in the Christian world possess far more integrity than the unbelieving world. When one makes “his political ideals” (*i.e.*, the culture in which he aspires to live) the foundation of his life, there is no way he will embrace the teachings of Scripture (*i.e.*, divine truth) — his fleshly values will prohibit him from doing so. “Loving God and loving others” is to be the premiere characteristic of the human family, but that does not at all define our diabolical world — bending the knee to God is an absolute negative to them; under no circumstances will they abandon their personal autonomy... they refuse to stop being the master of their own life. The reality is this: when people place their faith in Christ, “the love of God is poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5), thus, they are given the grace to love God and love others — according to Scripture, one cannot love God and hate His people; to do so, simply gives evidence to the fact that one is not a child of God (cf. 1 Jn 4:7-8, 20-21; 5:13). The fact that “believers have an affection for God’s people,” is a sign that they are truly born-again Christians... if one does not have a warm heart for God’s people, it is very unlikely that he has experienced the new-birth (cf. Jn 3:3) — God doesn’t dwell in a person’s heart and not manifest His character in and through that person in some way (read 1 Jn 2:18-20).

Since there are significant differences in many of our world’s “cultures,” one cannot accuse someone else of being a racist simply because their culture differs from theirs; to do so shows incredible disrespect for others who weren’t raised the same way they were raised — as human beings we need to “respect the differences” that exist in other people’s cultures, and not make everyone embrace our own culture. Whites need to respect black culture, and blacks need to respect white culture; understandably, most people in our world live in a community that is chiefly characterized by their ethnic

culture. I have had the opportunity to travel to a number of foreign countries, and serve in them, and one of the things I found extremely interesting were “*the differences that existed in some of these cultures;*” my wife and I happened to be individuals who enjoy looking at the differences that exist in other cultures. When we lived in Vancouver, Canada, we were constantly amazed at the various cultural nuances that existed in the population that lived there; Vancouver is known as being one of the most *cosmopolitan cities* in north America; ethnic groups from all over the world live there; as such, it has a very diverse culture. Though there were a few ethnic groups that weren’t necessarily the sweetest people (some were very stern, straight-faced, not out-going and friendly), most of the people were pleasant. While living there, Barb & I had friends from at least a dozen different countries (including Asia, Europe, the Middle East, India, Armenia, and the Philippines)... we ended up making Greek food our food of choice. What I discovered while living up in Vancouver, and traveling to a number of other countries, is that “*my world became **much larger** than the little one in which I was raised;*” for some strange reason, I had always thought that “*America*” was the last word on everything in this world — but that does not all define our world; the lack of integrity in the scientific world here in America has substantiated that... only the extremely narrow-minded liberal scientific world here in the US is completely sold out to evolution; the reason for their supporting evolution has *nothing* to do with factual evidence or their genius... instead, *it is their diabolical hatred of religion*, in particular Christianity — “*they love **darkness** rather than the light*” (Jn 3:19), so much so that their hatred of light controls a lot of their decisions; they are far more preoccupied with “*hating something*” than “*liking something*” — they never admit to a wrong; they always justify the reason why they traveled down the road they did, thus ensuring the integrity of their thinking to the world. To the surprise of many Americans, the supremacy of evolution does not exist in Europe and most other countries — I address this subject on two other studies I have done titled, “*Ultimate Reality*” & “*Enslaved to Christ*” — in those studies I quote the scientific world in Great Britain who were stunned at the remarks American scientists made regarding “*the absoluteness of evolutionism.*” When the ***British Museum of Natural History*** in London opened a new exhibit on “*evolution*” to mark its one hundredth anniversary, the leading American scientific journal, “*Nature*,” ran a critical editorial in response to the museum’s suggestion that “*evolution by natural selection was only **one** of a number of possible explanations.*” Regarding the critical editorial, two weeks after the article was published, twenty-two members of the museum’s distinguished staff of biologists wrote the following letter to the editor of *Nature* —

Sir, as working biologists at the British Museum of Natural History we were astonished to read your editorial. . . . How is it that a journal such as yours that is devoted to science and its practice can advocate that theory be presented as fact? This is the stuff of prejudice, not science, and as scientists our basic concern is to keep an open mind on the unknowable. . . . Are we to take it that evolution is a fact, proven to the

*limits of scientific rigor? If that is the inference then we must **disagree** most strongly. . . . we have **no absolute proof** of the theory of evolution.*

Obviously, that's a pretty demeaning statement they made to our American scientific world. How can the most respected element in our world (supposedly), stand on the stages of some of the most prestigious colleges & universities in our country and make absolutely mindless statements regarding ultimate reality? *You would think these so-called brilliant minds would "**insist**" on understanding the fullness of the issue, and not simply satisfy themselves with empty, emotional, prejudicial thinking!* How can nonsensical reasoning characterize our "*so-called brilliant nation*"? By the way, there are numerous scientists from all around the world who are **not** Christians, yet they have stated unequivocally that "***there is not ONE piece of hard evidence that supports the theory of evolution***" — contrary to what many leftist ideologues have claimed here in America. The renowned French scientist **Pierre P. Grasse**, in his book "*Evolution of Living Organisms*" said, "*Explanatory doctrines of biological evolution do not stand up to an objective in-depth criticism; they proved to be either in conflict with reality, or else incapable of solving the major problems involved*" (New York: Academic Press, 1977). French scientist **Louis Bounour**, former president of the "*Biological Society of Strasbourg*" and the "*French National Center of Scientific Research,*" startled many in the scientific world when he declared that "*Evolution is a fairy tale for grown-ups. This theory has helped nothing in the progress of science. It is useless*" (quoted in "*The Advocate,*" Mar 8, 1984). Keep in mind, these statements were made by two of our world's most distinguished scientists. I quote numerous other scientists in a study I did titled, "*Ultimate Reality*" — you can access it on my website should you desire to read those quotes. With that in mind, I have no respect for the evolutionary thinking of the scientific world here in America — *none!* or the debased culture of Hollywood... or the integrity of diabolical thinking that exists in the minds of our nation's liberal elite — thus, I have no desire to associate with members of these three cultures (cf. Ps 1:1; 5:9; 10:3-4; 36:1-4; 119:104). My prayer is that millions of those who align themselves with the diabolical thinking of the left will turn from it and place their trust in Christ. To give clarity to what I just said, "*all people are sinners, be they believers or unbelievers;*" Christians don't worship at the altar of other Christians, or beat each other up because of their imperfections; not at all, instead we worship at the altar of Christ alone, and in so doing place our trust in Him and obey Him. Perhaps it is best to contrast "*the diabolical deeds of fleshly men*" and "*the fruit of the Spirit*" as outlined by the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:19-23 —

- ***Diabolical Fleshly living*** is immoral, impure, sensual, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, and carousing.
- ***Divine Godly living*** is loving God, loving other (especially believers), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Ultimately, the question is this: “Which of these two lifestyles best characterizes your life?” Though divine perfection doesn’t characterize anyone’s life in this world, the true born-again Christian will exhibit “godliness” far more than “fleshliness” — conversely, the non-Christian will be far more inclined to exhibit “fleshliness,” because “true godliness” is not a characteristic of the unbelieving world. Though there are religious people all over the world who behave somewhat respectfully, none of them humbly love others as God requires; they simply try to live righteously. Paul follows up his contrasting of the two lifestyles with these words: “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24) — that word “crucified” is emphatic in Greek and defines the centrality of that verse. The verb tense here indicates something that happened decisively in the past; *i.e.*, at conversion. When we were saved, there was a sense in which we nailed our old, evil, corrupt self to the cross with all its affections and lusts, and determined that we would no longer live to cater to our fallen nature; that it would no longer be the dominate force in our life. Due to the fact that we inhabit sinful flesh, we renew this commitment over and over and over again in life; the Christian life involves constantly keeping the flesh in the place of death (cf. Mt 16:24; Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20; 6:14). Writes Paul, “Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16) — when we walk according to the Spirit, we allow God to have His way in our life; thus we are to constantly be occupied with Christ and make decisions in the light of His holiness. Writes Paul, “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, and new things have come” (2 Cor 5:17) — when we became new creatures in Christ, the diabolical qualities that we possessed as unbelievers (self-centeredness, old priorities, old value systems, pride, old habits, evil thoughts and lustful looks) no longer dominated our lives; divine qualities and Christian character (God-centeredness, humility and a new spiritual perception of things) now became the most important things that characterized our lives; in short, we no longer have an affection for the things of this world... instead we now have an affection for the things of God. Now with all of the foregoing in mind, it stands to reason that the culture of the “believing world” can be radically different from the culture of the “unbelieving world,” regardless of one’s race or ethnicity, the believing world does not co-mingle with the unbelieving world, because their values are very different. Beloved, do not be deceived.

Without question, the most profound study the Lord ever led me to do, is one that is titled, “Sin and Man’s Eternal Purpose.” Aside from the doctrine of Christ, no other study comes close to matching this one — not only that, it gave me a much greater understanding of Christ and the Cross. In that study I learned the purpose of sin in God’s economy; that sin really has a purpose; it was not just something that accidentally became a part of our world. Though I have a doctorate in theology, and have sat under some of the most incredible scholars in the world, I had never heard this teaching. The “reason” for man’s existence is expressed this way in the Christian world’s most noted catechism (the Westminster Catechism): “Man exists for the glory of God” — though that is precisely why we exist, those words in and of themselves do not give clear definition to that reason... once one understands why God so willed that “sin” exist in the entire

created order, one will then understand “*the reason why he exists*” — when I discovered the reason why I exist, it was so profound to me that it completely changed the way in which I now look at life. This thing called “*sin*” is one incredible reality. The simplistic understanding I had of sin prior to doing this study was extremely shallow in comparison. If you would like to read this study, check out my website: www.thetransformedsoul.com simply click on the “*Additional Studies*” link at the top of the homepage, and then scan the various “*Spiritual Life Studies*” that are listed. You can print a “*pdf copy*” of any of my studies by clicking on the “*icon*” in the upper right hand corner of any study.

BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY

James H. Cone is the chief architect of “*Black Liberation Theology*” — he has written several books on the subject. He states, “*Black Liberation Theology refuses to accept a God who is not identified totally with the goals of the Black community. If God is not for us and against White people, then He is a murderer and we had better kill Him. Black theology will accept only the love of God which participates in the destruction of the White enemy. What we need is the Divine love expressed in Black power. Which is the power of Black people to destroy their oppressors here and now by any means at their disposal. Unless God is participating in this holy activity we must reject his love.*” That is the philosophical foundation of Cone’s thinking — God must be “*pro-Black,*” and “*the precursor and progenitor of black supremacy.*” His thinking actually parallels that of the Muslim world; that’s probably where much of his thinking came from — *any action is okay that brings about the advance of Islam.* Jeremiah Wright, the African American pastor of Trinity Church in Chicago, was the spiritual mentor of Barack Obama for more than twenty years — it was at Trinity Church where Barack found religion, where he was married, and where his daughters were baptized. Jeremiah Wright latched onto Cone’s race-based theology and mixed it with Christianity; his statements are the heart of this theology — “*Jesus was a poor black man*” because he lived in oppression at the hands of “*rich white people.*” *Black theology has held that having black conceptions of God and images of Christ is crucial for empowerment; thus it politicizes Christianity and emphasizes racial autonomy.* The question that everyone must ultimately ask himself is this: “*Am I believing divine truth (i.e., ultimate reality), or is humanistic thinking too prominent in my mind?*” Sometimes life isn’t what we thought it was, or wanted it to be; if that is the case, are you willing to embrace it for what it is, or will you insist on making it correspond with your innate desires? The philosophical foundation of Christian thinking is “*understanding who God is, who we are, and what God’s plan is for our life;*” thus “*reality*” must be understood and accepted — that is a very long journey for many people in our world; even in the Christian world. When our understanding of reality is insufficient or tainted with untruth, we must give ourselves “*to knowing the truth;*” only then will life make sense, and set us free from being enslaved to erroneous thinking. If this subject interests you, let me encourage you to read a study I did titled, “*Enslaved*

to Christ” — it is extremely provocative and life changing. You can access it on my website: www.thetransformedsoul.com

Obama, in his famous speech on race relations – “*A More Perfect Union*” – referred to the supremacist black nationalist belief that “*Blacks are the real Jews; God’s Chosen People.*” In his book “*Dreams From My Father,*” he said: “*I imagined the stories of ordinary black people merging with the stories of David & Goliath, Moses & Pharaoh, the believers in the lion’s den & Ezekiel’s field of dry bones. Those stories of survival and freedom and hope became our story, my story; the blood that had been spilled was our blood, the tears our tears.*” Obviously, Scripture (God’s revelation to man) is not the foundation of Black Liberation Theology; rather, hatred for white oppression and white injustice is its foundation. The most disconcerting thing about Obama’s declaration is its influence on the black community; how many African Americans are opting out of their biblical faith and embracing the thinking and theology of Obama and James Cone? It is understandable that the vast majority of blacks voted for Obama (93%) because he is black, but how much his thinking has impacted *Black constructs of faith* is altogether another issue. Though “*racism*” continues to exist in our world at some level, and cannot be approved or supported (anything that is wrong is to be rejected), neither can the fight against racism and injustice be the foundation of one’s theology — to do so is to *make a significant issue the premiere issue*. It should be noted, there are not only *White* racists, there are *Black* racists, *Asian* racists, *Mexican* racists, *etc.*; to simply accuse “*whites*” of being the world’s racists is absolute stupidity... the problem is, the diabolical left has decided to identify “*white Christians*” as being racists! to anger the world! so that the world will reject these so-called brainless, religious freaks! There is *nothing* these corrupt idiots won’t do to destroy true born-again Christians; again, *the left demonstrates a complete absence of integrity in its thinking* — it matters not whether or not they can defend their position with integrity, the only thing that matters is getting “*a lie*” implanted in the minds of the world regarding Christians. Beloved, this is no silly little issue we’re talking about, this is an attack on the character of God and His people. If some of you can’t handle reality, close the book and go play your little tidily winks game... I am not address-ing this issue to *create* a problem, I am addressing this issue to *identify* a problem. Let’s continue on —

As I sit here today and reflect upon our recent past and the election of Barack Obama, I am now far more troubled than I was ten years ago. I remember all of the rhetoric that was going around out there in our political world concerning his close association with Jeremiah Wright, and how Obama attempted to “*distance himself from Wright and what he taught*” (rather than owning up to his true convictions, he disavowed who he really was; the “*end*” justified the means in his mind; that same tenet is used in Islam)... but now, years later some very sobering truths have surfaced in my mind. I wish I would have been more attentive in examining the essence of Black Theology and what Wright was teaching; but for some reason I was not — I had already found politics to be nothing but a twisted, dishonest discussion of reality. Apparently I just hoped that Obama was

simply “*an attendee*” of a prominent black church in Chicago; that he really wasn’t into all of the diabolical theology that particular church was propounding (as he’d intimated). Now years later as I reflect upon Barack and Michelle Obama’s comments, it has become very evident that “*they are not only ardent followers of Black Theology, but they have a diabolical love for the Islamic world, and a diabolical hatred for Israel and Christianity*” — if you have ever studied the Bible you know “*that’s a No-No;*” the Jews and Christians are *God’s chosen people* whether one likes it or not (cf. Gen 12:1-3; Num 24:9; Deut 7:6; 14:2; Ps 33:12; Is 45:4-7; Eph 1:4; 2:10; 2 Th 2:13; Mt 25:34); somewhere along the line, one has to learn to “*let God be GOD.*” One can’t displace Him with human diabolical thinking — numerous nations and people have struck out at God’s people since He chose Abraham and his descendants to be *His servants* in this world; *i.e.*, those who serve His purposes. Though none of us fully understand exactly what God is doing in our world at any given point in time, He has clearly told us to “*trust Him and His plan for His people.*”

Due to Obama’s influence on America’s civil and foreign policy, as a nation we now find our self on the precipice of falling prey to diabolical principles in pretty much every sector of society, where God is neither acknowledged or followed — political ideology seems to have displaced divine truth; that is, the thinking of men has displaced God’s thinking. Remember, our country was founded by men who not only believed in religious freedom, but believed in those divine principles that God outlined in His Word (read the constitution); as such, we experienced God’s favor in this world; just as Israel did when it embraced God in its history. But now with ever-increasing defiance and rejection of God’s divine precepts, it appears as if we will now *start reaping* what we have sown; since we have now sown diabolical ideals, we will reap accordingly — it should be obvious, America has been on a downward plight now for a good while. To deny the superintendence of God in this world is the foundation of diabolical thought — either we live life with a *diabolical orientation*, or we live life with a *divine orientation* (*i.e.*, either we defer to the devil, or we defer to God); those are the only two options that God has given to this fallen world (to opt out of one is to embrace the other). Said Jesus, “*either you are for Me or you are against Me*” (Mt 12:30). Taking God off the stage is the most foolish action one can make (cf. Ps 14:1; Rom 1:21-25); as important as the “*sun*” is to life on this planet, so is “*God*” to the spiritual well-being of all His creatures. Obviously God has not given man the responsibility of figuring everything out on his own (man doesn’t have the ability to do that)... rather He has asked man to “*simply humble himself before Him,*” (*i.e.*, acknowledge his infirmities, deficiencies and inadequacies) and in so doing “*God will open his heart to believe and extend grace to him*” (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Th 1:5; Jam 1:21; 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5); *it is the proud person that God rejects* (*i.e.*, those who think they are wise autonomous creatures). The reality is, we are all a bunch of decrepit sinful people (*i.e.*, a people with a “*self orientation*”); but the vast majority of human beings are simply too proud to fess up to the truth of who they really are. Now if we as human beings were basically all that really existed, then we would each have the option of using our own skill-set to determine our own destiny, and those who get in our way we would either eradicate from our lives or we would relocate to another area. Obviously, all of us as

human beings don't think the same, and don't have the same values, so more than likely we would continually be at war with each other (which is a pretty good picture of our present world). I remember the words of that young black guy who was arrested in Los Angeles some 30-40 years ago: "Can't we all just get along?" The truth is, we can't all just get along, because we are stubborn, fallen sinful creatures; though that answer may not sit well with you, that is the reality; only the diabolical element in our world insists that it has the answer to the fallen nature of man — again, nothing could be more foolish. By the way, Scripture tells us that "God is restraining sin's expression in our world," so that it doesn't completely dominate all that goes on in this world... so we must not fool ourselves into thinking that man is basically good; that there are just a few rotten apples in the world — the whole human family is rotten to the core (cf. Lk 18:19; Rom 3:10-19). The sobering news is, God is going to one day remove His hand from this world (to a degree) and let sin pretty much have "full expression"... and then the end shall come, and God will judge the world accordingly. Always keep "the big picture" in mind when looking at reality — God is on the thrown! (cf. Is 55:6-11; 66:1-2); never lose sight of that fact.

Michelle Obama's comment following the election of Trump was this: "All hope is now lost" — that makes sense if you are really a believer in Black Theology... little does she know, she has been deceived (cf. Gen 3:13; 2 Cor 11:3; Col 2:8; Rev 12:9), and is embracing a system of thought that is simply a "dead end street" (it may sound good and appeal to her innate bias, but ultimately it is going nowhere, because it is not of God) — I feel sorry for both Michelle and Barack because they have believed diabolical lies (such thinking is not of divine origin). In addition to that, I feel sorry for those blacks who have embraced this false hope and have made Black Theology their construct of faith... all in the hope that they will ascend to the throne and dictate what goes on in their little world. It is no wonder that Michelle expressed "hatred" for our country years ago, because both her and her husband were ardent believers in Black Theology (*i.e.*, that Black Theology is the answer to the black world). The reality is, either we believe what God says, or we believe what man says. The most troubling aspect of Black Theology is its "hatred for Christians." Since any diabolical didactic like that is a "work of Satan," Black Theology is diabolical in its orientation. Satan was not only the cause of the fall of the human race (cf. Gen 3), he is the one who tempts every human being... he is the one who leads them astray... he is the one who rules over the unbelieving world (cf. Is 14:12-17; 2 Cor 4:3-4; Eph 2:2; Col 1:13), and he is in continual conflict with those who have placed their faith in Christ (cf. Eph 6:11-18; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Jn 5:16). Should one fail to be ever mindful that Satan is constantly at work in our world, he will simply delude himself (1 Pet 5:8). Scripture clearly teaches us about "what is going to happen at the end of the age" — Satan is going to rule for a season; God is going to let him to do so to accomplish His own eternal purposes... in so doing Satan will be in opposition against God and His people, just as he has been since the very beginning. He is going to manifest himself in the future as "the abomination of desolation" in the temple (cf. Dan 11:31; Mt 24:15; Mark 13:14; Rev 13:14-15); and "exalt himself to the position of deity" (cf. Dan 11:36-39; 2 Th 2:3-4). "He will speak out against the Most High and persecute His saints" (cf. Dan 7:25). Paul defines Christ's archenemy as "the lawless

one” & “*the man of lawlessness*” (cf. 2 Th 2:3, 8-9). It is important to always remember that Satan disguises himself as “*an angel of light*” (2 Cor 11:14); therefore he is “*very deceitful*” (Gen 3:13; Dan 8:25). He plays on our wishes and our wants, so we can’t just believe what we *want* to believe; we must examine the Scriptures to see if what we are thinking and being taught is indeed “*true*” (cf. Acts 17:11; 2 Tim 2:15). Jesus told His disciples, “*False Christs and false prophets will arise so as to mislead – if possible even the elect*” (cf. Mt 24:24); thus God’s children must not let themselves be “*swayed by false doctrine*” (cf. Eph 4:14; 6:11; 1 Cor 14:20; Gal 3:1). Whether or not you *like* someone’s political rhetoric or not, you must examine the *foundation* of what they are saying, and ask yourself if it “*truly aligns with what God’s Word teaches;*” remember, “*the righteous live by faith*” (that is, by believing what *God* says; cf. Rom 1:17). As Christians we are to confide in other believers so that we may not stray from the *truth* (cf. Acts 17: 11; Eph 4:11-16).

What we appear to be seeing in Black Theology is the beginning of a “*hateful divide*” that Satan is going to use to persecute God’s people here in America. Quite frankly, I never thought I’d see the day when the persecution of Christians would begin to take centerstage in our nation; it seemed so foreign to everything I had experienced in years past... but now there are six significant sectors in our society that are joining hands in lambasting the Christian community: the diabolical left, the majority of our news commentators, the majority of our colleges and universities, the liberal elites, the entertainment industry, and the ultra-liberal black community – all six of these entities seem to be coming together to establish a *federation of hate* – remember the words of Jesus: “*Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*” (i.e., their deeds are *self-oriented* rather than *God-oriented* – cf. Jn 3:19); Jesus goes on to declare that “*everyone who does evil hates the light*” (cf. Jn 3:20). The reality is, the diabolical left *hates Christianity* (both its doctrine and its followers). For those of you who think this is a little far-fetched, you have not been paying attention to the demonic ugliness that has been sweeping through our country in recent years. With the foregoing in mind, the Lord Jesus said in the *Sermon on the Mount*: “*You’ve heard it said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy;’ but I say to you love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? If you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*” (Mt 5:43-47). The fact that *love* is commanded shows that it is a matter of our *will*, not our *emotions*; nowhere in Scripture are we ever commanded to “*feel*” anything; as previously stated, our feelings cannot be controlled in an absolute sense. Though our feelings can be intense at times, we are not to let them rule in our lives (by the way, my feelings sometimes get very intense, just like yours do) – the dynamic of the flesh is *feelings*, whereas the dynamic of the Spirit is *faith* (obedience to the Word). The question every believer must ask himself is this – “Am I going to let my *feelings* rule in my soul, or am I going to let *God’s Word* rule in my soul?”

Clearly James E. Cone operates on “*feelings*” — he hates anything he doesn’t agree with, and has made “*hate*” a primary construct of his faith. No matter how justified one may feel he is in “*hating someone*,” hate is antithetical to the teaching of Scripture — though we are to hate what is evil, we are not to hate people (I expand on this later because there is much more to it than meets the eye). “*We are not to repay evil for evil, but do what is right*” (cf. Rom 12:17). “*We are not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*” (cf. Rom 12:21). Remember, Jesus Himself said, “*We are to love our enemies and do good to them*” (Mt 5:44); in so doing “*we will heap burning coals on their head*” (i.e., cause an acute sense of shame in their heart — Rom 12:20). Down through the ages God repeatedly reminded His people to *never* take revenge saying, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay*” (cf. Prv 20:22; 24:29; Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Rom 12:19); it is God’s prerogative to punish wrongdoing, not man’s; incidentally, the “*I will repay*” is stated emphatically in Greek — God doesn’t want believers to think for one moment that our enemies are going to get away with evil. The apostle Paul writes, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap*... the one who sows to his own *flesh* shall reap corruption, but the one who sows to the *Spirit* shall reap eternal life” (Gal 6:7-8). The message is clear, “*we cannot live according to the dictates of our flesh*” (i.e., our fallen sinful nature).

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, *the tragedy of repaying evil for evil is that we add evil to evil* — he called it “*the chain reaction of evil*” — hate multiplies hate and violence multiplies violence in “*a descending spiral of destruction*” (*Strength to Love*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1964, p. 51). It’s too bad King’s successor, **Jesse Jackson**, and the majority of the black world didn’t embrace what King clearly taught. The black leaders today are reminiscent of the Pharisaical world during the time of Christ — they *pretended* to honor the prophets of old, when in fact they were no different than their fathers who had killed them (read Mt 23:29-36); in like manner, the liberal black world has placed **Martin Luther King** on the throne, but do not embrace what he taught! As such, they are a complete contradiction of who he was. My question to black America is this — are you going to *heed King’s words*, or the words of those *diabolical leaders* who have replaced him as “*head of the Black world*” in our country? Martin Luther King, though a man of foibles like all of us, was a man after God’s own heart; he walked in the light because he had trusted Christ as his Savior. When the Holy Spirit takes up residence in a believer’s life, *He moves him in a godly direction*. Obviously, no matter how virtuous any of us may think we are, none of us “*like*” everything or every person; but that is not the point Jesus is making. Instead Jesus is saying, “*In spite of the fact that you don’t like your enemy, you are to show love to him*” (not hate); i.e., you’re to respond with “*love*” even toward those you may not necessarily like, and in so doing let God minister His grace to their heart. You’ll notice, God Himself deals graciously with both the just and the unjust, both the good and the bad. Jesus closes this little discourse by exhorting us to *imitate God by dispensing blessing to everyone without partiality* (cf. Mt 5:43-48). Obviously, *one cannot love unless the love of God has been poured out in his heart by the Holy Spirit* (cf. Rom 5:5; 1 Jn 3:10-18; 4:7-13; 4:19-21). The reality is this, the spiteful leaders of Black Theology are “*not loving people*” — why? because the Holy Spirit has *not* taken up residence in their soul; therefore *hate* rules in

their soul; they are simply defunct human beings like all other unbelievers. Jesus told His disciples the night before He went to the cross, “[keep in mind], apart from Me you can do nothing, so you need to abide in My love” (i.e., be ever conscious of my love for you; Jn 15:5, 9-10); unbelievers do not love and do not abide in God’s love, because God’s Spirit does not dwell in them (Rom 8:9); instead they simply live by the dictates of their diabolical flesh and what seems right to them (i.e., to their fallen human minds – cf. Prv 16: 25); that’s the reason why “hate” rules in their soul. Do I ever have feelings of hate? Of course I do, all people do... none of us are unique in that regard; in spite of the fact that we all hate at times, we are not to let hate rule in our soul. Due to the fact the Christian world largely rejects the “moral values” of the left, the left will launch every attack possible on them, including calling them bigots and racists, as if such declarations makes them a people of virtue. Think about it, simply because the believing world rejects the values of the unbelieving world, we are called bigots and racists (i.e., people who are prejudicially intolerant of others); little do they know, we are rejecting diabolical human values and embracing God’s divine values (which has nothing to do with prejudicial intolerance). The truth is, ardent leftist ideologues embrace every diabolical value that their passions find appealing, and will take whatever steps are necessary to make those values foundational to our culture; even if it means “some kind of evolutionary war” (which could very well happen). In other words, the left is completely sold out to diabolical values — anything that restricts them or denies their autonomy is passionately rejected. Now whatever the immediate future in our country is, the reality is, God is ruling and will one day bring the hatchet down on those who have arrogantly sided with the evil one and hated His people. If history tells us anything it is this: “those who ‘hate’ will not listen to those who do not align themselves with their way of thinking” ... so those of us on the right should not be surprised; at this particular point it appears we are just going to have to wait until God drops the hatchet. I say this, because the passionate thinking of the diabolical left is very pronounced in our world today, and coalesces with what Scripture teaches on “the end times.”

If there is anything certain in this world, it is this: “God will have the last word.” Only time will prove that to the diabolical people of our world; “when you hate the light and love darkness you will never listen,” and only “by humbling oneself before God” will one’s heart ever be opened to the truth (because God is the dispenser of truth). Little does the diabolical left know, the emotion of hatred ultimately blurs one’s vision, and causes him to think irrationally (stupid). Consider “Adolf Hitler.” Remember, God is the one who ultimately controls the outcome of things (cf. Prov 16:1, 9). Just because significant emotional fire (rage) burns in one’s soul, has nothing to do with who wins the battle; more often than not those who are angry and undisciplined lose in a very painful way. Ultimately, it is usually arrogant thinking that causes people to go to WAR! Such has happened thousands of times in our world. As the old song stated it, “When will we ever learn?” The truth is, “This world will never learn!” In the lives of many people, “hatred” (a reactionary emotion) controls the discourse in their minds and ends up destroying them. A significant corollary of hate is “anger” — though there is an upside to

proper anger (Eph 4:26), there is a very destructive downside to it when it is not grounded in biblical truth (cf. Jam 1:20; Prv 15:1; 19:11; 29:8; 30:33). As King Solomon said, “*Anger resides in the bosom of fools*” (cf. Ecc 7:9). Essentially, anger is damaging when it is ventilated or when it is internalized; *i.e.*, when people blow up or when they clam up. God has written a lot on this subject in His Word, if you want to study the issue. I find it interesting that even the wise sages of history were able to discern the folly of hatred — **Confucius** (ca 525 BC) said: “*It’s easy to hate, and it’s difficult to love; this is how the whole scheme of things works. All good things are difficult to achieve.*” Likewise, **Buddha**, who also lived during the 6th century BC said, “*Never in the world does hatred cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love.*” Then there was the renowned scientist **George Sarton** who said, “*The most malicious kind of hatred is that which is built upon a theological foundation;*” sadly, hatred is the essence of Black Theology. Should some of you not like what the great sages of history had to say, at least listen to what God has to say. The long and short of it is, the foundation of “**hate**” is man’s diabolical flesh; *when you let hate rule in your soul, you will pay a steep price*. Is “*truth*” foundational to your thinking, or are “*other values*” more important to you?

As believers, “*we are to do good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of faith*” (cf. Gal 6:10; Mt 5:16; 7:17f; 12:35; Lk 6:27; Eph 2:10). Did you take notice of the word “*especially*”? Showing love to God’s people is a “*must*” – the Bible clearly teaches that “*hating God’s people*” is a sign that one is not truly of the household of faith, and is an indicator that one is not truly born again (1 Jn 3:10-18; 4:7-8, 20). Though all of us as believers stumble in life, and possibly for an extended period of time, *all true born-again believers ultimately persevere to the end because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who continually moves us in a godly direction* (cf. Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; Rom 8:25; 15:5; Phil 1:6; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; Titus 2:2). According to the apostle John, however, *there were some who had left the early first century church*, and he responded this way: “They went out from us, but they were *not really of us*; for if they had been of us, *they would have remained with us*; ultimately they went out from us in order that it might be shown *that they were not truly of us*” (1 Jn 2:19). Conversely, Jesus said, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father...* many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, we prophesied in Your name; we cast out demons in Your name; we did this and that in Your name.’ Behold, I will declare to them, ‘*I never knew you (i.e., “I never had relationship with you”); depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*” (lawless individuals do not humbly acknowledge their sinfulness or hunger after the truth and embrace the lordship of Christ; they are not subordinate to Christ and His will for their lives). The reality is this: one can come close to knowing some spiritual truths and not truly be born-again; they may outwardly embrace divine truth to a degree, but never to the point where it settles deeply in their soul. Without humility of heart and hungering after the truth, ultimately one will rebel against God and His people. Remember, evil oftentimes masks itself with *pretense*; *i.e.*, it is pretending to be what one is not (*i.e.*, good), it is talk without truth, it is action without holiness, and profession without divine substance. Satan disguises himself as an “*angel of light*”

(2 Cor 11:14); the reality is, those who are evil “*hate the light*” (Jn 3:20), because the one and only true GOD is not their god (cf. Is 45:5-7).

ACTIONS OF BARACK OBAMA’S ADMINISTRATION

There are hundreds of incidents that took place during Obama’s administration that demonstrated his disdain for the Christian world (both Protestant and Catholic) and the Jewish nation; obviously I only address a few of them. Quite honestly, I got sick reading all of this junk (they are just one diabolical precept after another), so I only quote a few of them as you will see. You can go online to a number of sources to read about all of the “*anti-biblical rhetoric and actions*” that characterized Obama’s administration. One online source would be “*America’s Most Biblically-Hostile U.S. President.*” Perhaps the most accurate description of Obama’s antipathy toward Catholics, Protestants, religious Jews, and the Jewish nation would be to characterize him as “*anti-Biblical.*” According to Rabbi Jonathan Cahn (who attended a National Prayer Breakfast) — “Obama led this nation to *champion the killing of the unborn*, and not only within its borders, but in that of other nations across the world... that he labored to strike down the standards and order ordained by God *concerning man and woman and marriage* (again, not only within these borders, but around the world)... that he took part in isolating and *condemning Israel* before the entire world, and advancing a resolution which proclaimed that Israel had no right to *Jerusalem*; that it did not belong to Israel, that it was ‘*a Palestinian territory.*’” I find it amazing that one can go back in history just a little way and then make a final judgment on such findings... all the while completely ignoring the far more significant ancient history — either denying its significance and pretending that it didn’t even exist. The truth is, Obama knows nothing of the integrity of Scripture (he simply lets his feelings dictate reality); but what can one expect from our diabolical world? It always astonishes me at how fallen man justifies his thinking; he simply ignores anything he doesn’t want to hear, and embraces what he wants to hear — obviously, such is completely lacking in integrity. Let me give voice to a few of Obama’s behaviors —

When President Obama met with Pope Francis in the White House, he intentionally invited *gay rights* and *pro-abortion activists* to attend his meeting with him. The Vatican expressed concerns over the White House guest list — a senior Vatican official told The Wall Street Journal that there are concerns photos of the pope with such activists could be seen as an endorsement. When Obama’s administration invited scores of *Muslim representatives* to America, the State Department was called out at least twice for *denying visas to solitary Christian representatives*. When a few persecuted Iraqi Christians crossed the border into the U.S., they were thrown into prison for months and then sent back to the countries that were persecuting them; thus, they would possibly be enslaved, raped, or murdered — statistics repeatedly show that Obama’s administration took in a *vastly disproportionate number of Sunni Muslims* into our country... that his administration massively favored Muslims over Christians. When war erupted in Syria in 2011,

approximately 75% of the population was Sunni Muslim and 10% Christian. If the U.S. were to admit Christian refugees in proportion to their population in Syria, about 1260 Christians would have been resettled here in the U.S. — but only 68 were allowed here. Though Sunni Muslims comprise 75% of Syria’s population, 99% of those received by the U.S. were Muslims. *In a lawsuit filed by an appellate court against the Department of Homeland Security*, Judge Daniel Manion wrote that he was “*concerned about the apparent lack of Syrian Christians as a part of immigrants from that country*”; [though] 10 percent of the population of Syria is Christian, yet less than one-half of one percent of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States were Christian.” Obama’s hostility toward Biblical people of faith is often contrasted with his preferential treatment of Muslims and Muslim nations. Though Obama professes to be a Christian, black theology has nothing whatsoever to do with biblical Christianity; just as many in the “*cultic world*” call themselves Christians, they do not at all embrace the teachings of Scripture. I find it amazing at how Satan seems to operate — he will do anything to muddy the water of Christianity. Following are a few more diabolical negatives that came from Obama’s administration —

- In 2009, the annual *White House Christmas cards*, rather than focusing on Christmas, Jesus Christ, or faith, instead it highlighted things such as the family dogs... and the White House Christmas tree ornaments included figures such as Mao Tse-Tung and a drag queen. Keep in mind, everything one does is done with a purpose in mind.
- In 2016, President Obama appointed a *transgender* to the Advisory Council on Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships.
- In 2013, the Obama Department of Justice defunded a Young Marines chapter in Louisiana *because its oath mentioned God*, and another youth program because it permitted a voluntary student-led prayer.
- In 2013, Pastor Louie Giglio was pressured to remove himself from praying at the inauguration after it is discovered he once preached a sermon supporting the *Biblical definition of marriage*.
- In 2012, the Obama administration forgave student loans in exchange for public service, but announced it would no longer forgive student loans if the public service was related to *religion*.
- In 2012, the Obama administration argued that the First Amendment provides *no protection for churches and synagogues* in hiring their pastors and rabbis.
- In 2011, the Obama administration denigrated other countries’ religious beliefs as *an obstacle to radical homosexual rights*.
- In 2011, President Obama opposed the inclusion of President Franklin Roosevelt’s famous *D-Day Prayer* in the WWII Memorial. Unlike all previous presidents, Obama studiously *avoided any religious references* in his Thanksgiving speech.
- In 2011, the Obama administration released its new health care rules that overrode *religious conscience protections for medical workers* in the areas of abortion and contraception.

- In 2011, for the first time in American history, Obama urged passage of a nondiscrimination law that does not contain hiring protections for religious groups, forcing religious organizations to hire according to federal mandates without regard to the dictates of their own faith.
- In 2011, although he filled posts in the State Department... for more than two years Obama did not fill the post of religious freedom ambassador (an official that works against religious persecution across the world); he filled it only after heavy pressure from the public and from Congress.
- In 2011, after a federal law was passed to transfer a WWI Memorial in the Mojave Desert to private ownership, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the cross in the memorial could continue to stand, but the Obama administration refused to allow the land to be transferred as required by law, and refused to allow the cross to be re-erected as ordered by the Court.
- In 2010, Obama misquotes the National Motto, saying it is “E pluribus unum” rather than “In God We Trust” as established by federal law.
- In 2010, Obama began to deliberately omit the phrase about “the Creator” when quoting the Declaration of Independence; an omission he made on no less than seven occasions.
- In 2009, Obama declined to host services for the National Prayer Day (a day established by federal law) at the White House.
- In 2009, when speaking at Georgetown University, Obama ordered that a monogram symbolizing Jesus’ name be covered when he was to make his speech.
- In 2009, in a deliberate act of disrespect, Obama nominated three pro-abortion ambassadors to the Vatican; of course, the pro-life Vatican rejected all three.
- In 2009, Obama announced plans to revoke conscience protection for health workers who refuse to participate in medical activities that go against their beliefs, and fully implemented the plan in February, 2011.
- In 2008, Obama spoke disrespectfully of Christians, saying “they cling to guns or religion” and “have an antipathy to people who aren’t like them.”
- In 2016, a military prayer breakfast whose speaker was highly decorated Delta Force Lt. General Jerry Boykin (retired) was cancelled because Boykin was a traditional value Christian who had voiced his support for natural marriage and his opposition to Islamic extremism — the atheist critic behind the cancellation had complained that Boykin was a “homophobic, Islamophobic, fundamentalist Christian extremist.”
- In 2016, at the orders of a commander, a 33-year Air Force veteran was forcibly and physically removed by four other airmen because he attempted to use the word “God” in a retirement speech.
- In 2015, a decorated Navy chaplain was prohibited from fulfilling his duty of comforting the family (or any member of the unit) after the loss of a sailor because it was feared that he would say something about faith and God. He was even banned from the base on the day of the sailor’s memorial service.

- In 2015, a high decorated Navy SEAL chaplain was relieved of duty for providing counseling that contained religious views on things such as faith, marriage and sexuality.
- In 2014, Maxwell Air Force Base suddenly banned Gideons from handing out Bibles to willing recruits, a practice that had been occurring for years previously.
- In 2013, a counter-intelligence briefing at Fort Hood tells soldiers that evangelical Christians are a threat to Americans and that for a soldier to donate to such a group “was punishable under military regulations.”
- In 2013, Catholic priests hired to serve as military chaplains were prohibited from performing Mass services at base chapels during the government financial shut-down; when they offered to freely do Mass for soldiers without receiving pay, they were still denied permission to do so.
- In 2013, the Air Force Academy, in response to a complaint from Mikey Weinstein’s Military Religious Freedom Foundation, made the words “so help me God” optional in a cadet’s honor oath.
- In 2013, a Senior Master Sergeant was removed from his position and reassigned because he told his openly lesbian squadron commander that she should not punish a staff sergeant who expressed his views in favor of traditional marriage.
- In 2014, the Obama administration sought funding for every type of sex-education; except that which reflects traditional moral values.
- In 2012, the Obama administration opposed legislation to protect the rights of conscience for military chaplains who do not wish to perform same-sex marriages in violation of their strongly-held religious beliefs.

Now, whether the issue was abortion, same-sex marriage, being an advocate of planned parenthood, hating anything that has a Christian orientation, refusing to wish people “Merry Christmas” (it’s how “Happy Holidays”), removing “Christmas ornaments” in the public square, encouraging the retail market to eliminate any mention of Christ or Christianity during the Christmas season (it’s now “Happy Holiday” time), removing “prayer” from government sponsored events, rejecting “religious expression” in the public arena; obviously, this list goes on and on and on... I have simply listed a few things to help one see the “hatred for Christians” that Obama and black-liberation theology endorses.

THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The separation of Church and State is a phrase that is not found in the Constitution. The phrase “wall of separation between the Church and State” was originally coined by Thomas Jefferson in a letter he wrote to Danbury Baptists in Connecticut in 1802. The reason for writing the letter was to assuage their fears — he told them the wall was erected to “protect them;” *i.e.*, to keep the State out of the Church’s business, not to keep the Church out of the State’s business. The Constitution states, “Congress shall

make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof — thus the Constitution was placing restrictions on the government concerning the passing of laws that would interfere with religion. The leftist ideologues have since *twisted* the clear meaning of what the government said, and has used it to keep the Church out of the State's business. Thus the left has used its new found interpretation to eliminate anything from government or the public arena that has to do with "*Christianity or Christian theism.*" In actuality, the left has intentionally *distorted* the clear meaning of our nation's Constitution. One only needs to examine the European historical background of the founders of our country to identify what specifically motivated them to word things as they did. The foregoing simply demonstrates the way the "*liberal left*" has operated in our country for the past 60 years — their hatred for the "*religious right*" has grown significantly since I was a teenager.

In 1892, the Supreme Court thoroughly studied this issue and declared that "*this is a Christian nation.*" Stated **John Quincy Adams**, "*The highest glory of the American Revolution was, it connected one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.*" Can you even imagine such words being spoken today in our country? Historians clearly state that 90-95% of our country's founding fathers were *practicing Trinitarian Christians* — thus the words, "*In God we trust*" are emblazoned over the Speaker of the House in the U.S. Capitol. Likewise, *oaths in courtrooms* have involved God from the beginning... *prayers* have been said at the swearing in of every President, and every President has been *sworn in* with his hand on the Bible, saying "*So help me God.*" Furthermore, our *National Anthem* mentions God. The *Declaration of Independence* mentions God four times. *The Bible* was used as a textbook in all our schools until the middle of the 20th century — for years all of the foregoing were endorsed by liberals and conservatives alike. The separation of Church and State (as stated above) has long been viewed as a cornerstone of American Democracy. The first amendment to the Constitution in the "*Bill of Rights*" (ratified in 1791) was "*the freedom of speech, press, religion, and petition*" — "congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of Religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of Speech, or of the Press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to Petition the government for a redress of grievances." It appears as though it was only a matter of time until a fairly large segment of our society became "*unchurched, unspiritual, and diabolical*" and started muddying the waters and hating the God of our forefathers; tragically, this group of people would be far more prone to embracing Communism and Atheism than the Deistic thinking that characterized our forefathers; they are already finding ways to persecute those on the "*Religious Right*" — they are being denied jobs, jury duty, influence in our schools, and a host of other things. Once people truly reject divine truth, God gives them over to a "*depraved mind*" and they become slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, and inventors of evil; that's what happens when God "*darkens one's mind.*" Regarding "*the consequences of unbelief,*" read Romans 1:18-32. I stated for foregoing pretty hard, because I really

wonder how many professing Christians really understand the severity of diabolical thinking.

WHY HOLLYWOOD HATES CHRISTIANITY

The television host, ***John Ankerberg***, addressed this issue in an article that appeared in “*Front Page Magazine*” and in “*Movie Guide*” — in it he says the Hollywood Left views Orthodox Christians and Orthodox Jews as “*the enemy*” — even more than the military, corporate executive, the CIA, southern sheriffs, and Republicans. In a word, ***Hollywood hates authentic Christians, because Christianity is diametrically opposed to its world-view***: a dogma reflected in the very deep thoughts of Michael Moore, Tim Robbins, and Barbara Streisand. It is based on the following five tenets:

1. ***Sexual Liberation*** — the glorification of *pre-marital sex* (including adolescent experimentation), adultery, homosexuality, abortion and the sexualization of children. This may be contrasted with the Judeo-Christian ethic of *sexual restraint/responsibility*, and the sanctification of sex within marriage.
2. ***A Live-for-the-Moment Ethos*** — “*the here-and-now is all there is*” is the way the beer commercial used to put it, “You only go around once in life, so grab all the gusto you can get.” Such thinking is opposed to the Christian emphasis on *life eternal*. Christians and religious Jews live not for the moment but for eternity. Hollywood’s seize-the-moment ethic ultimately leads to a total rejection of the Ten Commandments and all biblical morality.
3. ***The Cult of Self*** — or to put it in the lingo of pop psychology: “*self-actualization*,” *i.e.*, self-gratification. From this perspective, putting anything ahead of your own happiness is not only dumb, it is psychotic. Christianity and Judaism both teach that *your life isn’t your own*; it belongs to the One who gave you life.
4. ***Gender Sameness*** — the bizarre doctrine that men and women are psychologically identical, that gender roles are *socially imposed*, instead of *reality-based*. This dogma lies at the heart of liberalism’s push to radically remake the human family. The worst abusive invective the Left can hurl at the family (from its perspective) is “*patriarchal*” and “*male-dominated*.”
5. ***Militant Secularism*** — the belief that religious expression and traditional faith should play no role in shaping our laws and institutions. Thus, someone who speaks of rights being “*endowed by their Creator*” (like our founding fathers) or saying that America is a nation “*under God*” (like Abraham Lincoln stated) becomes an enemy of democracy.

What really enrages the Hollywood Left is the realization that, more than any other group in our society, *evangelical Christians* (who now might constitute the nation's largest identifiable voting bloc) stand in the way of its *political agenda* — abortion on demand, a contraceptive culture, erotic indoctrination masquerading as sex education, universal day care, the complete societal blessing of gay marriage and hate-crimes legislation that criminalizes religious speech. By attacking Christians, Hollywood is advancing its agenda. Over the past 50 years *Hollywood has been primarily responsible for the rapid degeneration of our culture*. Modern cinema is filled with violence, sadism, sex at its most animalistic level, crudeness, nihilism, and despair. As previously stated, these are some very sobering realities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BELIEVERS LOVING EACH OTHER

In the Upper Room Discourse that took place the night before Jesus went to the cross, He said to His disciples: “*This I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as it loves its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, you are not of the world... therefore the world hates you.... they will persecute you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.... they hated Me without cause*” (Jn 15:17-21, 25). It should be clear, the reason Christians are *persecuted* by the world, is because they are *hated* by the world; because the world hated Jesus they killed Him. The book of Acts gives a chronological presentation of what transpired in the first 30 years of church history — it includes the arrest of the apostles, the stoning of Stephen, the persecution of Christians spearheaded by Saul, soon after that the apostle Paul was persecuted, then there was the execution of James (the brother of John), and the imprisonment of Peter (and his miraculous deliverance by an angel)... the long and short of it is, every apostle was martyred for his faith with the exception of John, who was exiled by Emperor Domitian to the island of Patmos (a place where criminals were banished by the Roman government; they were compelled to work the mines on this 50-mile square island). In the book of Acts, the gospel was spread into the Mediterranean world where the Gentiles were in control... the Romans persecuted Christians for almost 300 years; the reasons they did so were primarily *political* — Christians said *Jesus is Lord* but would not say *Caesar is Lord*; allegiance to Jesus as Lord aroused strong suspicion of disloyalty to Caesar and the Roman State, and to them that was a kind of treason... as such, they were seen as *revolutionaries* whose king was Jesus, and His kingdom was the kingdom of God. A second reason the Romans persecuted the Christians was for *social reasons*; the Romans were deadly afraid that the Christians were having a strong influence among the lower classes, the poor people, which corresponds with what Scripture says: “Not many mighty, not many noble... God has chosen the weak, the poor, the nobodies and the nothings” (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-28). And last, all the social events of the Roman world, and all the social festivals that they conducted were also tied to “*idol worship*” — since Christians refused idolatrous temple worship, they isolated themselves from much

of the social life in the Roman world; thus they were an alien people in the Roman world. As such, Christians (the negative element in their society) were blamed for everything: be it plagues, famines, natural disasters, and the burning of Rome — so they were hated to begin with by the Jews, and now they were hated by the Gentile world as well.

Obviously, there was a price to pay should you become a Christian — you not only would have been alienated from society, but from your parents and siblings and friends, and you might have lost your job and any standing you may have accrued in life; many believers experienced personal alienation and personal persecution. As John MacArthur reminds us in a study he did on John 15:17-25, the official persecution of the Romans began in 64 AD under Emperor Nero — Christians were arrested and tortured, crucified and thrown to wild animals, they were burned as torches at Nero’s garden parties (that was the time period in which Peter and Paul were killed). In 90 AD under Emperor Domitian (as mentioned earlier) the apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos. Another empire-wide persecution came in 250 AD under Emperor Decius. Perhaps the most violent of all persecutions came under Diocletian starting in 303 AD — churches were destroyed, scrolls of Scripture were burned, and Christians were massacred. This went on for a good twenty years, until 324 AD when Constantine took power and actually established Christianity as a state religion; which was the forerunner to the Roman Catholic system (*i.e.*, the Holy Roman Empire) that continued to be the arch persecutor of the true church; for more than a thousand years the Catholic Church persecuted true Christians. Roman Catholicism flourished, and then came the Reformation — Reformers were persecuted, and the covenanters were killed and burned at the stake or beheaded. All of that history is exactly what Jesus said the night before he went to the cross: “On account of Me they will hate you.” Roman Catholicism was the main cultural force of Western Europe for more than thirteen centuries — the last Roman Emperor was disposed in 476, at which time the popes (bishops of Rome) greatly increased their power and influence; thus the Holy Roman Empire ruled in Europe. With that in mind, it wasn’t until 1796 that the weakening Holy Roman Empire officially came to a close under French troops led by Napoleon Bonaparte.

The Lord Jesus shared the following with His disciples in the Upper Room the night before He went to the cross, “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God and believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places... I am going to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with Me in heaven” (cf. Jn 14:1-3). And then He said to them, “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you” (cf. Jn 16:7) — the Helper (Holy Spirit) would dwell in them and meet their needs, and give them the peace and the strength and the wherewithal to carry out His work (Mt 28:18-20). With all of the heavenly blessings, however, now comes earthly hostility, hatred, and persecution. As MacArthur reminds us, “being persecuted is the cost of discipleship” — “we are to take up our cross and follow Christ” (cf. Mt 16:24); persecution is related to our faithfulness. Though the world will hate us, fellow-believers will love us — hence the new commandment of God:

“Love one another as I have loved you!” (Jn 13:34-35); the reality is, *“you are going to need it.”* The command to love one another is listed over and over again in Scripture; it is that important. Obviously we are not going to get love from the world (they hate us), so we must love each other — no man is an island. Peter states, *“Love the brotherhood,”* and *“Fervently love one another from the heart”* (cf. 1 Pet 1:22; 2:17) — as a homework assignment, study the following passages in the New Testament that address the importance of believers *loving each other* — cf. Mt 22:37, 39; Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17; 14:15, 23; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 13:1-3; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 5:6, 13, 22; Eph 3:17; 4:16; 5:2; Phil 1:9; Col 1:4; 3:14; 1 Th 3:12; 4:9; 2 Th 1:3; 1 Tim 1:5; Heb 10:24; 1 Pet 4:8; 5:14; 1 Jn 3:9-11, 14, 19; 4:7-8, 12-13, 20).

UNBELIEVERS LOVE THOSE WHO ARE OF THE WORLD

Why does the world hate Christians so much? Jesus told His disciples, *“The world loves those who are of the world... but since you are not of the world (I chose you out of the world), therefore the world hates you”* (cf. Jn 15:18-19). So the world hates us because we are not part of the world’s system. John MacArthur tells us that the reason the Jewish people were persecuted throughout Europe was *their unwillingness to integrate into the culture in which they lived*; since they didn’t do as everyone else did, they became a threat to the bigger culture — they had different clothing laws, different dietary laws, a different religion, different traditions, and different customs; they were the objects of persecution because of their non-integration. What spawned this was their experience with the Roman Christian world; it was precisely that world that made life miserable for the Jews — they were persecuted in the name of Christianity in Europe. To this day, the Roman Catholic Church has *not apologized* to the Jewish world for its unloving, ungodly behavior. **Richard R. Losch** in his work *“The Many Faces of Faith”* (Eerdmans Publishing, 2001, p. 72) reminds us, that though the Jewish people hated Christ and the early Christian world (which, by the way was essentially *all Jewish* for the first twenty years), that didn’t give Christians the *“right”* to later persecute Jewish people with numerous Inquisitions. The *Spanish Inquisition* was concerned with Jews who had converted to Christianity either under duress or out of social convenience, and were suspected of still secretly practicing their Jewish faith. The various Inquisitions brought about a reign of terror throughout Europe, that ultimately was responsible for the impoverishment, exile, and death of thousands of Jews, Muslims, and Christians accused of heresy. Jews were singled out for persecution simply because they were Jews. Jewish children over six years of age were taken from their parents and give a Christian education. Is it any wonder why the Jewish world was *“anti-Christian”* in Europe, and why much of it is still *“anti-Christian”* here in America? Though the Spanish Inquisition began in 1478 under Pope Sixtus IV, it was not formally abolished until 1834 by King Bonaparte, the emperor of France. As John MacArthur states:

That’s kind of a microcosm of how the world views us [as Christians]: we’re a problem because we’re just not part of it — the world is going

a certain way and we're not going that way; the world believes certain things we don't. The world accepts certain things and we don't. The world says certain things are right and we don't believe it. We are an alien isolated entity existing within another system, and we don't integrate.

In the gospel of John, Jesus says, “Satan is the ruler of this world” (cf. Jn 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12), “and those who are of this world are of their father the devil” (cf. Jn 8:44). There are two kingdoms existing in the world: the kingdom of Satan (cf. Col 1:13; Eph 6:12; Rev 13:2; 16:10) and the kingdom of God (cf. Mk 1:15; 4:11; 10:14; Acts 8:12) — these two kingdoms are diametrically opposed to each other; they have completely different values and do not mix. Those in the kingdom of Satan know what is right and wrong, nevertheless they still give their approval to those who do wrong... those in the kingdom of God don't do that. The law of God has been written on the heart of every person (both the unregenerate and the regenerate); no one is born an atheist... every human being is born with an innate sense of God — those in the kingdom of Satan simply “suppress the truth in unrighteousness, and exchange the truth of God for a lie” (cf. Rom 1:18-25; Ecc 3:11); thus God gives them over to the impure lusts of their hearts and to degrading passions... and to depraved thinking to do those things that are not right (cf. Rom 1:24, 26, 28). Those in the kingdom of God do not applaud those who do evil like the unbelieving world does (cf. Rom 1:32). “Those who are upright are abomination to the wicked” (Prv 29:27). Conversely, “He who justifies the wicked, and condemns the righteous, are an abomination to God” (Prv 17:15; 16:5). Thus said Jesus, “If you were of the world, the world would love you, but because God chose you to come out of the world, you no longer have a natural affection for worldliness; as such, you are now a living rebuke to the world” (cf. Jn 15:19-20; 1 Jn 2:15-24). MacArthur puts it this way, “Since we become the conscience of the world when we embrace Christ, the world hates us for that” — the unbelieving world loves the darkness and hates the light, because the light exposes their deeds for what they are (cf. Jn 3:19-21). To show how dramatic the difference is between believers and unbelievers, Paul says, “The world has been crucified to me and I to the world” (cf. Gal 6:14; 2:20; 5:24); thus we are now aliens and strangers in this world (cf. 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11)... “God has delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (cf. Col 1:13)... so we are no longer friends of this world; “friendship with the world is hostility toward God” (cf. Jam 4:4). Says John, “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (cf. 1 Jn 2:15). Therefore “we are to appear as lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse world” (cf. Phil 2:15). It should be obvious, when we preach sin, judgment, hell, grace and the gospel, the world hates it; that message is an abomination to them.

THE WORLD HATES THOSE WHO TESTIFY AGAINST IT

Jesus said, “The world hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil” (cf. Jn 7:7). When we call an ace an ace, and a spade a spade, and identify evil as evil, we will be

hated by the world. Homosexuality is evil. Adultery is evil. Fornication is evil. Lying is evil. Pride is evil. Self-centeredness is evil. Self-righteousness is evil — that is why they killed Jesus, because He said their religion was evil. Said Jesus, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside you are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness... outwardly you appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (cf. Mt 23:27-28). Says MacArthur, “They hate us because we are not a part of the [worldly] system, because by our life we rebuke the system, and by our message we condemn what the system is. We condemn everything about it. We condemn its philosophies, its religion, its ideologies, its goals, its objectives — everything.” We don’t commend worldliness any more than we commend Satan; instead we condemn it, because it is corrupt to the core. The world hates us because we just don’t belong... we are a living, verbal rebuke to the culture of our world — what this culture affirms, we reject... its standard of goodness and evil, we reject... its tolerances, we reject... its goals and objectives, we reject. We follow the Word of God; they do not. Back during the early years of my childhood, a “Christian ethos” played a significant role in our culture; just as it did when our country was being formed (read the Constitution and the Bill of Rights)... but that “godly ethos” is absolutely disgusting to the diabolical left — it hates it with a passion; to them, some of what the Constitution says is nothing but old school nonsense (that’s why they constantly ignore parts of it and try to change it). There is nothing the diabolical left won’t do to accomplish its goals; the end justifies the means; it matters not how they get there, the most important thing by far is simply getting there. Without question, our culture has become crooked and perverse (Phil 2:15). The kingdom of darkness is now strongly influencing nearly every element of our culture — it controls our educational institutions at nearly every level; our public colleges and universities are now just about completely under their control — many colleges will not let Christians pray or speak at their graduation ceremonies.

It is important to note, as followers of Christ we don’t condemn people — that is God’s work — we simply share divine truth with people, and in so doing, God by His Spirit will speak to unbelievers hearts, convicting them of the truth (cf. 1 Th 1:5; Acts 16:14; Heb 11:1; Jude 1:15). When the scribes and Pharisees brought an adulterous woman to Jesus... ultimately he said to her, “Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more” (cf. Jn 11:6) — Jesus neither condemned nor pardoned her; that was not His purpose at that time... but He did issue a warning to her that she should refrain from sinning. In this particular situation, we have an example of “God extending grace to an unbeliever” (cf. Jn 1:17). With the weak Jesus was always gentle... with the arrogant He was very firm... and with the foolish He was patient. Jesus’ instruction to us is that we “be merciful and not judge less we be judged, and not condemn less we be condemned” (cf. Lk 6:37); ultimately, God will judge the heart of every man. Regarding condemnation, “there is no condemnation awaiting those who are in Christ” (cf. Rom 8:1)... condemnation is reserved for those who embrace the evil way and reject divine truth (cf. Ps 34:21-22; Prv 12:2; 17:15; Mt 16:16). Said Paul, “When God judges us as believers, we are actually being disciplined by the Lord, in order that we may not be

condemned with the world” (cf. 1 Cor 11:32). As believers, we must be bold enough to share the truth about “*man’s condition*” and “*God’s divine solution*” to his condition — how else will one come to a knowledge of the truth, except one be told? (cf. Rom 10:13-17; Mt 28:18-20); though some may be offended by the truth, others will embrace it... though some may persecute you, others will reach out to you with great love and gratitude. As David Wilkerson states, “*Even though the world hates and persecutes Christ’s true disciples, we find a growing love and godly affection among the righteous brothers and sisters to embrace us all the more.*” As the world comes to a close, the love we experience in God’s house is going to become even more precious to us... though we will be hated by the world, and mocked by the media, and ridiculed by Hollywood, and scoffed at by coworkers, and made a laughingstock by society, when we enter into God’s house, we will be entering into a place of incredible love... it won’t matter what persecution we have faced, God’s love working through His people will bring great joy to our hearts and great peace to our souls (cf. Gal 5:6)... remember, only God can give us “*peace*” and “*joy*” (cf. Gal 5:22).

THE SUPERFICIAL THINKING OF OUR WORLD

Modern day thinking is extremely shallow when compared with the philosophical thinking that existed in the ancient Greek and Chinese worlds. For the first time in human history “*deep thinking*” came on the world stage, and profoundly affected the integrity of human thought. Few people in our world actually give serious consideration to “*thinking with substantive depth*” — they simply respond to their emotions as the barbarian world did years ago, and draw conclusions based on their innate bias. The problem with “*genuine thinking*” is that it requires spending a significant degree of time reflecting upon what is really true (*i.e.*, “*reality*”) — sadly, few people in our world today are truly thinkers; yet such shallow thinking is grossly affecting our entire world. Both the press and the vast majority of the leaders of our country simply satisfy themselves with constructs of thought that simply coincide with their political bias; as such, much of it is seriously lacking in integrity. For instance, if the black world heard Obama make some kind of declaration, 90% of them would jump on his train and embrace his thinking all the way to the end... in spite of the fact that they may not understand the integrity of his thinking, if indeed there is any — this thing called *integrity* is discerned by questioning some particular construct by asking every question imaginable. It is shallow thinking that pretty much defines most of the societal elements in our world. The long and short of it is, “*emotional political rhetoric governs most people’s thinking*” — it makes no difference what the issue is, when their emotional inner core moves them in a particular direction, the case is closed in their mind, and they support their thinking on the matter. As the old maxim goes, “*There’s enough information out there in the world to satisfy one’s ignorance on any subject*” — be it religion, evolution, racism, politics, taxation, economic issues, or anything else! For instance, if I want to “*hate*” a religion, “*hate*” a particular race, “*hate*” some economic system, “*hate*” some political position, I can

find a ton of information to support and justify my desires. Think about it, if your emotional inner core strongly leans in a particular direction, you can find a boat-load of information out there in the world to “support that view.” Because “racism” is such a hot button issue at this time in our country, take a good month and examine all the information out there in the world that corresponds with this issue — both the pros and the cons — it won’t happen overnight, you are going to have to discipline yourself to wrestle through all of the information you can find... and not just let your innate bias rule in your mind. Ultimately, you will probably come to a little different conclusion than what you had originally believed (or was taught); now embracing your new found position might not be as comfortable to you as the one you previously held — “reality” oftentimes is difficult to accept, because of our innate bias. Should your new found thinking now “conflict” with the common thinking of others, ultimately you are going to find yourself in a little quandary — How do I share my thoughts with others? Should I just keep them to my-self? Do I owe it to others to share what I now know, or is it best to let sleeping dogs lie, and not stir the pot in someone else’s mind? Am I prepared to defend my new found thinking? Or simply draw the conclusion that it’s best to just remain silent? Incidentally, one can apply “this construct” to our new found faith in Christ as well; do we keep it to ourselves or share it with others?

The norm for most people is that they simply satisfy themselves with a little bag of knowledge that agrees with their innate bias, because deep thinking oftentimes leads us down a more difficult path. Obviously when contrary thinking is stumbled upon, most people simply “reject it” because it doesn’t correspond with their innate bias; after all, they would have to muddy the water and “reject” their previous thinking — which is no pleasant walk in the park. The problem with our juvenile world is that it first determines what it “wants” (its man’s passions that lead the way), and then it gathers all of the information it can to support those passions, and ignore everything to the contrary; in short, fallen thinking man doesn’t think, he simply caves in to his desires! And then has the audacity to claim some level of integrity? Though the vast majority of people look for appealing ways to make life work, as well as ways to make government work, the problem is God doesn’t let superficial thinking bring forth great success... why should He? God isn’t going to let anyone get his way on everything; that’s just the way life works in our world, including democratic societies... we must each let our government run the show with integrity, with the understanding that it is to be in subjection to the Law of the Land, and not simply cave in to contrary loud, perverse voices). Should some group attempt to impose its thinking on others, the government needs to step in and own up to its responsibility and act according to the Law; people need to know that contrary actions will invite negative consequences... we cannot be a nation that hopes to survive, yet in weakness succumb to the loud, ugly voices; history has clearly demonstrated that. The problem becomes severe when the leadership at the top ignores the Law of the Land, and seeks to do things its way. When government rejects the “standards” as set forth in the constitution, it makes “itself” the standards, and changes democratic rule into “autocratic rule” — once again, when some-

one thinks he is the “*end all*” on everything (*i.e.*, the one who dictates what is to be), he invites rebellion, turmoil, and distrust — ultimately he is extricated from power (and deservingly so), but oftentimes society pays a very significant price.

The ancient Greek world was known for the genius of its philosophers — these guys made “*thinking*” their life’s work, and most of them “*erected schools*” in which to teach people to think — many of them “*died*” because of their convictions — it was only the juvenile, non-thinking world that couldn’t accept these guys; they simply didn’t have any justification to their own values and actions. These philosophers didn’t align their thinking with the political world — that was completely irrelevant to them — they wrestled with every aspect of their thinking... it mattered not what others thought, *they simply gave themselves to knowing and understand reality*; *i.e.*, why things are as they are, and what the significance of those things is (that was their passion). This involved “*significant thinking*” — the likes of which Albert Einstein is a good contemporary comparison — Einstein wasn’t into getting the approval of men... he was into discovering “*what really is*,” which is a quality that is extremely lacking in the western world today — the vast majority of people simply *regurgitate* what they were taught; *i.e.*, they simply believe what they learned in school from their professors, and declare it to be absolute truth, without examining its integrity (very few professors are original thinkers; they are simply *regurgitators*. Why is that? Because they are not truly invested in knowing what is really true; their shallow little minds have just grabbed on to the popular thinking of their little political group; regardless of its lack of integrity.

Though the ancient Greeks around 600-200 BC, undoubtedly considered themselves to be a giant step beyond *the thinking of the barbarians* that preceded them, they didn’t think of it as a stage in some unending upward movement in their society. The Greeks viewed time as circular — that there is change in history, and this change constantly returned upon itself, just as the planets or seasons do. Numerous nations had risen to power in the past, and had then declined; they would do so again (just as we will here in America). The distinguished twentieth preacher, **James Montgomery Boice**, stated in his book “*Foundations of the Christian Faith*” — “As far as history was concerned, the Greeks would have had no trouble applying the carnival barker’s description of his wheel of fortune: ‘*Round and round and round she goes, and where she stops nobody knows!*’” As the ancient stoic **Marcus Aurelius** said, “The rational soul... traverses the whole universe... and surveys its form, and it extends itself into the infinity of time... and it comprehends that those who come after us will see nothing new, nor have those before us seen more.” It was Christianity that brought “*the true doctrine of God*” to the table — God had revealed Himself in history; He was not one of the futile, half-human, half-divine gods and goddesses of the Greek pantheon, nor the unchanging First Mover of the Greek philosophers. As Boice puts it, “*This God loved His people, grieved for His people, and moved heaven and earth... for their deliverance.*” Another element Christianity brought to the table was *its view of the human being*, not as a divine soul imprisoned in a perishable and evil body (as the Greeks thought), but as a union of body,

soul and spirit all created in God’s image. Finally, Christianity introduced *a heightened moral consciousness* which required a final balancing out of rewards and punishments at the last judgment. Those doctrines slowly worked their way into human history, but as **Gordon Clark** stated in his book “*A Christian View of Men & Things*” — “If progress is the law of history; if our moral and intellectual baggage is superior to that of antiquity; and if our society and our ideas are to grow into something better and vastly different; if our imagination is to evolve to a degree not now imaginable; if all the old concepts which served their time well are to be replaced by new and better concepts, does it not follow that the theory of progress will be discarded... which no doubt served its age well, but which will then be antiquated and [deemed] untrue? *Could it be that the best contemporary evidence of progress is a growing disbelief in ‘progress’?*” Once again, our little world is going backwards, without the slightest bit of progress; diabolical men now sit on the thrones of most countries... morality is defunct, economies are collapsing, crime rates are going through the roof, there are wars and conflict on nearly every front... yet the diabolical left thinks its “*anti-God movement*” is the answer to our fallen world (by the way, that’s why the anti-Christ is going to succeed for a brief moment in time). That’s about as funny and stupid a statement one could possibly make — God calls such thinking foolish! What is necessary is a return to the biblical view of history in which **GOD**, not man, is in control — that is to be the prayer of the believer (cf. Mt 6:9-10; Is 55:8-9).

The Thinking of the Ancient Greek World

The renowned British Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford, **Alister McGrath** (who was an outspoken atheist in through college), reminds us that the ancient Greek world believed the *material world* was evil... that salvation was understood in terms of deliverance from the material world into a *spiritual realm*. The ancient Greeks were the first to suggest that there is a “*true reality*” under the “*apparent reality*.” The Greeks outlined two opposing approaches to the problem of knowledge; that knowledge either comes through the senses (*i.e., empiricism*), or that it is a matter of reason (*i.e., rationalism*). On the other hand, Scripture tells us that reality (*i.e., the knowledge of what is*) is placed in the heart by God who makes it evident to them (cf. Ecc 3:11; Rom 1:18ff). Obviously if it was not placed there, one could not be condemned for disobeying it. Yet another issue here that needs to be addressed is that of “*ethics*” (morality); such is a philosophical understanding of good and bad, right and wrong — the ancient Greeks thought ethics came from what one likes or doesn’t like; *i.e., that which gives one pleasure and that which gives one pain (Hedonism)*... or that it comes from distancing oneself from the world (*Cynicism*), that which is evil, and moving towards the ultimate good, which is God. Though the thinking of the ancient Greek world “*wasn’t spot-on*,” it greatly exceeds the thinking of our modern diabolical world... at least those guys could “*think*,” whereas modern man knows almost nothing of thinking.

Regarding God’s message to the world – God came to this world in *the fullness of time* (cf. Gal 4:4; Mk 1:15; Jn 1:14; Rom 1:3). God being GOD, had prepared the world for His coming; the language He would use to communicate divine truth was one known as “Greek” – far and away the most exacting language in the history of the world; one can say something in Greek that one cannot say in any other language (it is that exacting); it can state things as unequivocal truth, and define absolute reality in such a way that the thinking of God brings peace to a man’s soul; no other literature does that. Keep in mind, GOD is the author of the Greek language. It was Alexander the Great who conquered Persia and the entire Middle East by 331 BC – he established Greek cities all over the Middle East, and made the language, education, and culture of the Greeks the societal norms throughout the empire. This is often referred to as Hellenization – the term helenes literally means “Greek,” so to Hellenize a culture meant to Grecianize it (*i.e.*, give it strong Greek influence) – it was GOD who was at work preparing the world for His coming; Alexander the Great was simply a tool that God used to accomplish His purposes. Keep in mind, the Scriptures were central to the thinking and life of every first-century Jewish community; they defined the social roles, provided a moral code, and offered instruction, comfort, and encouragement; weekly readings in the synagogues kept fresh the Jews’ commitment to the covenant God of Israel. Through the Diaspora (the dispersion of the Jews among the nations), the Jewish people had also been indoctrinated into the ways of Greek culture and spoke the Greek language; so in the third century BC the Hellenized Jews no longer understood Hebrew (*i.e.*, the language of the Bible), so seventy Jewish scholars from Jerusalem went to Alexandria, Egypt (the intellectual capital of the Western world) to translate the Bible into Greek; ultimately, this translation became known as the Septuagint (the Latin word for “seventy”). This new translation made it possible for Greek-speaking Jews to study God’s Word in the vernacular of the day... on several occasions, Jesus quoted from the Septuagint (thus giving great credibility to the integrity of its translation); the entire scholarly Christian world today studies Koine Greek (the Greek language commonly spoken and written in Eastern Mediterranean countries in the Hellenistic and Roman periods), the language in which the New Testament was written; but being as the Old Testament was also now written in Greek, the language of Greek is critical to understanding the doctrinal truths of Scripture. So in the first century AD, many roads had converged that led to the coming of the Messiah; God in His providence had been preparing the world for His coming. Greece had united the civilizations of Asia, Europe and Africa, and established one universal language; Rome made one empire of the whole world, and Roman roads make all parts of it accessible; and the Diaspora paved the way for the propagation of the good news of the coming of the Messiah in their Synagogues and their Scripture. God knew the entire Western world would be the launching pad for spreading the gospel throughout the world; with that in mind, “deep thinking” had finally entered the world stage; no longer was our world an unthinking world – philosophical thought had now made its presence known (by the way, philosophy is “a logical explanation of reality”)... again,

this was one of the ways in which God was preparing the world for His coming. To express it in human terms, God was saying, “It’s time for the world to start **thinking!**”

I am always amazed at “the thinking of the ancient Greek and Chinese philosophers;” after all, we were always taught that “modern thinking” dominates “old world thinking” (that’s how arrogant our world has become; the truth is there is very little depth in the thinking of our present world — it is basically the by-product of our wishes and wants. In the following paragraphs I introduce you to the thinking of a dozen philosophers in the ancient world — though there were over one hundred renowned philosophers who significantly impact the thinking of the ancient world, I have chosen to just mention the thinking of just a few. In the 6th century BC the Greek philosopher Pythagoras came up with the idea that the universe can be explained mathematically; such was enormously fruitful in the development of scientific knowledge. He also is seen as the forefather of traditional Western philosophy; he believed one’s intellect is the route to genuine knowledge... and that the immorality of the soul in this life ultimately plays an important role in the rewards and punishment in the next life (he had come to believe in reincarnation). Confucianism flourished in China’s classical age (500-200 BC), and has remained a guiding force in Chinese thought to this day; it stresses personal integrity as the means to promote social cohesion and harmony. At the age of 15 Confucius (551-479 BC) elected to devote his life to learning; at about 50 years of age he deplored the moral degeneracy that characterized political life, and reckoned the only way to address it was to give careful attention to the time-honored traditional values of the past in order to deal with social unrest. When he rose to the position of Minister of Justice, the reforms he introduced were so successful that crime was virtually eliminated. Confucius strongly emphasized the importance of the archetypal relationships between husband and wife, parent and child, and the reciprocal duties they were to carry with them (obviously such thinking is completely lacking in the Western world in which we live). He also argued that rulers needed to be selected on “their merits” (not popularity)... that they should show genuine devotion for their subjects... and that they needed to develop a virtuous character in order that they might earn respect and compliance from the citizenship that they were to govern. Like the great leaders of the past, rulers need to promote the moral education of the people — which at the core means, “treating others as you would be treated” — good government must foster an internalized respect for appropriate moral conduct. Think about it, in this corrupt stupid world in which we live here in America, we can’t even teach “moral values” in our schools! In addition to Confucius, there was Lao-Tzu, another Chinese philosopher of the 6th century BC who significantly impacted Chinese thought — Lao-Tzu had eventually become so exasperated with the ways of men, he turned his back on society and disappeared into the desert. While Confucius focused on social relations, Lao-Tzu was far more concerned with how the individual should approach life — rather than conquering life with the intellect, which he believed was the cause of all man’s problems (he felt it was counter-productive), thus he believed man should avoid the pursuit of goals and let the governing principle of life and the universe (the “Dao”) simply flow through him; in that sense, his approach was far more mystical:

such an approach to life is known as “non-striving” — that’s the key to living in tune with the Dao. So Lao-Tzu felt that it was not possible to intellectually grasp the meaning of life, that man needed to let the Dao simply flow thru him... such thinking is completely foreign to western thinking — though interestingly enough it does mesh somewhat with biblical thinking — “We are to let God be GOD in our lives... and not insist on understanding everything that goes on in our world” (cf. Ecc 1:13-18; 7:13-14; 12:13; Is 55:8-9).

In the 5th century BC the Greek philosopher Heraclitus concluded that an eternal order exists beneath the shifting world of appearance; such had a profound influence on Plato, and still does today in our world. Heraclitus had grown increasingly misanthropic about the world in which he lived; he went into the mountains viewing society as too corrupt. He came to the conclusion that all things are in a continual process of flux. Plato quotes him as saying that “you cannot step into the same river twice,” meaning that no things or states in the universe remain eternally the same. Heraclitus believed that the order of law unites opposites, and that harmony supplants discord. Parmenides, the 5th century Greek philosopher explored the nature of “what is,” and argued that it cannot be created or destroyed, since something cannot come from nothing — “being, therefore, must be eternal.” Thus he concluded that the universe is one — unchanging, imperishable, unbounded, and indivisible. So why do we perceive a world of multiplicity and change? Parmenides’s answer is that the world as it appears to the senses is an illusion; he was the first person to advance a systematic dualism of appearance and reality. The Chinese 5th century BC philosopher Mozi was a pacifist and traveled around his war-torn region trying to dissuade rulers from fighting; he emphasized the importance of self-knowledge and authenticity in moral behavior. Whereas Confucius emphasized one’s social role, in particular familial duties, Mozi argued for an impartial love for all humanity. Mozi saw heaven as a moral force that ensured people’s actions were rewarded and punished (cf. Ecc 3:11-14).

The renowned Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 BC) was predominantly interested in the moral questions that affect our lives, such as what is just, courageous, and good. His critical questioning irritated some Athenians, and within a few years he was brought to trials and condemned to death for impiety (such action is not too dissimilar of the diabolical left in our country; if they could kill us by taking us to court, they would) — Socrates willingly drank the hemlock that killed him; he put his moral integrity above his physical wellbeing. He claimed “what really matters” is dealing with the deep ignorance with which we all live — recognizing one’s own ignorance was the crucial first step toward knowledge; “it is only once we realize that we don’t know what we thought we knew, that we will begin the search to discover it.” Socrates held to certain substantive views about ethics, and maintained that the good life consists in purity of the soul... thus it followed that knowledge of moral virtue is in our best interests and should be our key objective... and exposing others’ ignorance is doing them a favor. Sadly, the Athenian democratic regime did not see it that way; hence he was tried and executed. The Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 BC), along with Aristotle, has been the most

important influence on Western philosophy. His dislike of Athenian democracy that brought about the execution of Socrates (his teacher) caused him great grief. Ultimately, Plato rejected democracy as a system of government on the grounds that *the people are not well qualified to rule* — “*those who are likely to rise to the top in a democracy are not going to be the types of people we would want to have governing;*” incidentally, that is a position I have held for years (though I was taught that democracy possessed the greatest degree of integrity of all the various kinds of government, I no longer agree with that — the central problem of letting democracy run our world, is that political entities are more interested in “*being in control*” (i.e., getting elected), than doing what is really best for the country/society (of which many are almost totally ignorant); hence, they will capitulate to the desires of the masses, regardless of the integrity of their desires (that’s been our story here in the U.S. over and over again). By employing that kind of governmental process, “*ultimately the majority are going to be ugly and corrupt, and usher in the destruction of a society*” — that has happened time and again in our world. As Plato and others have said, the masses are *incompetent* to run our world, because life is all about “*them*” rather than the “*well-being of the entire society.*” When the hens run the hen-house, you’ve got problems — our country is on the verge of bowing to the diabolical, immoral world; any other line of thinking is delusional. *Integrity* must dictate reality in our world if things are going to proceed in an orderly, harmonious fashion. Plato believed it was necessary to *institute a rigorous regime of training & selection to produce an elite group of rulers who are wise and incorruptible; he felt it was important that rulers be genuine lovers of wisdom, that they must acquire knowledge of the Good, so that they can govern effectively for the good of the state as a whole.* Wow, is that not foreign to our stupid world? We have elected some of the most arrogant people on the planet in recent years! And now the majority of institutions in our nation are grossly diabolical, self-serving, and corrupt. The thinking of Pythagoras and Socrates was key to Plato’s philosophy.

The range of thinking of the Greek philosopher *Aristotle* (384-322 BC) is staggering when compared with other philosophers — he dealt with ethics, logic, metaphysics, meteorology, physics, economics, and psychology; his influence on European thought has been profound. He studied in Athens at *Plato’s Academy* (which continued to exist for 800 years). Aristotle believed that knowledge needed to be grounded on what it is that is possible to experience; thus making the senses the starting point for philosophy. He believed that if we speculate on that which lies beyond our experience we stray into mysticism. Yet Aristotle was interested in the question of “*being,*” and what kinds of things there are, and what it is for something to exist. Aristotle viewed us as primarily *social beings*, and government as there to help us achieve a *good life within society* — that its role is to facilitate rather than dictate (which is the complete opposite of the diabolical left in our country). Though humans strive for wellbeing, the means to achieve this is to *live virtuously and engage in intellectual contemplation.* The problem with the Western world is that it is seriously lacking in virtue, and unwilling to contemplate reality for an extended period of time — to them, knowledge must coincide with their

innate bias (which is nothing but diabolical deception). Let me share the thoughts of just a few more — the Greek philosopher **Diogenes** (400-325 BC) turned his back on the trapping of civilized life, regarding reason and nature as better guides to conduct... so he abandoned his aristocratic life and worked among the poor; he ultimately taught that “virtue lies in overcoming artificial desires,” thus he lived a simple existence. The Greek philosopher **Epicurus** (341-270 BC) argued that everything is composed of tiny indivisible particles of matter; *i.e.*, that “atoms” are sufficient to explain all phenomena in the cosmos; humans and their souls are simply matter in motion, that physical death is the end of us... therefore it is our duty to maximize our happiness before we die, and he believed that the highest pleasures are “intellectual” (the greatest pleasure of all is philosophizing with one’s friends; that physical desires are to be reined in so that simple pleasures can be enjoyed more fully... extremes of pleasure inevitably leads to pain... thus Epicurus advocated a temperate life, eschewing all religious beliefs and practices.

The Chinese philosopher **Han Feizi** (ca 280-233 BC) founded the School of Legalism, which emphasized the imposition of law to ensure public order — he emphasized the interests of the state rather than individual freedoms (ultimately it became the philosophical justification for Chinese imperial government). He wrote a letter to the first Emperor of China (Shi Huangdi) with advice on how to gain hegemony over China’s warring states — such legalism had a profound influence on him. Feizi had argued that people are motivated by personal gain and the desire to avoid punishment, therefore, education and a strict system of laws & punishments are key to ensure moral behavior. With all of the foregoing in mind, **Albert Einstein**, the most prominent scientific mind of the 20th century, stated it this way, “What is the meaning of human life? To answer this question at all implies a religion... the man who regards his own life and that of his fellow-creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life” (Gerald R. McDermott, *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions?* InterVarsity Press, 2000, page 7).

You’ll notice, each of the philosophers mentioned above placed a very strong emphasis on “morality” and “thinking with integrity”... yet here we are today living in a country where at least half of its people embrace diabolical thinking — they tolerate immorality (*i.e.*, they are anti-God and anti-religion, they promote homosexuality and sex before marriage, they love pornography and transgenders; they are anti-marriage, they are pro-divorce, they are pro-Hollywood, they are profane, and arrogant, and support welfare-dependency), and they are very intolerant of those who embrace morality — how’s that for an oxymoron? The reality is, because they have refused to honor God as GOD, their foolish heart was darkened (that’s **emphatic** in Greek), and God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts and depraved passions; they had ex-changed the truth of God for a lie (cf. Rom 1:18-32). It is one thing to worship a false god, and try and live good in this world; it is quite another to think you are righteous, and express hatred for biblical truth and those who embrace it. As the Lord said to Isaiah, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness” (cf. Is 5:20); the reality is, “their root will become like rot... and it will come upon them swiftly” (Is 5:24-26). God doesn’t tolerate arrogance or the persecution of His people! Read the stories of

Pharaoh & Nebuchadnezzar — He not only didn't tolerate their proud hearts, He brought the hammer down on them swiftly! The issue of "thinking" that we have been addressing is not just an easy little exercise... the truth is, very few people are willing to give serious contemplation to the realities that govern our world (God is the principal governor), they are far more interested in just making their little life enjoyable and not causing any problems. It is hard to know why that is (perhaps it is the work of the Evil one, arrogance, or just plain laziness), but for mature thinking to not be the chief characteristic of the believing community and our world's leaders is very disconcerting... to think that our nation's leaders have not taken the time to make sure their thoughts & decisions possess integrity is hard to believe and understand. As Christians we need to give serious consideration to the integrity of divine revelation (i.e., truth); it's more than casual reading... it requires prayerful questioning and thinking at the deepest level. God gave us a mind, and a written revelation, and He expects to give supreme attention to it!

The self-righteous world doesn't see itself as God sees it... *i.e.*, it doesn't see itself as being totally depraved and sinful. Man is a relativist — he judges him-self by comparing himself with others... his experiences and his fallen human thinking is the determinative in his life... his own self-righteous thinking runs the courtroom in his mind; whatever he feels is right is right to him, and what-ever he feels is wrong is wrong to him. It was the renowned French writer and philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who espoused this line of thinking in his famous work "Emile" — "I need only consult myself with regard to what I wish to do; what I feel to be right is right; what I feel to be wrong is wrong" (London; J. M. Dent & Sons; 1943, p. 249). In his work "The Social Contract" he shared his concept of a just state — the free man voluntarily surrenders his will to the community and submits to its laws, which are based on the general will of the people. Particularly significant to him was his idea of civic religion, the essence of which was a civic faith necessary for a government's stability; although the regime establishes its doctrines and they are binding on all citizens, other religions are permitted, but only if they do not claim absolute truth. By removing Christian doctrines from their supernatural context, Rousseau paved the way for humanistic liberalism; that essentially is what postmodernism teaches in our world today — pure, secular, humanistic thought. When man removes the authority of God from the equation, "he simply does what is right in his own eyes" (cf. Judges 21:25; Deut 12:8); the problem is, his fallen, humanistic thinking is seriously deficient (cf. Prv 19:3; Rom 1:21-32; 1 Cor 1:18-21; 3:19; also Mt 9:9-13; Lk 15:1-32; 18:9-14)

Scripture has much to say about "seeking the wisdom of God" and its importance, not mere humanly derived knowledge (cf. Ecc 1:13); that simply brings grief and frustration (cf. Ecc 2:9-11). Only divine wisdom enables humans to lead a good and true and satisfying life; such wisdom obeys God (Prv 4:11), is characterized by prudence (Prv 8:12), discernment (Prv 14:8), and humility (Prv 10:8) — it is based on the fear of the Lord (cf. Job 28:12-28). Obviously, only God possesses wisdom in an absolute sense (Job 12:13); furthermore, it cannot be derived by human intelligence (cf. Job 28:12-13; Ecc 7:23). God freely gives it to those who "seek it" (cf. Prv 2:6; Ecc 2:26). In the New Testament, wisdom (sophia in Greek)

is an attribute of God (Lk 11:49), the revelation of the divine will to humans (1 Cor 2:4-7), a religious and spiritual understanding of the will of God (Mt 13:54; Jam 1:5), and the human intellectual capacity (Mt 11:25; 12:42). Said the Lord, “I love those who love me; and those who **diligently seek Me will find Me**” (Prv 8:17) — keep in mind, our faith involves *thoughts*, the foundation of which means we must **think and believe** — “Faith is the **substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**” (Heb 11:1). As one **humbles himself before the Lord, God opens his heart that the Word of God might be implanted in his soul** (cf. Jam 1:21; Acts 16:14; 1 Th 1:5). “As a man **thinks within himself, so is he**” (Prv 23:7). “Those who seek the Lord have **understanding**” (Prv 28:5). Beloved, seek Him while there is still time (cf. Mt 7:7; Eph 5:16); make your life count — God greatly honors those who humbly seek His wisdom in this world; imagine the eternal God looking down at one of His little creatures prayerfully and humbly trying to understand reality — obviously he would see himself as totally lacking in virtue, yet striving to know His creator and what life is truly all about — nothing more could please Him than that! To not seek His wisdom is to simply be satisfied with your own fallen thinking (that should be a very logical deduction to you).

THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

John Allen in his book “*The Global War on Christians*,” says “Christians today indisputably are the most persecuted religious body in the world.” According to the evangelical group “*Open Doors*,” 100 million Christians today face interrogation, arrest, torture and/or death because of their religious convictions. While nearly one-third of the world identifies themselves as being Christian, 80% of all acts of religious discrimination are directed at Christians. One scholar estimates that 90% of all people killed on the basis of their religious beliefs are Christians. Terrorist attacks against Christians escalated 309% between 2003 and 2010 — though there have been 70 million Christians martyred since the time of Christ, 45 million of them were martyred in the 20th century. According to *Newsweek Magazine*, persecution against Christians is especially prevalent in the Muslim world — “In recent years the violent oppression of Christian minorities has become the norm in Muslim-majority nations stretching from West Africa and the Middle East to South Asia and Oceania. In some countries, it is governments and their agents that have burned churches and imprisoned parishioners. In others, rebel groups and vigilantes have taken matters into their own hands, murdering Christians and driving them from regions where their roots go back centuries.” The “*Barnabas Fund*,” a UK-based international body formed to support persecuted Christians, identifies a number of forms of aggression against Christians — social, institutional, employment, and legal discrimination, suppression of missionary activity, corporate worship, conversion to Christianity, and community oppression. As “*Open Doors*” states, more than 75% of the world’s population live in areas with severe religious restrictions, and 215 million believers suffer “high, very high or extreme persecution” in the fifty countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. Some have categorized the pressures faced by Christians in five spheres of life — private, family, community, national, and church.

Aside from the 215 million Christians who are being subjected to serious persecution, “*Open Doors*” notes the following: *North Korea* remains the most dangerous place to be a Christian... *Islamic extremism* remains the global dominant driver of persecution... *Ethnic nationalism* is fast becoming a major driver of persecution — in Asia it took on an anti-minorities form that is fueled by dramatic religious nationalism and government insecurity... in addition to that, *Mexico* is now among the top 50 countries where Christians face the most persecution; 23 Christians were recently killed by drug cartels specifically because of their faith, and local authorities in Chiapas drove more than 150 Protestants from their community, effectively stealing their land and leaving them without food. A Christian friend of mine in southern Mexico named “*Marcela*” is translating my book “*Soul Transformation*” into Spanish. Marcela has been involved in ministry in southern Mexico for about 30 years; she shared something that was rather surprising to me — she said the Roman Catholics (*i.e.*, those that embrace “*liberation theology*”) in that region are very much against Protestants and actually persecute them; sadly, that is the case with many Roman Catholics in Central and South America. To continue on, the most violent persecution is taking place in *Nigeria* and *Pakistan*... yet there is significant persecution taking place throughout much of *northern Africa*, the *Middle East*, and *Asia* (persecution is rising sharply in *Bangladesh*, *Laos*, *Bhutan*, and *Sri Lanka*). Open Doors noted that *India* has risen to its highest rank ever amid the continued rise of Hindu nationalism; an average of 40 incidents have been reported a month, including pastors being beaten, churches burned and Christians harassed. According to the organization Open Doors, *the Middle East* accounts for a majority of countries ranked in the top ten for extreme persecution of Christians — North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, and Eritrea. The Christian population in Iraq alone has plummeted from 1.5 million in 2003 to current estimates of 275,000. In addition to that... *of all the 64 million Christians in India, approximately 39 million are experiencing direct persecution*. *In central Asia*, persecution has been increasing due to both Islamic extremism and government attempts to restrict it — in many countries certain Christian books have been banned, and the membership requirement to remain a legal church has more than doubled; resulting in many churches being deemed illegal overnight. According to Open Doors, 215 million Christians in over 60 nations are facing very high persecution in our world, and of that number 100 million live in Asia.

As *Johan Candelin* states in his study on “*The Persecution of Christians Today*” — “*The largest group of people being persecuted for their faith are Christians, in spite of the fact that Christianity is the world’s largest religion.*” As incredible as it may seem, Christianity is growing fastest in countries where human rights are being violated or do not exist. As the director of the Religious Liberty Commission, Candelin addressed the United Nations Commission for Human Rights in Geneva and other contexts... as such, he has given a brief analysis of the global situation regarding the persecution of Christian (the analysis is based on reports from 114 countries, and

personal visits to many countries where Christian people suffer). The persecution of Christians goes hand-in-hand with six important trends that are taking place around the world —

1. Conflicts increasingly occur **within a country**, not between countries, and in such situations religious tensions are likely to increase. Human rights are increasingly at the core of civil conflict, and added to that is the way countries like China, Russia and Indonesia interpret the whole issue of human rights; the reality is, human rights are each sovereign country's own internal affair.
2. Many countries with a **colonial past** are seeking their own identity, and very often this has strong ties to a religion. For example, we see this clearly in Asia: Pakistan adheres to Islam, India to Hinduism, Indonesia to Islam, and Sri Lanka to Buddhism. It is worth noting that the search for a national identity is strongest in five of the eight countries that together make up more than half of the world's population — China, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. In each of these countries, Christians are finding themselves in increasingly tense situations, because they are considered a threat to national harmony.
3. Developments in the **Muslim world** are likely to negatively impact the lives of Christians within the next decade. The population growth in the Arab world is 4.3 percent; as such, the population is very young, and this creates the conditions for the growth of radical elements.
4. There is a great difference between **the West's view of reality** and that of the developing countries. The West often interprets global thinking as its own world view written large... but ways of thinking, interpretation and culture differ far more than Westerners think. The West must be ready to listen, and to listen as never before. Understanding the thinking of other cultures has long been a problem for America; since America seemed to be "the world's power-broker of late," they seem to have misinterpreted the thinking of other countries.
5. There is a misunderstanding in **Europe** today that religion is no longer relevant to the modern world... but nothing could be further from the truth. The amazing fact is that of the world's seven-and-a-half-billion people, only a tiny proportion (about 170 million) call themselves atheists. There are 2.5 billion Christians... 1.5 billion Muslims... 1 billion Hindus... and 450 million Buddhists. Religion is, and will continue to be, at the very center of our world, and at the center of the conflicts within it, and also at the center of how these conflicts are resolved. Once again, the proud thinking of those in the western world is oftentimes very indiscreet and inaccurate.
6. The sixth paradigm shift is that of **partnership**. The European Union is an example of political partnership... conversely, we see financial partnership taking place on numerous levels, with numerous mergers taking place between one big company

and another. The reality is, all of us can work very effectively together to help guarantee the human rights of Christians — religious liberty should be a quality that every nation should seek after. The broadest international basis we have for cooperation in helping suffering Christians is the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights of 1949 (especially Articles 18 and 19). Simply put, they say that every person should have the freedom to adhere to and practice the religion he or she chooses, and to change religion without coming under pressure as a result. This obviously includes the right to keep one's religion without being forced into another. Religious rights could be said to be a principle building block, even the cornerstone of human rights.

As Candelin states, not all persecution has to do with religion — many people are persecuted for ethnic, social, and political reasons. Nevertheless, hundred of thousands of people are being killed, brutalized, sold as slaves, imprisoned, tortured, threatened, discriminated against, and arrested solely because they are Christians... and those who are subjected to persecution and suffering ask us to “shatter the silence” and use our voices to express their cries. This plea is directed to those of us as believers, wherever we may be. Persecution seems to pass through three phases — the first is disinformation, which begins more often than not in the media (through printed articles, radio, television, and other means). Christians are robbed of their good reputation and their right to answer the accusations made against them. The public opinion that easily results from being constantly fed such disinformation will not protect Christians from the next step which is discrimination. Discrimination relegates Christians to a “second-class citizenship” with inferior legal, social, political, and economic standing than the majority in the country. And the third stage is persecution — once the first two steps have been taken, persecution can be practiced without normal protective measures taking place. Persecution can arise from the state, the police, the military, extreme organizations, political groups, news media, mobs, paramilitary groups, or representatives of other religions. Beloved, it all seems to begin with “disinformation” — if there is anything we must do, it is change the ugly discourse that is taking place by the liberal media; their diabolical misrepresentation of reality must be quelled or severe persecution is inevitable. It is amazing at how the human mind functions — it will believe anything it wants to believe; whether in fact it is true or not; it exchanges the truth of God for a lie (cf. Rom 1:25). I am reminded of an article in “New Yorker Magazine” regarding the opening of a “Chick-Fil-A” in New York City — basically it said, “Chick-Fil-A has infiltrated New York City with its Christian values... beware of the restaurants pervasive Christian traditionalism... Chick-Fil-A is basically on a crusade across America... Boycott it!” Incidentally, this was countered by someone with these words: “I have never once seen or heard any pervasive Christian anything at a Chick-Fil-A, unless you count polite, friendly employees, with good work ethics and descent food.” What this empty-headed proud world refuses to accept, is the fact that one day they are going to be held accountable. I can't even imagine what that day is going to be like for them — they are going to be banished from God's presence and the created order and cast into the eternal fire (cf. Mt 25:41; Mk 9:48; Lk 16:24; Jude 1:7; Rev 20:15), but just prior to that, “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow,

and confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father” (cf. Phil 2:10-11) — friends, this isn’t “*a maybe*,” this is “*a definite absolute*” that is going to happen, and in all probability in the not to distant future; again, the diabolical left *despises* that message with a passion.

THE INTRINSIC NATURE GOD GAVE MAN

Compared to all other creatures man is totally unique in that he was “*made in the image of God*” (cf. Gen 1:27); as such, he possesses qualities that are not seen in the rest of creation. The reality is, man must see these qualities if he is to understand himself and understand God — as the supreme creation of God, man has been given the authority and the power to “*have dominion over His creation*” (cf. Gen 1:26)... thus “*man stands at the pinnacle of creation*,” that was God’s message to him. Because man was made in the image of God, “*he is a moral creature with God-consciousness*” — qualities no other creature possesses. Since man and woman fell from their original estate, they became “*fallen autonomous creatures*” who have since abrogated the responsibilities that God had given to them. A third element man possesses is that he is a “*spiritual creature*,” *i.e.*, he possesses a living, powerful, invisible, immaterial nature (cf. Ecc 12:7; Lk 8:55; Acts 7:59; Jam 2:26) that is either under the governing authority of Satan or the governing authority of God. Those who submit to God and have placed themselves under His authority, and are in harmony with His character (as the Law of God is) are referred to in Scripture as being “*spiritual*” (cf. Rom 7:14; 1 Cor 2:12-14) — “*spiritual wisdom*” pertains to those things which have spiritual significance in the life of a believer (cf. Col 1:9; 3:16)... those who walk so as to please God are “*spiritual*” (cf. Gal 6:1); conversely, the blessings that accrue to believers in our world today are called “*spiritual blessings*” (cf. Eph 1:3)... the Godward activities of believers are “*spiritual sacrifices*” (cf. Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5)... lastly, the resurrection body of the dead in Christ is a “*spiritual body*,” *i.e.*, such as is suited to the heavenly realm (cf. 1 Cor 15:44). According to Scripture, “*the spiritual state of the believer’s soul*” differs from one believer to another — it depends upon their diligence in studying God’s Word and prayer, and being obedient; such as are led by the Spirit are spiritual (cf. Rom 8:4; Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18). With the foregoing in mind, we are not only moral, spiritual creatures made in God’s image, but we exist for “*communion with God*” who is Spirit (cf. Gen 3:8-10; Jn 4:24; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 3:16); since God is Spirit, our communion with Him takes place on a spiritual level — said Jesus, “*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*” (cf. Jn 4:24; Phil 3:3). So aside from having a “*physical nature*,” we also have a “*spiritual nature*” — when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, and placed our trust in Christ, *God made us spiritually alive* (cf. Eph 1:3; 2:1-5; 1 Cor 2:15) and blessed us with *spiritual gifts* for the purpose of ministering to and serving others (cf. 1 Cor 12); conversely, we now have a *spiritual battle* that we must fight (cf. Eph 6:10-18). Said Paul to the believers at Colossae, “We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all *spiritual wisdom and understanding*, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord... strengthened with all power” (Col 1:9-11). Likewise said

Peter regarding the community of believers: “As living stones you are being built up as a *spiritual house for a holy priesthood*, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices* acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (cf. 1 Pet 2:5). As believers, we are a “*royal priesthood*” who have access to God’s throne, and minister to the needs of others in the power of God’s Spirit (cf. Rom 12:1; 15:16; Heb 13:16).

In contradistinction to the Law of heaven, in the western world today there is a strong tendency to *deny the moral responsibility that God has demanded of His creatures*; this is the result of man rejecting the preeminence of God and *embracing self-determinism*. By rejecting the wisdom of God, fallen man’s thinking wanders into the abyss and fails to reflect reality. Because man essentially sees himself as a *physical creature* who has likes & dislikes and is both relational & emotional... he doesn’t see himself as *spiritual creature* who has a relationship with God (after all, he is spiritually dead — *i.e.*, dead in his sin, and dead to righteousness — cf. Rom 6:11-13, 20; Eph 2:1; Col 2:13). The vast majority of people simply see themselves basically as *physical beings* who live a *physical life*; *i.e.*, what they see and feel and touch are the greatest realities... the spiritual dimension of man is a very questionable one to him; that God is Spirit is a bit much for him to accept and understand — since that is much the same for us as believers, the majority of us are inclined to ask God to manifest himself in our lives (*i.e.*, in some physical sort of way); after all, if life is physical, we need to see physical evidence of God’s work in our lives. This line of thinking became pretty significant in the “*charismatic movement*” — they insisted that God evidence Himself in our world by miraculously healing people, and giving them the gift of tongues... “*faith*” needed to be more than an invisible reality. Yet Paul said, “*We don’t walk by sight, we walk by faith*” (cf. 2 Cor 5:7; Jn 20:29; 1 Pet 1:8). “*Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (Rom 11:1); Said Paul, “*In hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees*” (cf. Rom 8:24). It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the heart and gives us assurance of the truth.

When man insists on being “*the self-determinant of his life*” (*i.e.*, the one who defines life), he is making fallen humanistic thinking the pinnacle of reason. It was just such thinking that launched our world into the stratosphere of human thinking back in 18th century Germany — it was a movement known as “*The Enlightenment*.” **Karl Barth** characterized it as “*a system founded upon the presupposition of faith in the omnipotence of human ability*.” **Immanuel Kant** defined it in his “*Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Only*” (1793): “*The Enlightenment represents man’s emergence from a self-inflicted state of minority. A minor is one who is incapable of making use of his understanding without guidance from someone else... having the courage to make use of your own understanding, is therefore the watchword of the Enlightenment*.” **Christian Wolff** (1679-1754) was the one who sought the path to absolute truth through “*pure reason*.” Influenced by English Deists, **H. S. Reimarus** rejected supernatural revelation, and the fact that man had developed beyond the need for the Christian faith. Everything that had transpired during the Enlightenment was predicated on “*the reliability of reason*.”

By the beginning of the 20th century *the Enlightenment in Europe* had impacted Christian thinking here in America, and gave birth to *liberal theology*. The Enlightenment emphasized “the all-sufficiency of human reason” — thus liberal theology gave precedence to human thought over divine thought; *i.e.*, it rejected the doctrine that Scripture is infallible — instead, it held the position that though Scripture *contains truth*, not everything in it *is truth*... thus liberal theology denies that which is supernatural — it denies the deity of Christ, the atonement, miracles, prophesy and creationism (thus it embraces evolutionism). Liberal theology simply looks for the hidden truths that they believe Scripture contains, all the while denying that every single word of it is true; in other words it picks and chooses what it wants to believe — in short, *it basically reduces the Christian faith to religious truths and moral values that they find acceptable*. It was just such thinking that ultimately brought into question much of what the Bible really teaches. My prayer is that you understand the foregoing argument, because it is very critical in the liberal Christian world today — read it again, if you do not understand it.

Humanism sees man and his capabilities as the central concern; it places confidence in human nature and the power of education; thus causing man to be skeptical about most theological matters... its counterpart is “*Secularism*,” a term coined by **G. J. Holyoake** (1817-1906) to indicate a way of life that removes God, revelation, heaven, and hell from consideration, and bases morality on that which will enhance the public good. So secularism is concerned with *the affairs of this world*; not that which is celestial or sacred. Humanism and Secularism are concerned with *human interests* and exclude the divine, thus holding to the position that men and women are on their own in the universe, without a god or life after death. The *humanist* sees himself as being self-sufficient, complete and whole, not as deficient and in need of some extraterrestrial (God)... in short, *humanism* is a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to God or religion. The concept of *secularism* is “*this worldly*” and excludes the transcendent “*other worldly realities*,” so it is a nonreligious approach to individual and social life... essentially, it shifts away from God and moves toward this world. The philosophy of *secularism* is fatally flawed by its reductionist view of reality — it denies and excludes God and the supernatural by fixating on that which is natural. **Francis Schaeffer** in his book “*How Should We Then Live*” (1976) attacked secular humanism as “*the great contemporary enemy of the Christian faith*,” that secular humanism is guilty of having “*exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator*” (Rom 1:25). Having excluded the *Eternal Transcendent Reality* (GOD) as the absolute object of worship, the secularist inexorably makes *the world of man and nature absolute and the object of worship* — remember, that which is “*most valued*” in a person’s life, is what one *worships*. The word worship means “*to bow down and pay homage or reverence toward a superior or ruler*” — to worship God means to acknowledge Him for who He is, and submit to His Lordship (cf. Mt 4:10; 9:18; Jn 4:24; 9:38; Rev 4:10). Scripture tells us that the supernatural God has created the world and sustains its existence (Col 1:16-17); thus this world has value because God created it, continues to preserve it, and has taken steps to redeem it. Man exists to rule over the created order, and in so

doing be responsible to God for his work. As **David W. Gill** states in the “*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*” (Baker Books, 2001, p. 1086) — the important work for the believing world, is to ensure that our world is not “*abandoned to secularism and humanistic thinking.*” Following are six more quotes on the issue of secularism —

- **Christopher Dawson**, in his work “*Religion and the Modern State*” (1935) stated, “Once society is launched on the path of secularization it cannot stop in the halfway house of Liberalism, it must go on to the bitter end, whether that end be Communism or some alternative type of totalitarian secularism.” In short, secularism is practical atheism that *encourages people to live indifferently to religious faith.*
- **The Oxford Conference** in 1937, made the following statement: “The disintegration of society has one root cause; human life is falling to pieces because it has tried to organize itself into unity on a secularistic and humanistic basis *without any reference to the divine will.*”
- **John D. Fee** in his article on “*Secularism*” (1947) said, “The atmosphere of secularism is perfect for breeding un-Christian and anti-Christian social philosophies. There can be no such thing as neutrality toward God... whether they be secularists or atheists who recommend patterns for social life *without God.*”
- **Hazen G. Werner** said in his work, “*The Christian Faith and Secularism*” (1948), “Secularism is to be charged with exteriorizing our values, glorifying the physical, dissolving our restraints, inflating the ego, robbing us of our moral sensibilities, and atrophying our sense of meaning.”
- **Daniel M. Cantwell** in his book “*Door into Life*” (1948) said, “Secularism has fashioned our idea of the Church... [regrettably] we see its strength in numbers... rather than in the Holy Spirit molding individuals and institutions.”
- **Georgia Harkness** said in his work “*The Modern Rival of Christian Faith*” (1953), “Secularism has almost wholly engulfed our culture and is on the way to swallowing up our churches and our souls.” The truth is, many in the *Christian world* are far more *secular* in their thinking than *spiritual*; many of them have an extremely shallow understanding of the things of God — as such, humanistic thinking controls much of the discourse in their minds.

Now with the diabolical nature of humanism and secularism clearly revealed, the reality is, *Christianity is an uncomfortable disturbance to humanistic thinking...* humanism ostensibly extols the dignity of man... humanism is not Godless, but it keeps God in His place — the pulpit; it equates the Christian moral code with such terms as decency, brotherhood, and the Golden Rule; thus, humanism is the orthodoxy of the unbeliever. **Charles Frankel**, in the *New York Times Book Review* (Jan 14, 1962) wrote, “Humanism rejects supernaturalism and moral absolutism, and argues that the best possibilities of

human beings can be achieved only by a combination of informed intelligence and the candid recognition that man must bear the responsibility for whatever standards he adopts.... Humanism is a liberating point of view that is thoroughly compatible with a fervent devotion to the highest spiritual interests of mankind.” Because humanism displaces God from the throne of reason, humanistic thinking is diabolical, corrupt to the core, depraved, unrighteous, deceitful, insolent, arrogant, without understanding, and haters of God — as such, those who embrace it are worthy of death (cf. Rom 1:25-32). “Humanistic secularism elevates man to the pinnacle of wisdom, and hates God and His followers with a passion” — as incredible as it may seem, they worship what God made (the created order) and actually attribute it to evolutionary development, rather than the One who made it (the Creator); remember, there is not one piece of evidence that supports “evolution” in our world — NONE! I address this subject in a couple of studies I have done — “Ultimate Reality” and “The Economy of God in Our World” — you can access them on my website: www.thetransformedsoul.com Is it any wonder that God calls the thinking of men “absolute foolishness”? (cf. Ps 14:1; Prv 19:3; Ecc 7:25; Mk 7:21-23; Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 1:18-20; 2:14; 3:19); *i.e.*, it is neither rational nor grounded in reality.

THE SEXUAL PASSIONS OF OUR WORLD

In conjunction with personal autonomy, “sexual sin” is the most coveted passion in the human family — not only is it highly deceitful (cf. Jer 17:9; Mt 5:27-28; Rom 1:24ff; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:24; Eph 4:22; Col 3:5; 1 Th 4:3-5; Titus 3:3; Heb 3:13; Jam 1:14-16; Rev 18:2-3), it is extremely destructive to the individuals involved and to society as a whole. The ramifications of sexual sin are enormous. Sexual activity between any man and any woman outside of marriage is deemed acceptable in our world, provided there is mutual agreement between the two people involved. Likewise, the most perverse element in our world deems sex between two people of the same sex as acceptable, provided there is mutual agreement between them. Most people in our fallen world simply view sexual activity in all its forms as a very self-gratifying pleasure. In the ancient Greek world, adultery was not seen as something that was immoral — in some cultures (in particular, Corinth) it was actually seen as a part of worship; it is that way today in some regions of India. The temple in Corinth housed more than one-thousand prostitute priestesses whose services were part of their worship. In the Greek way of thinking, the body and soul were two separate spheres; *i.e.*, they saw these two parts as mutually exclusive (what one did with his own body had nothing to do with his soul). The apostle Paul said in his letter to the Church at Corinth, “The body is **not** for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Cor 6:13). Contrary to what many in that culture believed, God does care about the body — He has purchased the body with the blood of His Son and filled it with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20). According to Scripture, God has given human beings strict instructions regarding their bodies; as such, there are severe consequences that surpass the passing pleasure that illicit sex affords. The Bible is filled with warnings about sex outside of marriage. It should be clear: God is not against sex — He created it — but He did so with

a purpose in mind; He knows how wonderful this gift can be. But since we don't like the *boundaries* God sets for us in life, we frequently make decisions based on our own inclinations, and adopt the world's philosophy instead; this is especially true in the area of sex. Unbelievers insist on being free to do as they please in life — they refuse to *deny themselves the greatest human pleasure* simply because some people say it's wrong.

With regard to *the destructive forces this good gift can become* when it is removed from its proper context, take a moment and reflect upon its impact on our world — All of us know about the consequences of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases... but there are millions of families (a billion?) torn apart by affairs... millions of unborn babies aborted (murdered) in our country every year... millions of men not paying child-support (they have abandoned their children)... thousands of cases of incest and rape... prostitution is growing at an alarming rate... sex is even used to advertise and sell products... and *pornography is now a multi-billion dollar industry* — consider the following numbers: 79% of men ages 18-30 visit a porn sight at least once a month; 67% of men ages 31-49; and 49% of men ages 50-68 — of those numbers, 18% of men (21,000,000) admit they are *addicted to porn*. Are you just reading these numbers casually, or are you giving them serious thought? Regarding women and porn, 48% of young women visit a porn sight at least once every month. *These are astounding numbers* — go online and check them out for yourself. Sadly, the foregoing numbers apply not only to unbelievers, but to believers as well; even significant numbers of clergymen & pastors have become victims of online porn — conversely, it is rated as “*the number one problem of congregations*” by pastors). Did you listen to what I just wrote? Or are you stubbornly questioning its integrity. By the way, the diabolical left is actually promoting this trash; they are not just tolerating it, they are promoting it! *Our innate sinfulness* (i.e., our flesh) is a profound part of the entire human family, yet very few pulpits address its significance in the lives of the believing community. Again, it is not that our world *tolerates sexual sin* (that's bad enough), but the exceedingly liberal entertainment industry actually *promotes it*. Sex outside of the parameters that God has established for the human family is destroying families, friendships, teenagers, children, and the majority of our nation's social institutions (even our churches!). No one can deny the devastating consequences of our society's attitude about sex — aside from pride (self-autonomy), sexual sin is the number one problem for the human family. *Sex was designed for one union — “marriage.”* To use it for anything other than what it was designed for is not only to abuse it, it is to actually destroy it. Sex was originally designed for propagation, pure pleasure and oneness (i.e., intimacy in marriage); because mankind doesn't use it as God designed it, it has robbed them of true intimacy. Either we acknowledge these realities or we ignore them and close our eyes to them. Remember the words of Paul: “*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man*” (1 Cor 10:13) — so for those of you who are bewildered by these numbers, and think that they just apply to the ungodly in our world, come down off your high horse, *because “you” are nothing more than a common man!* It is the sick, self-acclaimed pietistic Christians who are trying to delude the rest of us, by claiming to be absolutely pure in their inner self (cf. Rom 7:18). The reason this particular issue bothers me so much,

is that such individuals are passing along a very juvenile understanding of man's inner core (*i.e.*, his flesh), and some people are actually believing them (only to their spiritual detriment). God made us "sexual creatures," but because we are fallen creatures our sexual desires were significantly affected. Therefore writes Paul, "Do not let *sin* reign in your mortal body that you should obey its *desires*... *sin* is not to be your master" (cf. Rom 6:12-14). "Lay aside every encumbrance, and *the sin* which so easily entangles you, and run with *endurance* the race that has been set before you, fixing your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith" (Heb 12:1-2); that word **endurance** (*hupomeno*) is **emphatic in Greek** — literally it means "to abide under and bear up courageously" (even under suffering)... in other words, we must endure the pressure to succumb and cave in to sin, because we are all going to experience it in this fallen world. The problem with many in the Christian community is their juvenile understanding of "sin."

As **Charles Stanley** says in his "Handbook for Christian Living" — "God made sex for marriage because sex is not just physical, it is **relational**." The Bible teaches that when two people have sex, they become united (cf. 1 Cor 6:15-16); our body is the vehicle through which we express what's in the soul — sex was designed to be the most intimate expression of our soul (we cannot have sex with our body and leave our soul elsewhere; though that was the Corinthian mentality, that does not define reality). God has designed sex to take place inside a relationship called "marriage" — thus sex is an expression of the total abandonment of one's body, soul, spirit, and life. Sex is the zenith of intimacy; therefore when sex is taken out of the context of marriage, it damages the individual's ability to be intimate... the more a person abuses this expression of intimacy, the greater the damage. Millions of married couples go through the motions of sex but experience no intimacy... their intimacy factor has been damaged through affairs or pornography or other ways. Paul said, "He who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (cf. 1 Cor 6:18); essentially he was saying, "You're just hurting yourself." Because many have engaged in sex before marriage, they simply saw it as enjoying physical pleasure with another person... thus they spent years programming their intimacy level with a false message: that sex has nothing to do with intimacy (but that is a complete distortion of the truth). Keep in mind, over half of all the marriages in our culture end in divorce (*i.e.*, broken families); and many marriages that do not end in divorce are seriously lacking in intimacy. The emptiness and guilt that accompanies sex outside of marriage ultimately destroys genuine intimacy. The apostle Paul warned the church at Corinth that one who commits adultery or fornication is hurting his own body (1 Cor 6:18); thus when we engage in sexual sin, we punish ourselves and alienate ourselves from intimacy, and set ourselves up for a life of isolation. As Stanley says, "Whenever sex is used for anything other than what it was intended for — **intimacy and oneness** — it loses its ability to accomplish what it was designed for;" since sexual sin hardens people, they become incapable of true intimacy. The sexual revolution in our country has caused a serious relational famine; what was perceived to be great pleasure actually produced great loss. Sex can be compared to "a fire" in the fireplace — a fire in the fireplace is lovely, warm, comforting, inviting, and pleasurable. But put that same fire on the sofa or carpet, and

it becomes destructive and disastrous. There is nothing inherently wrong with fire, but when the location is changed, that makes all the difference. One could also compare sex to “*a car*” — when one removes it from the road upon which it was meant to travel, it will not function the way in which it was designed to function. The problem with man is that he insists on running his own life and doing things his way — *he hates God’s way because it does not coincide with his own fallen personal desires*. Following are six passages that Scripture addresses regarding the issue of sex; a short exposition of each one can be found in “*The Handbook of Bible Application*” (Tyndale House Publishers, pp. 568-571):

- **Deut 22:22** — “*If a man is discovered committing adultery, both he and the other man’s wife must be killed; in this way evil will be cleansed from Israel.*” It ought to be very clear, adultery is a destroyer of society. A New Testament corollary of this is found in Paul’s words to the Colossians: “*Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire... it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come... lay aside the old self, and put on the new self*” (Col 3:5-10). In short, sexual sin is a powerful destroyer of relationships.
- **Prov 6:32** — “*The man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul.*” Sex sins not only destroy marriages, but scars children. God’s laws are not arbitrary; they do not forbid good, clean fun — rather, they warn us against destroying ourselves through extremely unwise actions. Regard lust as a warning sign of danger ahead — when you notice that you are attracted to a person, beware, your desires may lead you to sin; immediately go in another direction. Ask God to help you change your desires before you are drawn into sin.
- **Prov 5:8-9** — “*Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your vigor to others, and your years to the cruel one.*” Solomon here is telling his children that one great safeguard is to stay as far away from the temptation as possible. The reality is, there is no use asking God for deliverance if we insist on entertaining the sin; once you are aware of the temptation, you must *flee immediately*. In some case, it is necessary to flee as Joseph did. As Solomon said, those who visit the brothel squander their manly vigor, and give the best of their golden years to a cruel temptress.
- **I Cor 6:18** — “*Run from sex sin... no other sin affects the body as this one does. When you sin this sin it is against your own body.*” God doesn’t forbid sexual sin just to be difficult... He knows its power to destroy us physically and spiritually. It has devastated countless lives and destroyed families, churches, communities, and even nations. God wants to protect us from damaging ourselves and others.
- **Matt 5:28** — “*Anyone who even looks on a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*” The Old Testament Law said that it is wrong for a person to have sex with someone other than his or her spouse (Ex 20:14). But Jesus said that “*the desire to have sex with someone other than one’s spouse*

is mental adultery and thus sin.” Jesus emphasized that if the act is wrong, then so is the intention; *i.e.*, the thought (cf. Mt 15:19; 5:8). The truth is, wrong desires left unchecked will ultimately result in wrong actions and turn people away from God.

- **I Thess 4:3-5** — *“God wants you to be holy and pure and to keep clear of all sexual sin so that each of you will marry in holiness and honor — not in lustful passion as the heathen do, in their ignorance of God and His ways.”* To keep from hurting ourselves, sexual desires and activities must be placed under Christ’s control. God created sex for procreation and pleasure, and as an expression of intimate love between a husband and wife. Sexual experience must be limited to the marriage relationship to avoid hurting ourselves, our spouse, and our relationship with God.

GOD IS HOLY, MAN IS SINFUL

According to Scripture, the supreme characteristic of God is the fact that He is *“Holy.”* The most emphatic statement in all of Scripture is this: *“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come”* (cf. Is 6:3; Rev 4:8). The triple redundancy of the word *“Holy”* in those two passages speaks volumes as to the character of God — aside from anything else, God is *“HOLY.”* The word *“holy”* is used more than 600 times in Scripture. The word *“holy”* in Hebrew (*qados*) describes something that is *“absolutely pure and devoted,”* and is used of something that is *“separated”* from that which is not holy — God’s people are *“holy unto the Lord;” i.e.* separated unto the Lord (cf. Ex 19:6; Lev 20:26; Deut 26:19; 1 Pet 2:9). The Old Testament clearly and emphatically teaches that God is *“holy”* — He is *“the Holy One of Israel”* (cf. Is 1:4), *“the Holy God”* (cf. Is 5:16), and *“the Holy One”* (cf. Is 40:25). The Lord said to Isaiah, *“Thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is ‘Holy,’ I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit, and to revive the heart of the contrite”* (cf. Is 57:15). Thus prayed Hannah, the mother to be of Samuel, *“There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one beside Thee, nor is there any rock like our God”* (cf. 1 Sam 2:2). The Greek word for *“holy”* (*hagios*) is also translated *“sanctification”* and *“saint”* (cf. 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2 and Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2) — it refers to those who have been *“separated unto the Lord.”* In contrast to God being absolutely pure and holy, man is unholy, fallen and sinful — the Bible says, *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (cf. Rom 3:23); *i.e.*, man is totally depraved and corrupt (cf. Jer 17:9; Ecc 9:3). As **R. C. Sproul** states in his book, *“Essential Truths of the Christian Faith,”* there’s no part of fallen man that is left untouched by sin — our minds, our wills, and our bodies are all affected by evil. We speak sinful words, do sinful deeds, have impure thoughts; our very bodies suffer from the ravages of sin. As Scripture says, *“There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God; all have turned aside; together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one”* (cf. Rom 3:10-12; also Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-4). As the Lord Jesus said, *“There is none good except God alone”* (Lk 18:19). It is because of man’s fallen condition that Scripture

says “*we are **dead** in trespasses and sins*” (Eph 2:1), “***captive** to the law of sin*” (Rom 7:23), and “*by nature children of wrath*” (Eph 2:3). **Saint Augustine** said that man, having used his free will badly in the Fall, lost both himself and his will... that his will has been so enslaved that it has no power whatsoever for righteousness; thus man’s will is free to turn from God, but not come to Him — so grace is an absolute necessity; apart from it no one can be saved (James Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, InterVarsity Press, 1986, p. 210). Only by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit can fallen man be brought out of this state of spiritual death (cf. Eph 2:1-10).

THE MANDATE GOD HAS GIVEN CHRISTIANS

Aside from *loving God and loving fellow believers* (cf. Mt 22:37; Jn 13:34; Gal 6:9-10), we are to *love unbelievers* (cf. Mt 22:39). *and even love our enemies* (cf. Mt 5:44)... yet “*we are **not** to love the world or the things in the world... for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life is **not** from the Father, but from the world*” (1 Jn 2:15-16); loving the world is not compatible with loving the Father. So as Christians, we are to abstain from those sensual bodily appetites that proceed from our flesh (*i.e.*, our sinful nature), as well as from those evils that arise from what we see, and the unholy ambition of self-glory — the worldly elements of *appetite*, *avarice*, and *ambition* are not to characterize God’s people, because they are not of the Father. The Greek word that is translated “*love*” (*agape*) refers to “*an action*,” not some impulsive feeling; thus, it is a “*choice*” that we make — as stated earlier in this study, one cannot equate “*loving someone*” with “*liking someone*,” those are two completely different constructs... if a person’s attitude and personality is arrogant and disrespectful, I am not going to be attracted to them, nor will I want to hang around them (*i.e.*, I’m not going to like them); nevertheless, I am not going to treat them bad or be unkind to them... and should the need arise, as a believer I need to lend them a helping hand and seek their best interest. According to Scripture, we are not to let “*our feelings*” dictate reality for us (that can get us into trouble) — our innate desires & feelings & lusts are the primary problem of fallen man, so we must continually shut the door on such issues, and not entertain them. *Our feelings and our likes are one thing, our actions and our responses are another*; we can’t control our feelings and our likes, but we can control our actions and our responses. Since Christian love has *God* as its primary object (cf. 1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17), love does no wrong to another person, but seeks his highest good and welfare (cf. Rom 13:10; 15:2; Gal 6:10; Col 3:12-14). Furthermore, “*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit*” (Rom 5:5); thus we have the capacity to love as God commands. As Paul says, that which really matters in the Christian life is “*faith working through love*” (cf. Gal 5:6); “*if we have not love, we have **nothing***” (1 Cor 13:2), and “*if we do not love, we do not know God, because God is love*” (cf. 1 Jn 4:7-8). Probably the most significant ways we can love the unbelieving world is to be “*salt*” and “*light*” (cf. Mt 5:13-16) — just as salt seasons food and hinders the spread of corruption, so also it creates thirst; thus we are to make others long for the righteousness of God by seeing it in us (cf. Mt 5:16; 1 Pet 3:15); in so doing

we will be fulfilling our duty as believers by being *Christ's ambassadors* in this world and carrying out the *ministry of reconciliation* (2 Cor 5:18-20; Mt 28:19-20; Jn 17:18-20; Rom 10:13-15; 1 Pet 3:15); remember, as believers we are Christ's emissaries. If you think about it, why else would God leave us here on this fallen planet, where a good 85 percent of the population is going to hell? It is the same reason why Christ came to this world. Think about it, God has opened our minds and hearts to the truth, and filled us with His Spirit... and all we want to do is create a pleasant little utopia for ourselves? Obviously, that is not why God leaves us here on this planet. If you do not sense a "*divine obligation*" to reach out to fallen man, you better examine your faith to make sure you are truly one of God's children, because being salt and light is our calling in life (cf. 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 6:4; Mt 25:31-46).

COMMON MAN AND UNCOMMON MAN

In this little homily, the common man is the *unbeliever*, and the uncommon man is the *believer*. Whether or not one is a believer or an unbeliever, most people in our culture seem to be reasonably kind and likeable... few people are really ugly and unsociable (even among unbelievers). The reality is, the *behavioral attitudes* of most people have been formed by the culture in which they were raised — since society as a whole dislikes unkindness, belligerence and abusive behavior (thanks to the impact the Christian community has had on our country over the years), most people don't reflect those qualities; sadly, the diabolical left is now strongly influencing our culture; thus it is becoming increasingly more ugly. The primary reason people behave in reasonably good ways, is the desire to be accepted and liked by others. Since our culture is fairly "*outgoing & friendly*," it is pretty easy to interact with people and carry on a conversation with them; but that is not the case with all of the cultures in our world — the majority of most people groups in our world are far more private than ours. When my wife and I served in a church up in Vancouver, British Columbia, we noticed the *cultural differences* that existed between our two countries — whereas Americans are more outgoing and prone to say "*hello*" to people and talk to them, that was not as common with Canadians... they were a quieter and more private people, and kept more to themselves; though that may differ somewhat in the various provinces of Canada, that pretty much defined those in British Columbia. In the early 1990s we attempted to give away free CD copies of the popular "*Jesus Film*" to those in and around our community (this film had been effectively used by missionaries all over the world) — to my amazement, we were only able to distribute "*one copy*" of the film — and that was done by a beautiful young gal who was eight months pregnant. The truth is, it was not uncommon for people to slam the door in our face and not even talk to us — many of them viewed our knocking on their as an *infringement* on their rights, as if we had no right to knock on their door. Though that may happen occasionally here in the United States, that would have been a very rare response. Now if you didn't understand the "*private nature*" of Canada's culture, you could easily have drawn a wrong conclusion about them — that's how significant "*culture*" is in our world... we don't all share the same culture.

Though two-thirds of all the people in Canada would call themselves “Christians,” only a very tiny portion of them are evangelicals and fundamentalists — 38% are Catholics, 6% are of the United Church of Canada (a very liberal church), 5% are Anglican, and 2% are Baptist. Of all the major cities in Canada, Vancouver was “the least churched of any city in North America” — only about “one percent” of the population in Vancouver attended church on any given Sunday; Vancouver might be the least religious city in North America — however, since there has been a very large influx of people from Asia into Vancouver over the last twenty years, that number has probably gone up somewhat. The reality is, public life has been secularized in Canada... thus religious life has been privatized — “the Lord’s Day” is valuable because it gives workers a weekly day of rest, not because it honors God in some way; religious education is good because it produces well-behaved citizens, not because it cultivates a person’s love of God. Private issues in Canada include religion, abortion, alcoholic beverages, obscenity, marriage, divorce, and nearly all forms of sexual activity. Most Christians seem to have accepted the secularization of public life. Incidentally, Canada is believed to have more “hate crime legislation” than any other country in the world; no one has a right to “speak out against anyone” regarding any of the foregoing issues; thus Canada is often characterized in our world as being “very progressive” — as such, it is a very quiet private culture (nobody has a right to infringe upon another person’s rights), which would be a complete contradiction of our American culture; we have a much louder transparent culture than does Canada. A couple of things I found difficult to except were these: it is against the law to “spank your children” — if you are caught doing so, the state has a right to take your children from you; some of the younger parents in our church really struggled with disciplining their children, and were fearful that the state might intervene and take their children from them (which is pretty hard to imagine). In addition to that, some religious beliefs cannot be voiced in Canadian churches or on any broadcasting stations, because they are viewed as “hate doctrines” — again, that’s the culture that exists in Canada. My wife and I also found it very interesting that few Canadians dress provocatively or wear a lot of make-up, so they are far less preoccupied with their bodies than their American counterpart, and far more accepting of their own physicality — in that sense, they are far less pretentious than Americans. Let me expand upon that —

In comparison with Canadian women, American women are consumed with their looks and their bodies. Because of the media, the entertainment industry, television, magazines and billboards, we in America have become accustomed to extremely rigid standards of beauty. Sadly, physically attractive people have distinct advantages in our society — attractive children are more popular (both with classmates and teachers)... attractive applicants have a better chance of getting jobs and higher salaries... in the courthouse, attractive people are found guilty less often and receive less severe sentences. The “bias of beauty” in America operates in almost all social situations — all experiments show we react more favorably to physically attractive people. By the way, the current media ideal of thinness for women is achievable by less than five percent of

the female population. All research shows that women are much more critical of their appearance than men — 80% of women are dissatisfied with themselves when they look into a mirror; that is completely different for men (they generally have a much more positive body-image than women). Obviously the standards of female beauty are considerably higher and more inflexible for women as opposed to men. Female beauty on television, magazines and billboards makes “*exceptional good looks*” seem normal... so most women are trying to achieve the impossible. The standards of female beauty have become progressively more unrealistic throughout the 20th century. Regrettably, female dissatisfaction with appearance begins at a *very early age* — studies show that 81% of ten-year-old girls have already dieted at least once. For young girls, puberty only accentuates the problem — a Harvard University study showed that two-thirds of underweight 12-year-old girls considered themselves to be too fat... by 13, at least 50% of girls are significantly unhappy about their appearance... among women 18 and older, at least 80% are unhappy with what they see in the mirror. A study of Mexican immigrants here in America, found that those who had immigrated after the age of 17 were far less affected by the prevailing super-thin ideal than those who were 16 or younger when they came to the US — obviously our culture is not a very healthy one for women, despite what the diabolical element in our culture may claim. The resultant affect of fashion magazine photographs of super-thin models is that it produces depression, stress, guilt, shame, insecurity, and body-dissatisfaction by most women. Magazines like Vogue and Elle are *banned* in many eating-disorder clinics, because of their known negative effect on patients’ body-image.

Let me share just a couple of more statistics: 40% of women change their clothing at least twice a day, and reapply their makeup as many as five times per day — wearing makeup has been described as “*hiding one’s unattractiveness*” or “*wearing a mask*;” thus, the majority of women obviously don’t feel good about “*their looks*”... and 60% of women complain on a daily basis that they can’t find anything suitable to wear in their wardrobe (in spite of the fact that the average woman in America spends between \$150 and \$400 a month on clothing... and wears between \$5 and \$11 worth of facial products every day; the numbers differ in different areas due to the differences in income — 78 percent of women spend at least an hour a day on their appearance). Aside from all the foregoing, there is the soaring popularity of “*plastic surgery*” in our country; over 17 million cosmetic procedures were performed last year, at a cost of over \$8 billion. And then there are the issues of liposuction, facelifts, botox, and breast implants. The final word on this subject is this — since “*sexuality*” is the premiere expression of our fallen condition, and since men are the aggressors in our culture, is it any wonder why women go to great lengths to make themselves physically attractive and acceptable to men? Remember, we live in a “*fallen universe*” that is completely out of sink with its Creator; to think that we are just a little bit fallen is to be totally delusional; if there is anything that “*life*” must have taught us as believers it is that we are *totally depraved creatures*; *i.e.*, our corruption has extended itself to every aspect of our being (cf. Jer 17:9; Mk 7:20-23; Rom 3:9-18; Eph 2:1-3; 4:18); that is simply what it means to be a fallen human being. Unless

the Holy Spirit enlightens a person to the truth about himself, he will remain in darkness (cf. 1 Cor 2:14).

Another problem with our American culture is that there are certain “*sub-cultures*” in our country that “*hate*” anyone who doesn’t align with their thinking — “*hate*” has a pretty significant presence in our country; sadly, it is strongly promulgated by many in the press and the political world. “*Intense hatred*” has been widely directed at the Christian world by the diabolical left. Though most people in our culture are *modestly religious* (i.e., many people believe there is a God and that there is such a thing as right and wrong)... there is a significant number of people in our culture who are *extremely adamant about their irreligious beliefs*, and it is these people who “*hate divine truth.*” Many in the black world *hate white Christians in mid-America* (i.e., the agricultural community) — they think these people are the world’s morons. Little do they know that these people are some of “*the most significant people in our world*” — though they only constitute 1% of our country here in America, they are far and away the most significant... this so-called moron community conducts hundreds of thousands of “*tests*” each year both in the soil and in the plants themselves; their genius far exceeds that of the stupid diabolical fools who demean them. How anyone can criticize the agricultural industry is beyond reason — without it, none of us would live very long. By the way, if you don’t like those people, “*stop eating their product!*” Just because white Christians don’t embrace the diabolical left doesn’t make them “*fools*,” it simply demonstrates that they have far more integrity and wisdom than the empty-headed diabolical left. I state this pretty firmly, because I am tired of hearing the diabolical rhetoric of the left. If you leftists are so brilliant, why don’t you go to work in our world and provide for all of our world’s needs, rather than putting it on everyone else’s shoulders? How one can demean the labor force that makes this world “*tick*,” is very difficult to imagine.

There are certain behaviors in our world that Scripture deems *wrong*, but many outspoken non-believers take issue with that. The diabolical left is ardently opposed to hearing the religious right express God’s disapproval of pornography, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, adultery, profanity, etc; so they not only “*tolerate*” such ungodly behaviors, but actually “*promote*” them, and are vicious in their attacks on those who disagree with them — in that sense, our country is an extremely political one. Obviously it is one thing to discourage wrong behavior, but quite another to encourage it. The truth is, the foundation of *what is right* and *what is wrong* lies with God, not man; it is a matter of divine consensus, not human consensus. Contrary to what many in our culture believe, we live in a “*moral universe*” (i.e., a universe that has “*God-ordained values*”)... now should a particular culture violate those values, it is going to reap according — though we each control what we “*sow*” in life (that’s human choice), we do not control what we “*reap*” (that’s divine choice); as the apostle Paul said, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap*” (cf. Gal 6:7; Rom 1:18; Job 4:8; Prv 1:31-33; Hos 8:7; 10:12) — one can argue to the contrary all day long, but that isn’t going to change reality. Because there is such an emotional divide on this issue, there is going

to be “war” (ugly conflict) because of the absolute hatred of divine morality by the diabolical left. Some of you may question my continual use of the word “diabolical,” as if it is somewhat uncalled for; should that be the case, you are denying what Scripture teaches on the matter — if something is not of divine origin, it is of satanic origin; the thinking of men is not the thinking of God — God’s thinking does not correspond with man’s thinking; they are antithetical to each other; numerous passages address this matter: Said God, “My thoughts are not your thoughts... as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts” (cf. Is 55:8-9). Said Paul, “The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God” (cf. 1 Cor 3:19; also Prv 14:12; Jn 8:43-44; Rom 1:21-22; 1 Cor 1:18-25; 2:14; Titus 3:3). So in order to differentiate between right and wrong thinking, it is important that one identify its source; hence the frequent usage of the word “diabolical” (*i.e.*, that which is evil and characterizes the devil) — sadly, the political values of our world are often diabolical in nature; just as they were in ancient Rome, so they are today in our world. Unless one becomes accustomed to identifying things as they really are, it is highly likely that one will simply deceive himself.

Obviously if fallen human thinking prevails in our culture, we are going to reap a world wind of destruction — the reality is, Satan will continue to push our world into a totally depraved mind-set, that God will not only reject, but ultimately cause it to suffer accordingly. God is not neutral on His values; He is a holy God who has holy values — when they are rejected, He brings judgment. To somehow think that this war is going to cease is foolish; according to Scripture the “end times” are going to be volatile and extremely ugly (Acts 2:20); as the apostle Paul wrote, “In the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceits, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (cf. 2 Tim 3:1-4; Rom 1:28-32; 2 Pet 3:3; Jude 1:18-19). Aside from all this, with their depraved minds “they will actually hold to a form of godliness;” *i.e.*, they will actually see themselves as “being good” (2 Tim 3:5) — that is the essence of satanic goodness; remember, Satan disguises himself “an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). Obviously the unbelieving diabolical world not only thinks it is “good,” it wants the world to think that they are “the best people” in society, and that the radicals who do not agree with them are “the worst people.” According to Scripture, there are numerous behaviors that are completely unacceptable to God; *i.e.*, they are “deplorable behaviors” (I have listed several of them below). So for one to pretend that he is good, when in actuality he embraces these ungodly behaviors is antithetical to divine truth —

- Sexual Immorality — homosexuality, adultery, prostitution, pornography, rape, pre-marital sex, and fornication
- Lying, Cheating, Dishonesty, Deceiving
- Cruelty, Theft, Malice, Brutality
- Pride, Arrogance, Profanity, Gossip
- Divorce, Desertion, Abandonment

• Unbelief, Hating God, Hating God's people —

God's supreme commandment is that we love God (i.e., revere, respect and obey Him), and love People (i.e., seek God's best for their lives); in other words, if we don't love God and love people we are children of Satan. The very first President of our country, George Washington, said "religion" and "morality" are the two premiere issues of any lasting society... that without religion there will be no morality, and when that is the case, the nation will self-destruct. Our forefathers weren't nearly as narrow-minded and ignorant as the diabolical left makes them out to be — the reality is, our forefathers saw the much bigger picture, whereas most in our world today don't even understand the big picture... they are so consumed with a self-centered, ungodly mind, that they cannot even entertain divine truth; their minds are so corrupt, they cannot even fathom the essence of a Creator God — such depraved thinking is like ignoring the importance of "water" on our planet (without it there would be no life whatsoever!). As interesting as it may seem to many of you, "sexual perversion" seems to be the number one unpromising issue for the unbelieving world. Though "self-autonomy" is the reason behind the fall of man, "sexual perversion" is the most significant expression of man's fall. The first chapter of the book of Romans confirms this: "Because the ungodly did not honor God as indeed being the only true God, their foolish hearts were darkened... professing to be wise, they actually became fools. Therefore God gave them over to the impure lusts of their hearts... in so doing, they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator... so God gave them over to degrading passions, where men and women exchanged the natural function of their bodies for people of like sex... God then gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things which are not proper... they not only do such things, but give hearty approval to those who practice such diabolical activity" (Rom 1:21-32) — the preceding defines the diabolical left. The reality is God has placed "a God-consciousness" in our hearts, the chief end of which is to "glorify God" (cf. Lev 10:3; 1 Chron 16:24-29; Ps 148; Rom 15:5-6; 1 Cor 10:31; Rev 4:11); i.e., we are to recognize His glory and extol Him for it — failing to do so is man's greatest affront to his Creator (cf. Acts 12:22-23). That is a summarization of fallen man's blatant rebellion; because of his insistence on rejecting God, "hell" is his eternal destiny (cf. Mt 10:28; Mk 9:43-44), regardless of what half of the Ecclesiastical world believes! Beloved, we don't embrace a theology of men, we embrace a theology of God! Just because someone tries to deceive you by claiming to be a Christian, doesn't mean he believes in the teachings of Christ and Scripture (God) — if nothing else, consider what transpired in ancient Israel over and over again down through the ages; though they claimed to be a people of virtue, they were anything but virtuous; they even killed the Messiah! Dearly beloved, please let God's Word guide you into all truth (cf. Jn 17:17).

Ultimately the message everyone needs to understand is this: "It matters not what the world thinks, what matters is what God thinks — arrogance, pride, and violating what God says is sin, and sin has eternal consequences." Carefully reflect upon that statement. Because man's thinking is nonsensical and foolish (that's how God defines it), he cannot

accept the fact that a good God would send someone who doesn't appear to be that bad to hell — obviously, we have all wrestled with that construct... since none of us can fully wrap our minds around it, it is somewhat troubling to us. The reality is, we don't see our sinfulness as being that dark, or God's holiness as being that bright; thus we significantly reduce the *chasm* that exists between us and God — remember, we judge everything with our fallen minds (as if our minds are capable of doing so)... in spite of the fact that God tells us that “*His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways; as high as the heavens are about the earth, so are His ways above our ways, and His thoughts above our thoughts*” (cf. Is 55:8-9)... and that “*there is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way of death*” (cf. Prv 14:12). The fact that Adam and Eve “*died*” because they simply ate of some forbidden fruit, also seems a bit much to us. The reality is, we don't have the capacity to see things as they really are — *we are extremely deficient creatures*. It is only when we humbly hear the message of God, that God's Spirit gives us the grace to believe (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Th 1:5)... it is not attained through human rationalization. Henceforth, once we become Christians, we are given the grace to accept divine truth as truly “*being true*” — it is not that we fully understand it; nevertheless, we are given a deep inner conviction that it is indeed true when we humbly consider it, and that conviction is given to us by the Holy Spirit (cf. Jam 1:21; Heb 11:1). Essentially what divine truth does, is keep us humble and reveal to us how extremely shallow our human thinking is. Though “*hell*” is a reality, it is impossible for fallen man to accept... so he rejects it. Fallen man sees himself as being *relatively good* (not perfect, but pretty good), but the glass through which he sees himself is dark; thus he doesn't see things as they really are — he has no idea how *deficient* he is... how *ungodly* he is... and how *lacking in goodness* he is... when his flesh is provoked, he becomes extremely angry and strikes out at the one who provokes him... ultimately he desires the death of the antagonist in his life. Satan *hates* God so much, there is nothing he wouldn't do to destroy Him — little does he know, he can do nothing except that which God permits him to do... conversely, fallen man *hates* God and His people — the righteousness of God is completely unacceptable to him, because it denies him of *his autonomy* and *his fleshly desires*. If there is anything fallen man *hates* it is submitting to another person's authority — his personal autonomy is an absolute for him... in that respect, *the ungodly is no different than the devil* (cf. Jn 8:44). Because the *diabolical left* doesn't embrace the values espoused by the *Christian right*, it hates them... conversely, the Christian right doesn't embrace the values espoused by the diabolical left — whereas *the left hates the righteous thinking of the right*... and *the right hates the unrighteous thinking of the left*; the difference between these two groups is this: the right cares for the plight of the ungodly, but the left does not care for the plight of the godly (it simply wants to destroy them, and wipe them off the face of the earth).

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IS BOTH JOYFUL & SORROWFUL

Following Christ doesn't mean we don't enjoy life, but neither does it mean that everything in life is pleasant and problem free. It is here where the believer struggles in life. The author of Hebrews says "the discipline we go through in life, does not appear to be joyful, but sorrowful" (cf. Heb 12:11; 1 Pet 1:6) — that word "discipline" needs to be defined; the Greek term "paideuo" is used of "training, educating and correcting children;" as God's children, none of us are perfect creatures — we each still have a long way to go. If you think "you have arrived spiritually," consider the following — how much do you think you resemble Christ? That's a very sobering question, because we are a long way from being like Christ. Remember, when we get to heaven God is going to complete our transformation... as the apostle John says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1 Jn 3:2) — the emboldened words in that verse are "emphatic;" we are children of God who will one day be exactly like Christ! The apostle Peter put it this way: "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (1 Pet 5:10; Phil 1:29); that work will be done by God alone. Until the day of the Lord, none of us will be anywhere near perfect — that just happens to be the economy under which we as believers live. Thus, "we are all in the process of being conformed to the image of Christ" (Rom 8:29), and such is done through trials, adversity & suffering — these are the most effective teachers in God's economy. **Dr. Leslie Weatherhead** says in his book "Prescription for Anxiety" (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1956), "The trying things... i.e., those things that overwhelm us and upset our pride, do more good than all that which excites and inspires us." The great British preacher **Charles Spurgeon** puts it this way in his work "The Treasury of the New Testament" (Marshall, Morgan & Scott), "All the grace I have got out of my comfortable and easy times [is very little in comparison to]... the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs." The truth is, all of the divine discipline and training we undergo as God's children is unpleasant while it is in process; "it is not until later that it brings forth the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (cf. Heb 12:11). Just as "physical surgery" is no enjoyable experience, neither is "spiritual surgery" — but when one is knowledgeable as to the benefits of such surgery, obviously they are much easier to accept; think about it, if you didn't know the benefit of some physical procedure that you were being subjected to, calmness would not rule in your soul. To the dismay of most of us, there's no "sedative or anesthetic" that we can take to put us to sleep so that we don't feel the pain; in that sense, it differs from medical surgery. Spiritual surgeries must be accepted and endured "by faith."

Now, since the discipline of God is purifying in its aim, "we can rejoice when we encounter various trials" (cf. Jam 1:2) — if they had no positive transforming purpose in our lives, that would be one thing, but God has so willed that "through trials and tribulations" we are "being transformed into the image of Christ by the Holy Spirit" (cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 5:1-5;

1 Pet 5:10) — that is what is going on in every believer’s life; we are all in the process of *being transformed* — that verb in Greek (*metamorphoo*) is in the present tense, meaning this action is a continual ongoing action... and it is in the passive voice, meaning that it is an action that is being done to us (read 2 Cor 3:18) — in short, the Holy Spirit is continually at work transforming us into the image of Christ; being as that is in the indicative mood in Greek, that is “*a definite reality*,” not simply a “*maybe*.” As believers, we must believe the truth of God’s Word and not play around with it and distort its meaning; in the end, God will not tolerate that... so build your faith on the truth of God’s Word. Thus says Peter, “*If it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?*” (cf. 1 Pet 4:18; also 4:1, 12, 13). The reality is, the Christian life is not simply *a fun little life* (as some want to make it out to be), there is also the training side to it that can be *very painful*. Nevertheless, *we can enjoy life when it is lived in context to the ways of God* (i.e., by faithfully aligning ourselves with the ways of God) — be it studying Scripture, eating, working, doing our chores, dialoguing with others, attending to the needs of our family, loving and serving others, being generous, and being Christ-centered and not self-centered... when we are *Christ-centered*, rather than self-centered, the trials of life will be significantly less disturbing and more understandable and acceptable to us. Though pain is “*pain*,” pain without virtue is far uglier. Sadly, many of you may have come to Christ “*believing that all your troubles will melt away*” — that was a common teaching in some of Christianity’s denominations; but that is not at all what Scripture teaches. The idea of “*dying to self*” and “*death in Christ*” and “*suffering*” is widely taught in Scripture (cf. Jn 12:24-26; Mt 10:34-39; Mk 8:34-38; Rom 6:3-11; 12:1-2; Heb 12:1-2; 1 Pet 4:1-3). Self-denial should not be difficult for any Christian to understand, because this is what it means to become a Christian — to experience death and denial means we must be willing to say “*no*” to anything that is contrary to God’s will for us. The first commandment was this, “*You shall have no other gods before Me*” — as such, we are to say “*no*” to anything that would take God’s rightful place in our lives. Is this hard? Without question; it’s extremely hard; It’s hard for the strongest saint as well as the weakest one. Here is *Augustine’s* description as to the struggle that went on in his soul —

The new will that had begun in me... was not yet strong enough to overpower the old will that had become tough with age. So there were now two wills battling it out inside me, one old, one new; one carnal, one spiritual; and in the conflict they ripped my soul to pieces. From my own experience I know, therefore, what Paul meant when he said, “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Gal 5:17). I was on both sides, but mostly I was on the side that I approved in myself, rather than the side I disapproved. When I did things that I knew were wrong I did not act willingly, but just endured them; but habit had been reinforced by that part of my will that had deserted to the enemy, so it was by my own will that I found myself in a spot I didn’t want to be in.... I perceived that there was in my bodily members a different law fighting against the law that my reason approved and making me a prisoner under the law that was in my members, the law

of sin. Messed-up creature that I was, who was there to rescue this doomed body? God alone through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Rom 7:14-25) – (Sherwood Eliot Wirt, Love Song: Augustine’s Confessions for Modern Man; Harper and Row, 1971, pp. 108-109).

Augustine’s words are a classic statement of “the divided will” and of the difficulty of surrendering that will to God. Obviously, Jesus asked the fullest possible measure of devotion from those who followed Him. They were to give up everything (cf. Mt 16:24-25; Lk 14:25-35). Said Jesus, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (cf. Mt 6:24). If God is your person of choice, He must have “all of you,” not just a part of you. When we give up trying to run our own life and give up that which seems so precious and indispensable to us, it is then that we suddenly find the true joy of being a Christian and enter into a life freed from all obsession — states **James Montgomery Boice**, “This is the primary difference between a joyless and a joyful Christian.” He describes the difference as “death and resurrection!” in his book “Foundations of the Christian Faith” (p. 467). In an abstract sense, joyful Christians have died and risen with Christ... they find satisfaction in whatever God gives them... they reject the self-centered life... they reject the values of this diabolical world — the reality is, they have risen to new life.

As Paul said, “We are not to live selfish lives (that’s the way the ungodly live), but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than ourselves — we are not to merely look out after our own interests (that’s the way of the world), but look out after the interests of others” (Phil 2:3-4). If there is anything Christians do, it is this: “they bond together with other Christians.” God’s people naturally like sweet, kind, humble people, rather than loud, in-your-face, arrogant people; those negative characteristics don’t define the believer. Since the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in the lives of believers, they are far nicer, kinder and more humble than the world of unbelievers. Since God’s people are naturally loving, sweet, kind and humble, they naturally “bond with other believers.” Since all believers are brand new creations in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:17), they no longer possess the qualities that characterized them when they were unbelievers — the love of God has been poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5); thus a significant change has taken place in the core of their being. No longer are they children of the devil, they are now children of God (cf. Jn 1:12; 8:44; Acts 13:10; Rom 8:15-16; 1 Jn 3:8-10). Though we all stumble and fall in life in varying degrees, as believers we still possess the fragrance of Christ — sin renunciation (i.e., confession) is a major characteristic of the believer’s life... the Holy Spirit moves within him until he has properly dealt with his sin — the unbeliever knows nothing of that action. The truth is, “we are radically different people” after we have undergone the washing of regeneration (i.e., the new birth; cf. Jn 3:3; Titus 3:5) — “old things have passed away, and all things have become new” (2 Cor 5:17). As stated above, this likeness that we share with other believers is the result of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit; it is not something that we conjure up on our own by going to church for twenty years; not at all... it is the sweet presence of God in our lives; thus we have a

natural affinity for other genuine believers. Now, that doesn't mean that we don't have disagreeable moments with some believers from time to time, but that is not the ongoing characteristic of our lives as Christians — true genuine believers repent and experience reconciliation and peace despite the conflict; even though it may take awhile (cf. 1 Jn 3:9-11, 14, 18, 19; 4:7-8, 12, 13, 20) — God is well aware of *our weaknesses* and is very patient with us as His children (cf. Heb 4:15-16; Ps 103:1-14; Ps 32:1-7; Ps 51:1-17).

The truth is, *the diabolical world hates true believers* (Jn 15:18-19) — they have no affinity whatsoever for believers... on the other hand, true believers hate evil (cf. Ps 97:10; Prv 8:13)... hate every false way (cf. Ps 119:104; Prv 13:5)... and hate those who hate God (cf. Ps 139:21-22); obviously that last statement may be a puzzling to some of you — once again, our English word is not the same as the Hebrew word — the Hebrew word “*hate*” (*sane*) is not only used to describe an emotion, but is also used of “*rejecting or being against something.*” The Bible commands us to both love and hate — as believers, we are to *reject evil* and *choose love*. God *loved Jacob* and *hated Esau* (Mal 1:1-3); *i.e.*, He didn't have relationship with Esau (He rejected him). According to Scripture, **God hates** pride and arrogance... He hates lying and perverting the truth... He hates the shedding of innocent blood... He hates a wicked heart... He hates falsehood... and He hates those who sow discord among the brethren (cf. Prv 6:16-19; Ps 45:7; Deut 12:31; 16:22; Prv 10:12). Keep in mind the two meanings of that word “*hate*” — rejecting and being against *something* that God is against is very significant; so determine what God is “*for*” and what God is “*against*” — then embrace what He loves and reject what He hates.

THE BELIEVER AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST

Since most people in our culture are reasonably kind and likeable, it is relatively easy to talk to them or start conversations with them — though some people find it difficult to *converse* with people they don't know, once they start talking with people, it usually become fairly natural. There are *a number of topics* that are relatively easy for people to discuss — things like the weather, sports, where they are from, their children, what their ethnicity is, what they do in life, some place they may have traveled, what they did recently on a holiday (or will be doing), or something else that may have happened in their life. Once the discussion becomes somewhat mutual, and the climate becomes fairly friendly, it is then pretty easy to switch gears and start addressing some *philosophical issue* that makes for an interesting discussion; it could be a societal issue, some local issue, something in the news, or something that is happening on the international stage, obviously the list is endless — if you are willing to talk with people, you'll find it interesting at how issues pop up in a discussion. The important thing is to *get their engine up and running*, where they are sharing their thinking on a matter. Usually from there one can *bring God into the discussion* with questions like this: *Do they see God as an integral part of what is going on in our world? or is He just a distant reality? Ask them what they believe; what they think. Then share with them what you believe*

(all the while knowing that God is the one who opens another person's heart to the truth; should a person not have a humble heart, God will not open their heart to divine truth — should that be the case, “kindly shake the dust off your feet and move on” – cf. Mt 10:14; Mk 6:11; Acts 13:51). Essentially Jesus' message to His disciples was this: “Don't exert pressure and argue with those who reject God's message; if people refuse to accept the message, move on... don't cast pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet; those who love darkness and hate the truth are to be left alone; don't give them the opportunity to treat divine truth with contempt” (cf. Mt 7:6; 10: 14; 15:14; Lk 23:8-9; 2 Cor 6:14-18). Should the person be “open” to what you are saying, share the truths with them that they seem most interested in hearing (things like man's sinfulness, man's spiritual needs, God's love and forgiveness, and eternal issues). Should a person respond with disdain over the message of the gospel that you share with them, obviously they have hardened their heart, and God has given them over to a depraved mind (cf. Rom 1:28; Heb 3:8; 4:7); now should they simply reflect upon what you have told them, but not make a commitment to Christ, that is evidence that they have not yet fully rejected Christ... so later on pray for them that the day will come when they will embrace Him as their Lord and Savior.

When Jesus spoke to people, He addressed numerous issues — things like repentance, being poor in spirit and humble before God, our sinfulness as human beings, the foundation of our lives, our need of a Savior and a Shepherd, the love of God, and the mercy and grace of God — said Jesus, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest; take My yoke upon you, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy, My load is light” (cf. Mt 11:28-30). If God has gone before you as His ambassador, He will have prepared the heart of that person to hear the simplicity of the message that you share — He'll give you the words He wants you to share (cf. Lk 12:12; 21:15; Jn 14:10; 17:8; Acts 11:15). For believers to think that they are the ones who effectuate the new birth in someone is completely wrong; only God's Spirit can do that — we are simply called to share the message — only God can make it real to them and transform their lives and make them new creatures in Christ (cf. Jn 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Titus 3:5). Remember, the gospel message isn't that complicated — it begins with man seeing himself for who he truly is (a sinner), and seeing God for who He truly is (one who loves and cares about us so much, He sent His Son to this world to atone for our sins on the cross) — He simply asks us to “believe in Him,” and when we do He will make us one of His children and give us everlasting life — Jn 1:12; 3:16). That is the simplicity of the gospel — when God does the convincing, man will believe; without God's convincing, no man will believe. Paul said, “The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God unto salvation... God was well-pleased to save people through this so-called “foolish message,” but this message is both the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:18-24). It is not by coming up with some brilliant apologetic that makes us effective ambassadors for Christ — not at all! — it is through the simplistic message of the cross, that God opens a person's heart to believe” (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Th 1:5)... again, though God is well pleased to use us as His ambassadors, He is the one who effectuates

the work (cf. 1 Cor 3:6). As His ambassadors, we simply need to pray and ask God to go before us and give us the grace to rightly share the truth, and then let God do His work in their heart.

Take a moment and reflect upon “the great **commission** God has given to us” as His people — without a full understanding of His commission, standing up and speaking out for Christ can be a very overwhelming and intimidating task... naturally, we may wonder, “What shall I do?” or “What shall I say?” Fortunately, there is a lot more to it than we think — carefully reflect upon what Jesus said in the last three verses of the gospel of Matthew... you’ll notice this passage essentially has three components —

1. Jesus has **all authority** in heaven and earth — *i.e.*, He has the authority to give eternal life to all whom God has given to Him (cf. Jn 17:2); “in all things He has preeminence” (cf. Col 1:15, 18; Phil 2:9-11). The word “authority” (*exousia*) refers to “the power of rulership” — “all power was given to Christ both in heaven and in earth” (cf. Mt 28:18). With that in mind...
2. We are to go and **make disciples** — *i.e.*, make followers of Christ, by presenting the good news of the gospel to them. This commission God has given to us rests upon the authority and power of Christ; without which no one would believe in Him — it is not through the genius of men that people come to faith in Christ, it is through the ministry of God’s Spirit to the humble heart whereby anyone comes to believe.
3. Jesus is **with us every step of the way** — *i.e.*, “the Holy Spirit has come upon us to give us the power to be witnesses for Christ” (cf. Acts 1:8); without His power, no one would come to believe. Beloved, regeneration is the work of God, not the work of man — we share the message, and God does the work (cf. 1 Cor 3:6). Jesus is not only present with us, He is actually empowering us to effectively be His witnesses (*i.e.*, His ambassadors). The work is His and the power is His; we are simply the instruments He has chosen to carry out His purposes. Why would God ever choose fallen creatures like you and me to do His eternal work in the lives of other men? It almost seems ludicrous, but that is what God has chosen to do. Just as He chose Noah (another fallen creature) to build an ark to save the human family, so He has chosen you and me to share the message of salvation with other fallen people that they might become God’s children.

Ultimately, here’s the issue, “every human being is somewhat bewildered about life,” so to address the issue is not at all strange in anyone’s mind. There are numerous questions one could ask another person — “What do you think about this thing called life?” “Do you see it as having a purpose?” “What do you think the purpose of life is?” “Do you think there is a God?” “What is it that leads you to think there is one?” “What is the most frustrating thing about life for you?” “If you had a little genie (*i.e.*, a magic

spirit that serves the person who calls upon it), and you could ask him any question you could think of, and be sure that he would give you an absolutely correct answer... what question would you ask him?" With the foregoing questions in mind, you might want to travel down one of those paths when talking to someone — *I think it is significant to find out what the other person **thinks***, so that you can identify those issues that need to be addressed. Regarding this matter of "*life*," I have listed a number of famous "*quotes*" by people down through the centuries who have given serious consideration to it. Take some time and reflect upon what they had to say, in spite of the fact that most of these thoughts were expressed by people who were *not believers* —

- *The man who regards **life** as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life* — by the American physicist **Albert Einstein** (1879-1955), *The World as I See It*, 1934.
- *Tell me not that **life** is but an empty dream... things are not what they seem... life is real... life is earnest... the grave is not its goal* — by the American poet **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** (1807-1882), *A Psalm of Life*.
- *Life is warfare, and the sojourn of a stranger in a strange land... its duration is momentary... its consciousness a vortex... its destiny dark* — this is by the philosopher and Roman Emperor, **Marcus Aurelius**, in his work *Meditations*, in 170 AD.
- *Human **life** is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed* — by lexicographer **Samuel Johnson** (1709-1784), *Rasselas*, II.
- *Life is a combat without grandeur, without happiness, fought in solitude and silence* — by French author **Romain Rolland** (1866-1944), *Beethoven*, 1903.
- *Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises* — by English satirist **Samuel Butler** (1835-1902), *Notebooks of*, edited by H. F. Jones.
- *Where is the **life** we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?* — these are the words of the British poet, **T. S. Eliot** (1888-1965), *Choruses from 'The Rock.'*
- *God hath given to man a short time here upon earth, and yet upon this short time eternity depends* — by English prelate **Jeremy Taylor** (1613-1667), *Holy Living*.
- *Only if we suppose that the **present life** of human beings has an end which lies in part beyond the limits of the present natural order... can we find a rational meaning and explanation for human life as we see it* — by the British Anglican philosopher **Hastings Rashdall** (1858-1924) *The Theory of Good and Evil*, II.
- *Life would be tolerable but for its amusements* — by the English statesman **Sir George Cornwall Lewis** (1806-1863).

- The best use of a life is to spend it for something that outlasts it — by the American philosopher **William James**, (1842-1910).
- Life is nothing but a journey to death — by the first century Roman statesman and philosopher **Seneca**, *Ad Polybium de consolatione*, 44 AD.
- Men deal with life as children with their play, who first misuse, then cast their toys away — by the English poet **William Cowper** (1731-1800), *Hope*.
- Said **Jesus**, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” — John 14:6.
- Said **Jesus**, “I am the Resurrection and the Life” — John 11:25.
- Said **Jesus**, “This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent” — John 17:3.
- Said **Paul**, “The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me” — Gal 2:20.

As stated above, it might be good to ask the other person “what he believes about life?” How meaningful is it to him? What are the most bewildering aspects of it? What are the most disconcerting things about life? Does the Christian faith seem unreasonable to you? What do your parents believe? What were you led to believe as a child? By launching into a discussion like that, you will be opening the door to their mind and heart... and giving God an opportunity to address the person’s concerns. For a person to be open and honest (that’s humility), God will move in their heart... in spite of the fact that you might stumble a little bit in your conversation. Remember, it is as important for the other person to speak as it is for you to speak. When God is present, He will raise issues in a person’s mind... so let that person express them. Remember, God is **GOD**, and it is His desire to accomplish His eternal purposes through us... so don’t insist on controlling everything that is said or fret over your inability to answer every question imaginable; when you have no answer, simply focus on what you know and have experienced in your own life... and leave the rest to God. You might have to respond to some question this way — “That’s an interesting question; I really don’t have an answer for that... all I know is that God has forgiven me of my sin and confirmed His love for me in ways I never dreamed possible... I found it incredibly amazing that God could open my eyes to see and understand things I had never imagined.” If you could share something like that, God would “open” the heart of the other person to “respond to the message that you share” (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Th 1:5); the process may sound odd to you, but that is precisely how it works. I personally committed my life to Christ by listening to man share his spiritual experience in life as to how he came to know Christ; after he shared his testimony, I sensed God had actually opened my heart to the truth. Later on, several people wondered how I could have ever been inspired by that man’s testimony, because it was actually somewhat boring to them. Beloved, that is just the

way God works; you don't need some dynamic testimony that completely floors people; very few people in our world (far less than one percent) have that kind of testimony. Simply share what you know... what your testimony is... and let God do the rest!

Years ago when I was in college some people used to start their conversations with people by saying “*they were taking a survey*” — which included a number of issues including the existence of a God. Though some people questioned the integrity of that approach (because it appeared to them to be a little deceiving), the truth was, it was a survey and it was actually a very effective way of starting conversations with people. This particular approach was used by those students who were working with “*Campus Crusade for Christ*,” back in 1970 some 200 students on our campus were a part of that ministry team. After going through a list of questions, they would then focus on the one that involved the existence of God or Jesus Christ. Now whether or not the conversation ended with a person making a decision for Christ, the person had at least been *made aware of God's message to mankind* that had been shared with them (seeds had been planted in their heart)... as such, they probably continued to reflect upon what they had heard at some level, and possibly at some point they would make a decision to place their faith in Christ — my own experience was this: I had accrued a lot of information about Christ over the years... and then God finally had His final word shared with me, and my heart was opened to the truth. During the previous six months I had really become frustrated with life, and was wondering why it was so empty and meaningless... obviously, God had been working in my life all along and had finally gotten me to the end of myself... and then he used an old man to share his simple testimony with me. Everything doesn't happen over night in our lives; some learning takes years and years... but God knows precisely what we need to experience before disclosing the fullness of the truth to us. God often uses the circumstances of our lives to bring us to Himself... oftentimes it is not until He brings us to the end of ourselves that He finally reveals Himself to us... and then resurrects those thoughts we had heard years earlier in our hearts. This happened time and time again through the ministry of *Campus Crusade for Christ*. Remember, it is our responsibility to simply “*plant the seeds*” (cf. Mt 13:3-8) — the apostle Paul put it this way, “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth*” (cf. 1 Cor 3:6-9) — when a person humbles himself before God, God will extend *grace* to that person and open his heart to believe (cf. Jam 1:21; 4:6). Sadly, many people when they become Christians choose to live *a silent life*, and isolate themselves from the work of God in the world... they simply satisfy themselves with *being comfortable in life* (that seems to be the most important thing to them)... stepping out and serving others is *too taxing* to some Christians... they are far more interested in living a cozy self-contented life, than being a servant of the Most High.

Remember, we live in a *fallen world* that desperately needs to come to a knowledge of the truth — without it, man will ultimately despair over how empty and meaningless his life has been... no unbeliever ever lived his life satisfied and content with the life he lived; though that may not be the impression he gave to others, deep down he exited this

life forlorn and without hope of the life hereafter. *As followers of Christ we are to make a difference **for good** in life (and God is the one who defines what is good).* Jesus said, *“Let your **light shine** before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven”* (Mt 5:16) — believers are to be a *lighthouse* to others; a guiding star that ultimately that leads others to place their faith in Christ... *“the **harvest** is plentiful, but the workers are few”* (Mt 9:37) — the Christian’s responsibility is to share the good news with others... *“**confess Christ before men**”* (Mt 10:32); in so doing, Jesus will confess you before His Father (cf. Mt 10:32-39; Rom 10:9-10)... *“make **disciples of all people everywhere**”* (cf. Mt 28:19; Jn 17:18, 20; 20:21). **Apathy** is a disease of the heart; a self-centered disease — It has been said, *“The forces of good in the world are **immobilized** less by their adversaries, than by their sleep.”* If there is one thing believers must not be, it is apathetic. The Lord told Isaiah, *“Those who **wait upon the Lord** will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary”* (Is 40:31). That word “*wait*” in Hebrew (*qavah*) is often translated “*hope*,” when we hope for something, we must wait for it; conversely, when we wait for something, we are hoping for it. Paul told Timothy, *“We labor and strive in life, because we have fixed our **hope on the living God**”* (1 Tim 4: 10) — Christians look beyond the passing things of this world and set their hope on the living God; when “*our eternal hope*” is before our eyes, we will be strengthened and encouraged to be the people God wants us to be (cf. 1 Pet 1:3; 1 Jn 3:3). Jeremiah said, *“Are You not **our God**? Therefore we will **hope in Thee**”* (Jer 14:22). Since our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but ultimately against the spiritual forces of darkness and the demonic, satanic world (cf. Eph 6:12; Col 2:15; 1 Pet 3:22)... we must seek the Lord and place our trust in Him when we do His bidding, and let Him manifest Himself to the humble — by acknowledging satanic involvement, we are made very much aware of the need for the Holy Spirit to do His work in a person’s life.

For those of you who have children... teaching your children about God is critical — there are “*several good books and studies*” on the subject that might be of great help to you. The two most prominent ones are “*Teach Your Kids About Jesus*” by Joseph D. Henson... and “*Introducing Your Child to God*” by Larry Fowler (you can access his study online at: www.focusonthefamily.com) The important thing for parents is that *they make God an integral part of their own lives, and **model** it before their children.* God should be made a part of the *discussions* that you may have with your children on all kinds of issues. Your children need to know that God is an *extremely important* part of your life; when God is an integral part of your life, He will easily become an integral part of your children’s lives. Parents are an *extremely influence* on their children... the life parents *model* is the life children will *adopt*. Your kids need to hear you *pray* and ask God for help over & over again in life; your *dependency on God* will speak volumes to your kids — they need to hear you pray for *their needs* as well; you need to pray with them every night *before they go to sleep*; they need to hear you thank God for *your food* before you eat — by the way, *these prayers don’t need to be long prayers*, they simply need to be genuine prayers. During the day as things occur in your kids lives, *bring God*

*into the discussion and try to form a **biblical perspective** of the triune God in their minds.* Asking God for *forgiveness* and thanking Him for His love for you is *critical* in building their faith — your kids don't need to see you as a perfect human being; more than anything, *they need to see you as being humble and honest with God.* God told the people of Israel, *“The LORD is **GOD** — you shall **love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength... and you shall **teach** this diligently to your children both inside & outside the home, and when you lie down and when you rise up”*** (cf. Deut 6:4-7). Man's obligation to God is that *“he love Him”* with the totality of his being: *the heart* speaks of our emotional nature... *the soul* of our volitional nature... and *the strength* of our physical nature.

It is *humility of heart* that causes one to see himself for who he really is... and it is God who opens our heart to see and understand that (contrary to what one may think, that is not of our own doing — it is not our genius that gives us the ability to understand). Without humility of heart, God will not open the heart; grace is only extended to the *humble*, not the proud (that's why the Lord spoke in parables — Jesus told His disciples, *“To you it has been **granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted... while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand... they have **closed their eyes lest they should see**”*** (cf. Mt 13:10-15; Rom 3:9-18; Ps 53:1-3). The Holy Spirit is the one who *“reveals all divine truths to the minds of men”* (cf. Jn 14:26)... Jesus referred to the Spirit as *“the Spirit of truth”* (cf. Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). In Jesus' high priestly prayer, He asked the Father to *“**sanctify us by the truth of His Word**”* (Jn 17:17); *i.e.*, *“**separate us unto the Lord to accomplish His eternal purposes in our lives, through the ministry of the truth of the Word to our hearts**”* (cf. Lev 11:44-45; 1 Pet 1:16); sanctification is accomplished by means of *“the truth,” i.e.*, the revelation of God that is now contained in Scripture (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Th 1:5; 2 Th 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Jam 1:21; 1 Pet 1:22-23). Though an unbeliever can read Scripture, unless he *humbles* himself before God *“he will not understand it as God intended”* — you could have one million people study the Scriptures together, if they do not humble themselves their corporate attempt at trying to understand Scripture will be meaningless; only God enlightens men's hearts so that they can understand divine truth. The requirement of God is that man *“repent”* — by definition, repentance means *“to undergo a change of one's mind and the entire direction of one's life;”* thus repentance involves a radical turning from sin to Christ. The person who is truly remorsefully contrite regrets his sinfulness, and turns to God for forgiveness and cleansing. King David exhibited the spirit of repentance in Psalm 51 — *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.... the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite spirit, O God, Thou will not despise”* (Ps 51:10, 17). Remember the words of John, *“If we **confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**”* (1 Jn 1:9) — that word *“confess”* in Greek (*homologeō*) literally means *“to say the same thing about our sin that God says about it”*... and this only occurs when one humble himself before God... when man *sees himself* for who he really is (a sinner), and *sees Christ* for who He really is (the God of heaven)... he will turn to Christ and embrace Him as his Lord

and Savior. Now with the foregoing in mind, one cannot testify of Christ without identifying his problem (that he is a sinner) — surprisingly, some Christian churches talk about all the wonderful benefits of knowing God (He brings peace and happiness and prosperity and success to our lives), and completely ignore the problem of sin; in other words, the issue of sin is simply too big of a negative in their minds... that if they gave much focus to it, it would probably cause some people to stop attending their church, and keep some people from becoming followers of Christ — or so they think. Obviously, that is a very juvenile understanding of man’s condition and the message of the cross. Beloved, *we are grossly fallen creatures*, so we must come down off our high horse and deal with the reality of our condition. Just because liberal theology can’t stand the truth, doesn’t mean we can ignore it. Because Jesus emphatically emphasized man’s problem, the Pharisees killed Him — keep in mind, the Pharisees were the most religious group of people in the entire world. The life of Christ has nothing to do with “*self-righteousness, being religious or attending church*” — it has to do with embracing the divine truth of the gospel.