



# The Evangelical Protestant

## The Magazine of the Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church

“His message, His ministry, to His world”

**BREAKING NEWS!**

**TONGUES OF FLAME SEEN  
ON HEADS OF APOSTLES!**

**FILM AT ELEVEN, ED!**





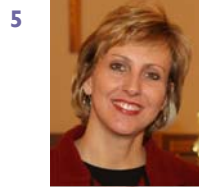
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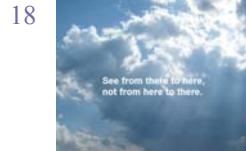
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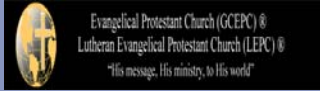


**"Doublespeak"**



**The Back Page**





Evangelical Protestant Church (GCEPC)® Inc.,

Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church (LEPC)®,

# We Believe

**1. The Holy Scriptures**, in the original tongues, is the inspired and inerrant word of God. (Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16,17)

**2. There is one God**, eternal and self-existent, Creator and Ruler of the universe, and manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 1:18, Matthew 3:16-17) We are Trinitarian.

**3. Jesus Christ** is truly divine and truly human having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Matt.1: 18)

**4. Jesus Christ** died on the cross and shed His blood as a Sacrifice

for our sins; He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. (1 John 2:2)

**5. Humankind** was created in the image of God, but fell into sin causing separation from God. (Gen. 3:1-24)

**6. Salvation** has been provided through Jesus Christ for all; and those who repent and believe on Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God. (John 1:10)

**7. Water baptism** identifies us with the death and burial of Christ and that we should arise to

walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19-20)

**8. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit** to glorify Christ, to convict of sin, to enable the believer to live a godly life, and to empower the Church to carry the gospel into all the world. (Matthew 12:31, Acts 1:8.)

**9. In the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ** for His Church. (Matthew 24:30, Rev 1:7)

**10. In the bodily resurrection** of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and everlasting separation from God of all those who reject Jesus Christ. (John 1:10-13, Rev 20:11-15)

GCEPC *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast."* Ephesians 2: 8

The Most Rev. Nancy Drew  
Presiding Bishop/President  
The Rt. Rev. Jessica Johnston  
Executive Bishop/Vice President  
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Bishop The Rev. Elijah Ruboneka

## The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

The Evangelical Protestant Journal "Kirchenbote" (Church Messenger) was established in 1885,

Gustav Schmidt became editor. In 1917, the German Evangelical churches in the Pittsburgh area began publication of a monthly entitled The Evangelical Protestant. (Archives Smithfield UCC)

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Editor Rev. Steve Bacon

# Bishop's Desk



Greetings everyone,

We are surprised to see that the world has not yet collapsed under the pressure of so much craziness going on! But, no, I have not placed any effort in that direction because confidence placed firmly in Christ Jesus tells us that HE holds all things together by the word of

His power!

**God**

**desires his people the called out ones, the church, to recover the lost art of hearing God**

That is a more sure and certain promise than anything drifting on the winds of world calamity. I believe we are getting ready to see a world-wide awakening of the knowledge and power of God on display than has ever been given to us. There is a principle that comes into play of the 'filling of the cup.'

God often waits until the cup is completely filled before He acts. The answer then to the question, "Why isn't God doing something?" could well be 'the cup is not yet filled.' Another is that God is doing something. He is always doing something. Often He is waiting. Sometimes 'watching quietly as the dew on the grass from His Holy Hill.' Our God is never without options and always has a plan.

To our credit, God is merciful and long suffering. He would rather see redemption and restoration than destruction. Sometime He is shaking and there we

are, finding that God actually really is very busy in the life of the earth and it's occupants and especially His people.

"We turn to God for help when our foundations are shaking only to learn that it is God shaking them." Charles West. We, therefore, find ourselves in the most secure of places and can be comforted that everything that really matters will remain when all is said and done. The shaking is from the hand of God who knows all, sees all and desires us to remain. That is tough on those who are screeching after wanting to see us all get what we deserve.

The point of God's shaking is so that what is unshakeable will remain. We come through better for it all. More grounded. Freer. More faithful. Certainly, more grateful. We come through realizing what truly matters and more, that all along Christ's strong hand was holding our own. We are blessed indeed. Strong winds are going to blow. Kingdoms are going to fall. There will be 'wars and rumors of wars' but these are just the birth pangs that tell us that what God has promised to us will surely arrive. He who is faithful and true never forgets a promise. We are His and He is ours. It might be a wild ride up ahead but hold on! He's got this!

We are now celebrating Pentecost. The arrival of the Mighty Holy Spirit and the birth of the church age. Praise God that Holy Spirit is continually with us giving us displays of His power in unusual times. Teaching us whatsoever Jesus teaches. Interceding for us. Standing by us because we have a thing about not wanting to be alone whether we admit it or not. Life is often hard and we

need a sure Companion that we can rely on knowing that He will never leave us. Thank you, Holy Spirit. Thank you Jesus and Heavenly Father for sending Him to us.

We will return to Ordinary time and summer. May God grant us all wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him so that we can know His times and seasons. Jesus was always aware of the time and how it played out for Him in God's plan while He was on earth.

When Jesus' half brothers asked why He was not going with them to the feast, Jesus' response was that it was 'not yet His time.'

When the crowd tried to throw Him off a cliff, He turned and walked back through them. They could not touch Him because it was not yet His time. When His time did come, He fully surrendered Himself to it, despising the shame but looking past it to a joyful time that was to come.

May we be so sensitive to the Lord's Presence with us that our hearts beat in time with His own and be comforted that all things work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. God's peace to the EPC GCEPC/LEPC. You are gold and you are treasured by the Father and by me.

*Bishop Nancy Drew*

*My greatest desire for all of our ministers is that they would have a close walk with Our Lord, learning His ways, hearing His voice, knowing Him.*

# “I Will Never Be Late”: A Message on Waiting

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries



*My prayer and blessing for you is that you will discover and uncover the mysteries of God in His ways and His word. I pray for you a revelation of His grace in your life and that all lessons imparted to you through your message will become revelatory teaching for the flock of God.*

My morning reading this included a post by the author of Passion Translation, an encouragement that “Jesus is never late”. Here is the post:

“I hear His whisper....” “I Will Never Be Late” 05/20/16

You have asked Me, 'When will the waiting be over?' Wisdom governs My timing and the changes of seasons. There are changes coming and they will come so swiftly you will be caught off guard, but rest in My wisdom. It is easy for you to miss My timing. You know a measure of My plan, but you must learn that My timing is different. I will tell you My plans, but the timing of these plans is in My hands. As pieces of a puzzle come together to frame a beautiful picture, so there are pieces yet that must come together before the unfolding of the fullness takes place. I will never be late or fail to keep My promises. Why would you be impatient when you know that I hold all things in My hands, including the timing. My time clock moves in the rhythm of My love. So be sensitive to the wisdom of My timing and you will grow in the ways of eternity. Faith is never in a hurry and you will be thrilled beyond measure when you see what I accomplish in your life. Hebrews 6:15 The Passion Translation. "Abraham waited patiently in faith and succeeded in seeing the promise fulfilled."

Then I was led to Mark 5: 21-43. This story like the story of Jesus timing his trip to see Lazarus as he lay dying, perceived as a delay but oh the timing that led to a great display of God’s power and restoration.

In Mark 5 Jesus had just delivered the possessed man with the “legion” of demons. He again crosses the lake now and one of the synagogue leaders Jairus comes to him with a “situation” in that his daughter is dying, not dead, but dying. Jesus decides to go with him.

On his way to heal a child, a woman in her desperation to be healed touched the hem of his garment. He stops. I don’t know how long this took but I’m sure to Jairus and family every moment was critical as their daughter was dying right then. Can you imagine Jarius might be feeling “but my daughter is dying, we must hurry”. Yet he stopped to find out who had touched him and been healed. Even the disciples seemed baffled as there were so many pressing in on him. They may have been thinking – what does it matter? Finally, she revealed herself and the Lord declared to her that her faith had healed her. Twelve years of suffering ended. He could have continued, noted the release of power and kept going towards the young girl. But, it was important that he stop, turn and confirm that she indeed was healed and reveal to her that it was her faith that healed her. She had sought her healing undercover, but the Lord wanted to bring her out of hiding and into the light fully recognizing she was healed. Issues of blood would have brought shame upon women to the community they lived in. Je-

sus makes a point to show the community she is free from her issue, healed and therefore to be whole to the community as well. Now onto the next assignment.

In the midst of this Jarius is with Jesus is told that his little girl is dead and they questioned the need for Jesus to come. Jesus heard and told them to just believe, have faith. This woman’s who had been healed of 12 years of suffering had been healed by her faith, can you not believe the same?

Then he continues to move on toward the young girl. He arrives and asks them why they wail and grieve – she is just sleeping. With a select few and moving out those who have unbelief he raises the girl from her slumber.

How many times have you thought the Lord will never heal me or meet my need? Why is He waiting so long? Jesus was on the way to one miracle and performed another. His plan is multi-dimensional and we do not know what He is accomplishing along the way to bring our deliverance. We don’t know the whole story always in the Word but we are given a glimpse of the character of Christ to not be driven by time but to do what the Father does – John 5:19.

Trust His timing. In your waiting He is accomplishing much through the process of waiting.



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# “I Will Never Be Late”: A Message on Waiting

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries

(Continued from page 5)

## “Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman”

**21**When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. **22**Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. **23**He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” **24**So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. **25**And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. **26**She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. **27**When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, **28**because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” **29**Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

**30**At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

**31**“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

**32**But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. **33**Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. **34**He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

**35**While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

**36**Overhearing<sup>e</sup> what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

**37**He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. **38**When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. **39**He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” **40**But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. **41**He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha kum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). **42**Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. **43**He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

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# IF YOU LOVE ME KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

Bishop David Church



Bishop Dr. David A. Church  
Director of Missions

To reach the lost and bring them into the Kingdom of God requires that we return to *God's way* of building the Church, discarding man's methods with those given us by Jesus Christ who said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:20-23

In the average Evangelical church today there is a grievous misunderstanding of the relationship between grace and the Law, partially because of incorrect exegesis and "wrongly dividing" the Word of God. According to the teaching of many Dispensationalist preachers (derived from the Scofield Bible the Law) has become only a footnote to Grace. Many teach that the Old Testament Jews were saved by keeping the Law, and that the Church is saved by Grace. Redemptive history is harshly divided into the dispensations of Law and Grace, without any intermingling of the two. But this is blatantly a false view. It also removes the necessity of keeping the commandments of Christ to "be holy as God is holy", and "that those who practice such things (works of the flesh) will not inherit the kingdom of God." "The wages of sin is death" according to the passage above. Salvation by grace is not a license to sin. The "carnal Christian" is a myth, a construct of those possessing an antinomian inclination in their lives and theology. If the Holy Spirit truly indwells a person, they will bear the fruit of repentance and be transformed. Christ and the Apostles all taught this.

If the Jews were saved by the Law there would be absolutely no one saved because no one other than Jesus Christ *ever* kept the Law perfectly even though that is what God requires. Salvation has always been by grace through faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was credited (counted or imputed) to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3) The Law was given as a governing document to the Israelites by God through Moses. Although it listed the ordinances of God, He knew perfect adherence to the Law was unobtainable by Fallen Man. The Jews were to look past the written letter, past the shadows and types contained within it towards the sacrifice of the Lamb of God that actually removes sin and bestows upon all with faith in Him the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. For all are saved only through faith in Jesus Christ, whether looking forward to the Cross, or back to it as we do. But it has always only been "the Seed of the Woman" that crushes the head of the serpent Satan and destroys the sting of death which is sin, and ultimately Death itself which will be thrown into the Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne judgment, never again to rule over Man's heart through guilt and fear.

Romans 3:21-26

*"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*

That the righteousness of God through faith in Christ was revealed in the Old Testament during the Mosaic (Law) dispensation until Christ is proven in Romans 3:21-22. Salvation was through faith, is through faith, and will always be through faith in Jesus Christ *alone*. Since the Garden of Eden we have been living in the Age of Grace. The idea of living under different dispensations is true, if dispensations are meant to mean the methods used by God to deal with sinners rebelling against His reign. And that includes every human (other than Christ) ever born or will be born. The

# IF YOU LOVE ME KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

Bishop David Church

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Scripture is absolutely clear, without any wiggle room or loophole, *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* All means all! As is taught in Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* one receives death as payment for his or her sins, and all have sinned and fallen short of the absolute perfection demanded by God in His Law, and even though the penalty for sin has been born by Jesus Christ upon the Cross we do not have a license to indulge again in the works of the flesh without consequences for doing so. Again, *“that those who practice such things (works of the flesh) will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* The myth and soul damning heresy of *“Once Saved Always Saved”* was discussed in the first chapter, and warnings of damnation to those that engage in habitual sin abound in the New Testament, the so-called time of the beginning the Dispensation of Grace, the Church Age. Never is it stated unless you have believed at some time in the past, but one must believe and persevere to the end to be saved, and one believes what they obey. Does the blood of Jesus Christ save those who believe but obey no commands? I think not. Where is repentance? In Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *“Cost of Discipleship”* he states *“Only the believing obey, only the obedient believe.”* In this statement Bonhoeffer breaks down the false distinction between the two. Faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin, if you will. He exposed the *“cheap grace”* and *“easy believism”* so rampant in modern evangelicalism today. We no longer tell those inquiring about salvation to count the cost of following the Lord. Jesus is portrayed as *“the solution to all your needs”* and *“He loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.”* Christ becomes something to add to your life to make it better, like a gym membership. No one is told they may be called by Christ to die a gruesome death, or to be subjected to torture for their faith. They only want to hear how God will bless them and prosper them in all that they do, as seen on TV. What happened to the will of the Father in this equation? Many seek to follow their own will but want God to bless it as though He is the *“cosmic genie”* that must acquiesce to all the demands of his children if asked whenever the *“word of faith”* is spoken. The Bible says in John 14:13-14 *“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask anything in My name, I will do it”*. But many fail to recognize that what the Father does for us is done that He may be glorified in the Son. We are not asking for ourselves for our own gratification in this verse, but it is for God’s glory alone.

But the warning by James in chapter 4 says *“Yet you do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”* The Lord promised to supply our needs, not to make us wealthy and comfortable. Where is our heart? Are we striving for material and financial wealth here on earth with no thought of the fact that we can’t take it with us? Do we bother to ask the Lord what He would like us to do with the life He has given us? Do we stop to consider that we are only stewards of all He places into our care? Are we laying treasures for Heaven, or only trying to have more toys than those around us? Where are our hearts? In the *“heavenlies with Christ”*, or on the things of this world serving mammon instead of Christ? Are we obeying Christ, His will and the commandments He has given us through Scripture? Or do we believe we can live as we like as *“Christians”* since we are *“under grace”*, not the Law. After all, we still love the Lord and He loves us, right?

The problem is, Jesus died to free us from these sins we still apparently love more than Christ. We try to justify our inability to refrain from things in our past by excusing ourselves as *“Carnal Christians.”* We tend to forget that in Christ we are given the ability to obey, though we aren’t to rely on our own strength, but in His by the Holy Spirit. The chains which bound us as slaves to sin are broken asunder *if* we are in Christ as a true, faithful, and believing child of God born from above. But again, faith and obedience are not to be separated. Grace is still unmerited favor upon us which saves us through faith in Christ. We will never be worthy of salvation apart from God’s grace towards us. Neither can we serve Him properly apart from this same grace, though we are called to live in holiness and righteousness.

In John 14:15 Jesus said *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”* He would not have said it if He did not give us as Christians the ability to choose to do as He commands. The Holy Spirit empowers us to stand against the wiles of the Devil by giving us the whole Armor of God, but we must decide to wear it by faith and to use it when engaging in war-

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# IF YOU LOVE ME KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

Bishop David Church



Bishop Dr. David A. Church  
Director of Missions

To reach the lost and bring them into the Kingdom of God requires that we return to *God's way* of building the Church, discarding man's methods with those given us by Jesus Christ who said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

fare with the Kingdom of Darkness. We must take the initiative to arm ourselves with Scripture, the Sword of the Spirit. Without studying the Bible we stifle our growth as Christians, remaining babes in need of spiritual milk instead of the meat that matures us and readies us for the mortal combat with our enemy and his forces of darkness. It is for the souls of the lost that we wage this war, dismantling his kingdom by rescuing one soul at a time from an eternity in Hell, separated forever from the goodness and grace of God. If we do not carry out the commands of our King we will be ineffective soldiers on the battlefield, possibly to the point of desertion and disqualifying ourselves. Considering that in Christ's parable about Jesus being the True Vine with us being the branches, we are warned that the unfruitful branches will be broken off and cast into the fire. In the parable of the unfaithful servant all he was given was taken from him and given to someone else, then the unfaithful servant was thrown into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is the same description as that of Hell. A servant would have been one already serving his Lord previously, so I am compelled to interpret this story at face value. Instead of saying the unfaithful servant never really believed in Christ I believe this is a story of an apostate, one who walked away from his faith in the Lord and service to Him. I don't believe that when the Master called His servants to Him an unbeliever would have been among them, nor be expected to be fruitful and gain an increase on the Masters talents. One has to *remain* in Christ, attached as a branch to the Vine in order to bear fruit, for he can do nothing alone. Jesus said "*apart from me you can do nothing.*" John 15:15

The necessity of obeying the commandments of Christ is seen in many of the epistles in the New Testament, as well as in the Gospels. Obedience is equated as being "in the Light" as opposed to still "walking in darkness." Here are passages from 1 John discussing those that do not keep the commandments of God.

*"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."* 1 John 1:6

*"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."* 1 John 2:3-4

*"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him."* 1 John 3:4-6

*"Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."* 1 John 3:24

*"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."* 1 John 5:1-3

Knowing Christ is equated with obedience to Him, which results in our walking in the light which is Truth. Knowing Christ does not mean just knowing facts about Him, like being able to quote sport statistics in a discussion. Knowing Christ implies an intimate relationship with Him, in the Word and in prayer on a regular basis and also in regular fellowship with His people. Christianity isn't something just added to your life, *it is* your life. All is done for His honor and glory. All is done for the Kingdom of God, not for our own gain. We all realize living for Him alone isn't done perfectly, but our trajectory on the path He has marked for us is evident by our walk and remains true as we walk by the Spirit.

# The End of Absolutes: America's New Moral Code

Christian morality is being ushered out of American social structures and off the cultural main stage, leaving a vacuum in its place—and the broader culture is attempting to fill the void. New research from Barna reveals growing concern about the moral condition of the nation, even as many American adults admit they are uncertain about how to determine right from wrong. So what do Americans believe? Is truth relative or absolute? And do Christians see truth and morality in radically different ways from the broader public, or are they equally influenced by the growing tide of secularism and religious skepticism?

A majority of American adults across age group, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and political ideology expresses concern about the nation's moral condition—eight in 10 overall (80%). The proportion is closer to nine in 10 among Elders (89%) and Boomers (87%), while about three-quarters of Gen-Xers (75%) and Millennials (74%) report concern. Similarly, practicing Christians (90%) are more likely than adults of no faith (67%) or those who identify with a religious faith other than Christianity (72%) to say they are concerned about the moral condition of the nation. Though measurable differences exist between population segments, moral concern is widespread across the demographic board.

Much less widespread, however, is consensus on morality itself. What is it based on? Where does it come from? How can someone know what to do when making moral decisions? According to a majority of American adults (57%), knowing what is right or wrong is a matter of personal experience. This view is much more prevalent among younger generations than among older adults. Three-quarters of Millennials (74%) agree strongly or somewhat with the statement, “Whatever is right for your life or works best for you is the only truth you can know,” compared to only 38 percent of Elders. And Millennials (31%) are three times more likely than Elders (10%) and twice as likely as Boomers (16%) and Gen-Xers (16%) to *strongly* agree with the statement.

When it comes to religion's impact on this question, active Christian faith is associated with greater disagreement on the above moral sentiment: The proportions of practicing Christians who disagree (59%) and agree (41%) that the only truth one can know is whatever is right for one's own life are the inverse of the general population (44% disagree, 57% agree). The difference is even more pronounced when practicing Christians (41%) are compared with adults of no faith, two-thirds of whom agree (67%) that the only truth one can know is whatever is right for one's own life.

A sizable number of Americans see morality as a matter of cultural consensus. About two-thirds of all American adults (65%) agree either strongly or somewhat (18% and 47% respectively) that “every culture must determine what is acceptable morality for its people.” Again, Millennials (25%) are more likely than Elders (16%), Boomers (14%) or Gen-Xers (16%) to *strongly* agree with this view.

While most American adults agree that culture plays some role in establishing moral norms, a majority also agrees “the Bible provides us with absolute moral truths which are the same for all people in all situations, without exception” (59%). There is broad agreement across age groups, which is surprising when one considers the notable generational differences on other questions related to morality. When it comes to faith groups, practicing Christians (83%), as one might expect, are much more likely to agree with the statement than others, especially those with no faith (28%). In fact, more than half of practicing Christians *strongly* agree (56%).

Christian morality is being ushered out of American social structures and off the cultural main stage, leaving a vacuum in its place—and the broader culture is attempting to fill the void. New research from Barna reveals growing concern about the moral condition of the nation, even as many American adults admit they are uncertain about how to determine right from wrong. So what do Americans believe? Is truth relative or absolute? And do Christians see truth and morality in radically different ways from the broader public, or are they equally influenced by the growing tide of secularism and religious skepticism?

A majority of American adults across age group, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and political ideology expresses concern about the nation's moral condition—eight in 10 overall (80%). The proportion is closer to nine in 10

(Continued on page 11)



# The End of Absolutes: America's New Moral Code

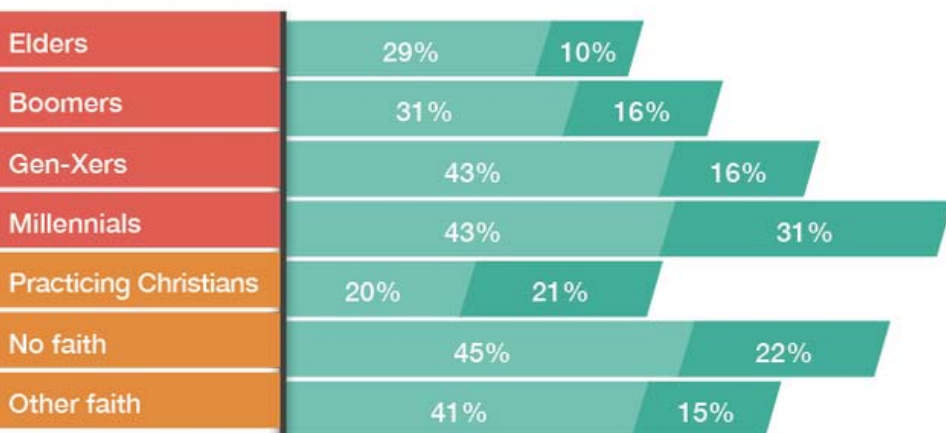
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## MORALITY AND TRUTH

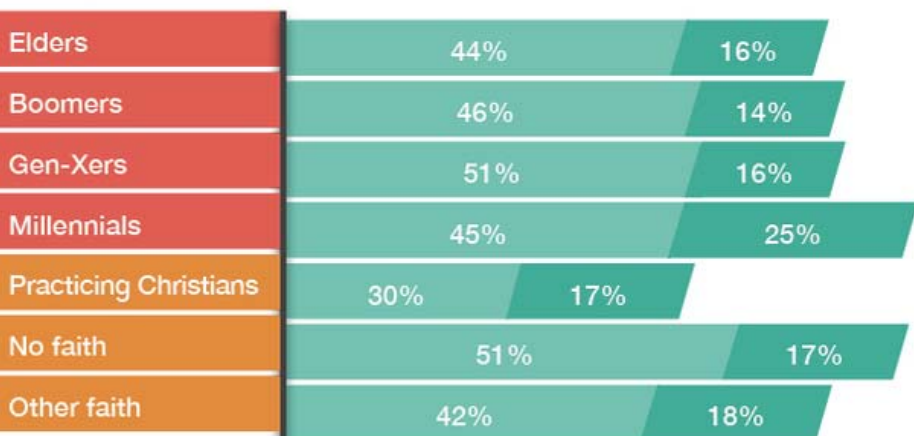
(% among U.S. adults, by generation and faith segment)

Agree somewhat Agree strongly

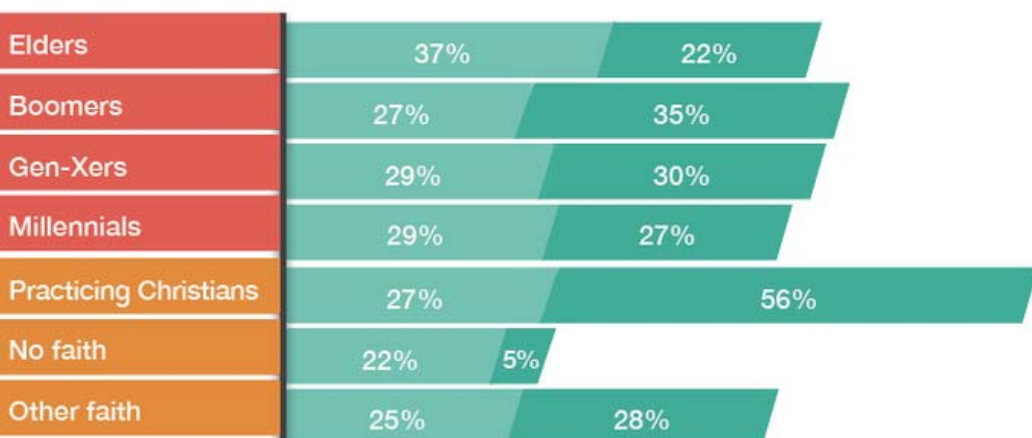
Whatever is right for your life or works best for you is the only truth you can know.



Every culture must determine what is acceptable morality for its people.



The Bible provides us with moral truths which are the same for all people in all situations, without exception.



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(Continued on page 12)

# The End of Absolutes: America's New Moral Code

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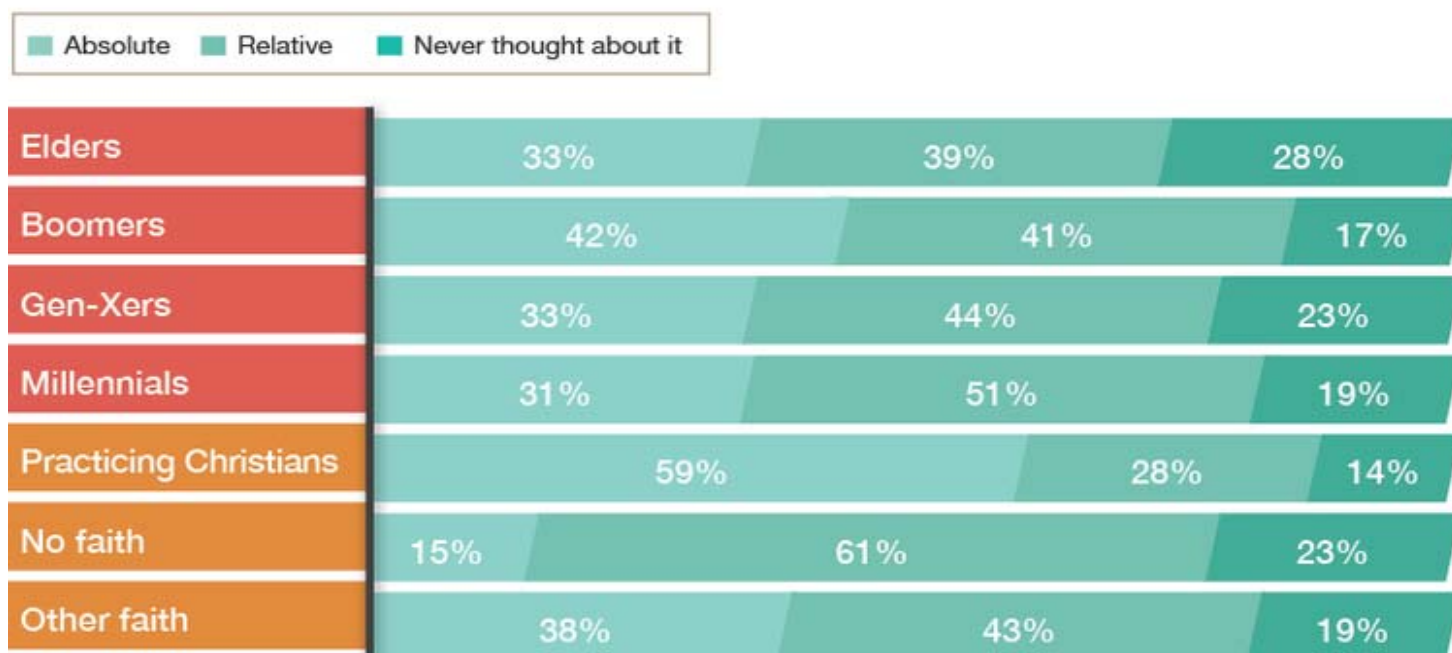
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## MORAL TRUTH: ABSOLUTE OR RELATIVE?

(% among U.S. adults, by generation and faith segment)



Barna

OmniPoll | July 3–9, 2015 | N=1,237

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Two-thirds of American adults either believe moral truth is relative to circumstances (44%) or have not given it much thought (21%). About one-third, on the other hand, believes moral truth is absolute (35%). Millennials are more likely than other age cohorts to say moral truth is relative—in fact, half of them say so (51%), compared to 44 percent of



# The End of Absolutes: America's New Moral Code

Gen-Xers, 41 percent of Boomers and 39 percent of Elders. Among the generations, Boomers are most likely to say moral truth is absolute (42%), while Elders are more likely than other age groups to admit they have never thought about it (28%).

Practicing Christians (59%) are nearly four times more likely than adults with no faith (15%) to believe moral truth is absolute. Those with no faith (61%), meanwhile, are twice as likely as practicing Christians (28%) to say it is relative to circumstances. Americans who adhere to a faith other than Christianity are roughly on par with the national average on this question.

## The New Moral Code<sup>1</sup>

Americans are both concerned about the nation's moral condition *and* confused about morality itself. As nominally Christian moral norms are discarded what, if anything, is taking their place? Barna's research reveals the degree to which Americans pledge allegiance to the "morality of self-fulfillment," a new moral code that, as David Kinnaman, President of Barna argues, has all but replaced Christianity as the culture's moral norm.

The morality of self-fulfillment can be summed up in six guiding principles, as seen in the table below.

<sup>1</sup>The "new moral code" material is adapted from David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016).

## What the Research Means

"The highest good, according to our society, is 'finding yourself' and then living by 'what's right for you,'" says David

## THE MORALITY OF SELF-FULFILLMENT

(Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.)

% "completely" + "somewhat" agree	% all U.S. adults	% practicing Christians
The best way to find yourself is by looking within yourself	91	76
People should not criticize someone else's life choices	89	76
To be fulfilled in life, you should pursue the things you desire most	86	72
The highest goal of life is to enjoy it as much as possible	84	67
People can believe whatever they want, as long as those beliefs don't affect society	79	61
Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is acceptable	69	40

# The End of Absolutes: America's New Moral Code

Kinnaman, president of Barna Group in *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme*. "There is a tremendous amount of individualism in today's society, and that's reflected in the church too. Millions of Christians have grafted New Age dogma onto their spiritual person. When we peel back the layers, we find that many Christians are using the way of Jesus to pursue the way of self. . . . While we wring our hands about secularism spreading through culture, a majority of churchgoing Christians have embraced corrupt, me-centered theology.

"So, there appears to be a dichotomy at work among practicing Christians in America," Kinnaman continues. "Most believe that the Bible is the source of moral norms that transcend a person's culture, and that those moral truths are absolute rather than relative to circumstances. Yet, at the same time, solid majorities ascribe to five of the six tenets of the new moral code. Such widespread cognitive dissonance—among both practicing Christians and Americans more generally—is another indicator of the cultural flux Barna has identified through the past two decades. But it also represents an opportunity for leaders and mentors who are prepared to coach people—especially young people—toward deeper wisdom and greater discernment."

Comment on this research and follow our work:

Twitter: [@davidkinnaman](#) | [@roxyleestone](#) | [@barnagroup](#)

Facebook: [Barna Group](#)

## About the Research

The study on which these findings are based was conducted via online surveys from August 17 to August 21, 2015. A total of 1,000 interviews were conducted. The sample error is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points at the 95-percent confidence level. The completion rate was 66% percent.

**Millennials:** Born between 1984 and 2002

**Busters/Gen-Xers:** Born between 1965 and 1983

**Boomers:** Born between 1946 and 1964

**Elders:** Born between 1945 or earlier

**Other faith:** identify with a non-Christian faith, or identify as a Christian but report beliefs not aligned with historic, orthodox Christianity

**No faith:** identify as agnostic or atheist, or as having no faith

**Practicing Christian:** Those who attend a religious service at least once a month, who say their faith is very important in their lives and self-identify as a Christian

## About Barna Group

Barna Group is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization under the umbrella of the Issachar Companies. Located in Ventura, California, Barna Group has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984

# Barna Group

Examine. Illuminate. Transform.



# Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?



R. Albert Mohler, Jr., is President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Louisville, KY

Does God care what we call Him? Do Muslims and Christians worship the same god? These are questions many Christians are asking these days, and for good reason.

For some time now, feminist theologians and a host of others have suggested that Christians should adopt new names for God. One denomination went so far as to affirm names like “Giver, Gift and Giving” in place of the “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” to be used in worship. Feminist theologians have demanded that masculine pronouns and names for God be replaced with female or gender-neutral terms. But to change the name of God is to redefine the God we reference. Changing the name of God is no small matter.

As a matter of fact, God takes His name very seriously, and the Ten Commandments include the command that we must not take the name of the Lord in vain. We are to use the names God has given for Himself, and we are to recognize that God takes His name seriously because He desires to be rightly known by His human creatures. We cannot truly know Him if we do not even know His name.

Moses understood this. When he encountered the call of God that came from the burning bush, Moses asked God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” (Exodus 3:13). God answered Moses, “I Am who I Am” (Exodus 3:14). God told Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations” (Exodus 3:15).

As these verses make clear, we are not to tamper with God’s name. We are to use the names whereby God has named Himself, and we are to recognize that any confusion about the name of God will lead to confusion about the nature of God, if not to idolatry.

Christians must keep this central principle from the Bible constantly in mind as we consider some of the most urgent questions we face in the world today. We must certainly have this principle in mind when we think about Islam.

Several years ago, a bishop in the Netherlands attracted controversy when he argued that Christians should call God “Allah” in order to lower theological tensions. He also argued that calling God “Allah” would be commonplace in Christian churches within a century and that this would lead to a synthesis of Islam and Christianity.

More recently, an Islamic court in Malaysia ruled that only Muslims can use the name “Allah” in print publications. “The usage of the word will cause confusion in the community,” the chief judge ruled. Oddly enough, Christians may well agree with this Islamic judge. To call God “Allah” is to invite confusion.

In the Bible, God reveals Himself to us in many names. These names are His personal property. We did not invent these names for God. To the contrary, God revealed these names as His own.

We have no right to modify or to revise these names—much less to reject them. Jesus Christ made this abundantly clear. In the simplest way imaginable, Jesus teaches us to know God as Father, and to use this name in prayer. The Lord’s Prayer begins with the words, “Our Father, who is in heaven.” By the grace that God has shown us in Christ, we can truly know Him as Father.

Muslims do not speak of God as their heavenly Father. In the Islamic faith, Allah is not only a different name for god; the deity it designates is far more impersonal than the God of the Bible. Father—the very name that Jesus gave us as the designated name for use in prayer—is a name that simply does not fit Allah as depicted in the Quran.

Furthermore, Muslims claim that Allah has no son. This represents a head-on collision between the God of the Bible and Allah. For, as the Bible makes clear, the one and only true God is most perfectly revealed as the Father of the Son, Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly teaches that no one has truly known the Father, except by the Son. In one of the most clarifying verses in the New Testament, Jesus declared Himself to be “the way, and the truth, and the life,” adding, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

# Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?

Because Muslims deny that God has a son, they explicitly reject any Trinitarian language. From the very starting point, Islam denies what Christianity takes as its central truth claim: the fact that Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father. If Allah has no son, then Allah is not the God who reveals Himself through the Son. How then can calling God “Allah” not lead to anything but confusion—and worse?

Islam teaches that the doctrine of the Trinity is blasphemous. But the Christian faith is essentially and irreducibly Trinitarian. The Bible reveals that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. Jesus is not merely a prophet, as acknowledged by Muslims, He is God in human flesh. This is precisely what Islam rejects.

The Trinitarian language is the language of the Bible, and it is essential to Christianity. Indeed, the Christian faith points to Christ and announces that we can only know the Father through the Son. Confusing the God of the Bible with Allah of the Quran is not only a mistake, it is a dangerous distortion of the Gospel of Christ.

The Trinitarian nature of God is embedded within the Great Commission. Jesus tells His disciples to go into the world and make disciples of all nations and to baptize them “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Christians are those who bear the names of God even in our baptism, and those names are Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This has become a matter of significant controversy in recent years as some Christians, including some serving with mission agencies, have argued that Christians can use the name “Allah” in talking about God. In some languages, especially those based on an Arabic source, there is no generic word for god. In such a situation, it might be necessary to begin a conversation by using this word, but the Christian cannot continue to call God “Allah.” It is hard to imagine that anyone can hear the name “Allah” without thinking of him as claimed in the Quran (see following article). Indeed, Muslims who speak languages other than Arabic use “Allah” as the name of god. But as soon as the Christian begins to explain that the true living God is the Father of Jesus Christ the Son, the Christian is making clear that the true living God is not Allah, but our Heavenly Father.

Continuing to use the name “Allah” to refer to the God of the Bible in such situations invites deep confusion. Some now argue that Muslims who come to faith in Christ can even remain within the mosque and continue to worship God as Allah. It is hard to see how that is anything other than a theological disaster.

We can now see that the name of God is no small matter. The deity we name is the God we believe in. Christians believe in only one God, and He is the Father who sent the Son to save us from our sins. Allah has no son, and, thus, Christians cannot know God as Allah. In this light, Muslims and Christians do not only use different names for God; in reality, these different names refer to different gods.

God takes His name with great seriousness, and so must we. Thankfully, we are not left in the dark, groping for adequate language. God has revealed His names to us, so that we can rightly know Him. We are not called to be clever or creative in referring to God, only faithful and accurate.

We are living in challenging days. One of the most pressing challenges of our times is the task of speaking rightly about God. This is particularly challenging when Christians encounter Muslims, but it is also a challenge when Christians encounter secular people in Western cultures. But this really isn't a new challenge. It was the same challenge faced by the children of Israel as they encountered the Canaanites, and the same challenge faced by the Apostle Paul at Mars Hill.

Our challenge is to speak truthfully about God, and the only way we can do that is to use the names God gave Himself. The God of the Bible is not Allah, and Allah is not the God of the Bible. Any confusion about that undermines the very Gospel we preach.

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version.  
Decision Magazine





**Q** :I'm not sure the Bible is of much use today. For example, we don't practice idolatry, and yet the Old Testament talks a lot about idolatry and things like that. Maybe the Bible needs to be updated.

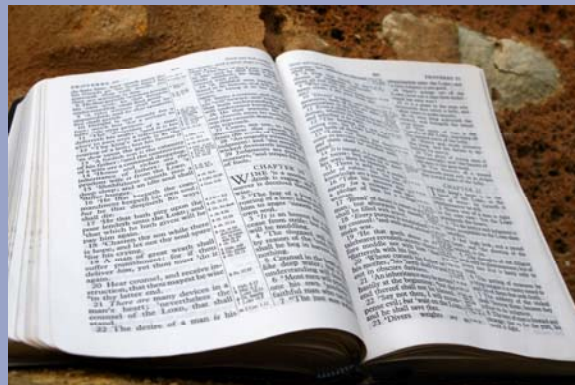
**A** :No, the Bible doesn't need to be updated—and one reason is because it tells us truths about ourselves and about God that will never change. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Luke 21:33).

Take, for example, what you say about idolatry, which the Bible rejects. No, we may not worship the same kind of gold or stone idols that God's people were warned against in the Old Testament (although some cultures still do). But don't we have our own "idols" today—things that we worship and serve just as zealously as ancient pagans did their idols? Money, fame, power, sex, pleasure—these and countless other objects have become the "idols" of our time. Not only are they false gods, but they take the place of the one true God in our lives.

The Bible doesn't need updating—but perhaps your understanding of the Bible needs updating! I can't help but wonder if you've ever actually read the Bible for yourself, with an open heart and mind. When you do, you'll discover it tells us not only that God exists, but that He loves us and wants come into our lives.

And we know this is true, because God has come down and lived among us in the person of Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us. Don't let your pride or anything else keep you from Christ, but by a simple prayer of faith open your life to His transforming power. He alone is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

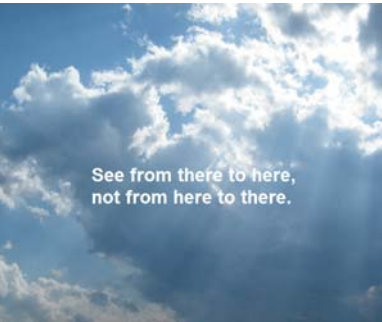
[Let the Bible—and its Author—transform your life.](#)



# Seeing from Heaven's Perspective...

By Bishop Nancy Drew

At the time I might have said, "release Jesus," thinking I was being supportive of His will. I would have thought of it as the right thing to do. I might have drawn a sword as Peter did in the garden. I might have wanted to 'call down fire' like the Sons of Thunder. I might have hated Barabbas because of his sin. If I had done any of that, I would have been fighting against God, not for Him.



Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. Passing through Samaria he looked for a place for the night but it was denied because the Samaritans were prejudiced against the Jews. When James and John ((nicknamed by Jesus, Sons of Thunder) saw this, they asked, "Lord, do You want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of." Luke 9:55. Then Jesus moved on to another village. James and John knew the scriptures. Hadn't Elijah called down fire to destroy the captains and fifties of the kings men? Yes, he had. There is a time for calling down fire. This was not it. Peter and John did not discern God or His plan. Jesus had set His face like flint to go to Jerusalem. He would not be distracted.

Jesus healed the ear of the servant of the high priest severed by Peter's sword and said, "No more of this." There is a time for swords but this time was not it. Peter was not discerning God or His plan. Jesus said, "Put your sword back in its sheath!... "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?"

Christ Jesus stood before the crowd that was shouting 'release Barabbas' drowning out the shouts of others shouting 'release Jesus.' However, it was truly God who had already made that decision. It was God who chose Barabbas. It was Christ Himself as He stood before Pilate and the crowd, who chose Barabbas! Jesus freely laid down His life. No man took His life from Him. Jesus knew the times and Jesus' time had come. As Jesus said on the cross, He could call 10,000 angels if that was His will but it was not. Jesus loved Barabbas, and Pilate, and every soldier that stood around and all of the people that were there including those who called for Barabbas' release over Jesus'. "But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) Barabbas was Jesus' choice just as each of us is His choice. Jesus was going to die in his stead. Do you see that? The sinner was set free. Jesus died in our stead. That was God's will. It was the bigger plan.

Discerning what God is doing must be seen not from an earthly perspective but from a heavenly perspective. Even in that most horrific of times, Jesus was watching God, discerning what God was doing. We, too, must discern what God is doing. We cannot presume or assume what God is doing based on what we think, what was done before or on our limited knowledge. In every situation discern His plan. Don't look at the people involved. Look at God. Listen to Him. Discern what God is doing. See from there to here, not from here to there. His plan is always bigger than all of us.



# Call yourself a Christian? Start talking about Jesus Christ



*Ed Stetzer is executive director of LifeWay Research and the incoming Billy Graham distinguished chair of church, mission and evangelism at Wheaton College.*

“Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words,” Saint Francis of Assisi is supposed to have said.

The aphorism, often quoted, expresses a well-meaning viewpoint of many Christians today. They are concerned that we’ve been too loud, demanding and angry. Now, they say, we need to show the gospel by our lives.

It’s a good sentiment, and I certainly agree that we need to demonstrate the gospel change in our lives by caring for others. But there are two problems with

the Assisi quote.

First, he never said it.

Second, it’s really bad theology.

You see, using that statement is a bit like saying, “Feed the hungry at all times; if necessary, use food.” For Christians, the gospel is good news — it’s what the word literally means. For evangelicals, our name speaks of the commitment to evangelism that defines us. The good news needs to be told.

Yet, Christians, evangelicals included, seem to love evangelism, as long as someone else is doing it. It’s time for all of us to start preaching our good news again.

Christianity is a missionary faith

It’s essential to understand that, regardless of our personal comfort level, we are called to share our faith because Christianity is a missionary faith. Despite the change in our culture and the way our faith is regarded, Christians are commanded to tell people about Jesus. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus called fishermen as his first disciples and told them he would make them “fishers of men.”

His disciples are still called to be fishers of men.

[Christians: Keep your prayers to yourself]

Even in our multi-faith environment, this calling should not be offensive to those of other faiths or no faith at all. Evangelism does not mean coercion. We can and should respect each other and strive for tolerance across varying beliefs, but that does not require pretending those differences do not exist. One of the core beliefs of Christianity is that Christianity should be propagated.

It isn’t necessary for every Christian to rent a stadium to proclaim the gospel to thousands. Most Christians can gain a

*(Continued on page 20)*





# Call yourself a Christian? Start talking about Jesus Christ

hearing for the gospel while exchanging life stories at the coffee shop, taking a meal to a hurting family or standing for justice in an unjust world.

What evangelism requires is that when we care for a friend or speak out for a cause, we tell others that our faith is the reason. We tell them the good news that was told to us.

People are more open than we think

When speaking to his disciples about sharing his message, Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:37). The problem then and now has always been about the lack of workers, people who tell the news. It has never been about the harvest — those who do not know Christ. They are often more open to listening than we expect.

Famous magician and outspoken atheist Penn Jillette once talked on his video blog about an encounter with a Christian who gave him a Bible as a gift. Rather than be offended by it, Jillette recognized the gesture for what it was — concern for him. “How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize?” Jillette asked. “How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”

That’s a good question for many Christians to answer today.

LifeWay Research, the Christian polling outlet that I lead, found that 78 percent of those who do not attend church said they, like Jillette, would be willing to listen “if someone wanted to tell me what she or he believed about Christianity.” Younger people were even more likely to say they would be willing to listen.

The harvest at least seems ready to hear, while the workers don’t seem as willing to talk. That’s a missed opportunity.

Christians are timid

A 2012 LifeWay Research study found that 80 percent of churchgoing Protestants believe they have a responsibility to share their faith, but only 39 percent have actually shared with someone how to become a Christian in the past six months. In other words, a lot of people think they should share their faith, but they don’t often do so.

[John Oliver has received thousands of dollars of donations for his televangelism ministry]

As I head to Wheaton College to take a newly created endowed chair, I’m aware of the man it is named after — Billy Graham. He was known for many things that should be part of our reputation as well. He cared for the hurting, sought to bring peace to tumultuous times and partnered with others for the greater good. Ultimately, however, he was mostly known for one thing: sharing the gospel.

And we should do the same today.

In Jesus’ last words before he ascended, he said we are to “make disciples of all nations.”

Evangelism isn’t just one part of our calling. It is central to our calling. Jesus’ last words should be our first priority.

# When Charity Becomes Harmful

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy

In this and upcoming articles, I will write about the book **Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help** by Robert D. Lupton. I am using this book in my Sunday school class for this year since most members of our class are involved with local charities and volunteer work. Rather than attempt to review the book in one article, I will take a chapter by chapter look at key concepts and offer them as a contribution to our LEPC Magazine.

In his book *Toxic Charity*, Lupton gives a perspective on charity and church helping others that departs from the usual understanding. This approach has met with mixed review from some in the helping industry; however, it makes points that are considered foundational to success in other arenas where helping people is the mission.

Lupton starts Chapter One of his book with “The Scandal” of charitable work in the US and those involved who refuse to see and actively perpetuate the problem. What is seen as the problem with American charity is that though very generous in giving, much of the money is either wasted or actually harms the people it is intended to help. According to the author, almost 80% of American adults are involved personally and financially in the charity industry. As some see it, public service has moved beyond a mere catchphrase or school requirement in the US. It is now a way of life for Americans of all ages.

What appears to happen with such massive involvement is that much money and effort are expended on many charitable and mission efforts but the outcomes are almost entirely unexamined. This is most apparent when talking to those closest to and on the ground of the receiving end of charity and mission work. These individuals admit that many times the very work and help coming to them may be hurting more than helping.

Having this information, one may ask how this is so. The answer when viewed from the perspective of helping professions such as medicine or behavioral science may give the answer. These professions have a history of knowing about and guarding against “dependency” of their clients upon those who provide help or cure, and the objective is to assure that their effort to help and cure does not create a dependency on the one providing the help or cure. Dependency destroys personal initiative. When we do for others what they can do for themselves we disempower them. This is understood in medicine and behavior science treatment but frequently overlooked in areas related to charity and mission work. It should be understood that not all charitable response is toxic. There are indeed times when one must do for others since calamity and other events necessitates help until the individuals can regain control and function so they may again do for themselves. When major events happen there is a need, and that need must be met. Extending lifesaving assistance in time of dire need is where Americans stand apart. We are at the forefront of generosity and helping others in need. Having said that, it must be remembered that our compassionate instincts may have serious shortcomings. To quote Lupton, “Our memory is short when recovery is long.” What happens is the response to the desperate circumstance is immediate; but when the crisis has passed, the shift to more long term development of those in need does not materialize since this is quite complex. The solution is to plan, and rather than prolonging the emergency, rebuilding must be an integral part of helping.

To see how development is a necessary component of charity, Lupton provides the example of New Orleans during and after Hurricane Katrina. He writes that in 2011, six years after Katrina struck New



Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy  
Board Certified Crisis  
Chaplain

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Orleans and long after the city should have shifted to long term development projects, churches and missions organizations still “marketed” the crisis and volunteers continued to flow into the city by the thousands distributing free food and clothing to “victims.” This is but a single example of how relief when not transitioned in a timely way creates a compassion that is toxic.

Lupton suggests that perhaps the Hippocratic Oath of medicine could serve as a model for those providing compassionate service. The Oath of Compassionate Service would be a guide for providing responsible and effective aid for those in need.

## The Oath for Compassionate Service

1. Never do for the poor what they have (or could have) the capacity to do for themselves.
2. Limit one-way giving to emergency situations.
3. Strive to empower the poor through employment, lending, and investing, using grants sparingly to reinforce achievement.
4. Subordinate self-interest to the needs of those being served.
5. Listen closely to those you seek to help, especially to what is not being said--- unspoken feelings may contain essential clues to effective service.
6. Above all, do no harm.

In future articles for our LEPC Magazine, I hope to write about other chapters of this book. Though it may be difficult for some to accept the reading and experiences of the author, he makes very valid points in how to think, plan, organize and carry out projects to assist those in need.

May we continue to hear His calling and serve all those to whom we are called to serve.

Rev. Thom

Lupton, Robert D. *How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And how to Reverse It.)*  
Harper Collins Publishers, 2011



# Meaning, Purpose, and Faith

Rev. John M. Haase



Rev. John M. Haase,  
Th.D.

Mental illness affects some 50 million Americans yearly. In fact, 50% of all Americans will develop at least one mental illness in their life. Mental illness costs the U.S. about \$200 billion in lost earnings yearly. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., but the 2nd leading cause of death for people aged 15-24 (Mental health by the numbers, 2016). Medications and psychotherapeutic treatments help, and many are treated and lead normal lives.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses in the United States, affecting over 40 million adults, or 20% of the population. Anxiety disorders are treatable, yet only about one-third receive treatment. These disorders can be caused by many factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events (Facts and statistics, 2014). It is not uncommon for those with anxiety to also suffer depression (Curtis, 2010).

Mental illness affects Christians just as much as any other population—we are not immune. In most churches the first responder is the pastor, but few are equipped for such challenges. Parishioners are sometimes referred to mental health professionals, most of whom are non-Christians. Christian leaders need to be informed about and familiar with treatment options for their flocks, including Christian practitioners in their area.

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Few pragmatic Americans stop to consider meaning in life until they face a crisis, like the death of a loved one. For many this crisis of meaning or existential crisis produces anxiety they are ill-equipped to resolve. This is often the point at which pastors/ministers enter their lives.

Christian existentialist, Søren Kierkegaard, used the term *dread* to describe general apprehension and anxiety about life. He believed God built dread into the human psyche to help us understand the meaninglessness and vanity of life (Biju, 2014). This *angst* includes frustration with self, knowing there is little we can do to save ourselves.

“I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind” (Eccl. 1:14, ESV).

Existential therapists recognize anxiety as an engine of change (Shapiro, 2016). The disquiet, discontent, and painful self-awareness that arises within the individual are essential to the change process. Most people in crisis want

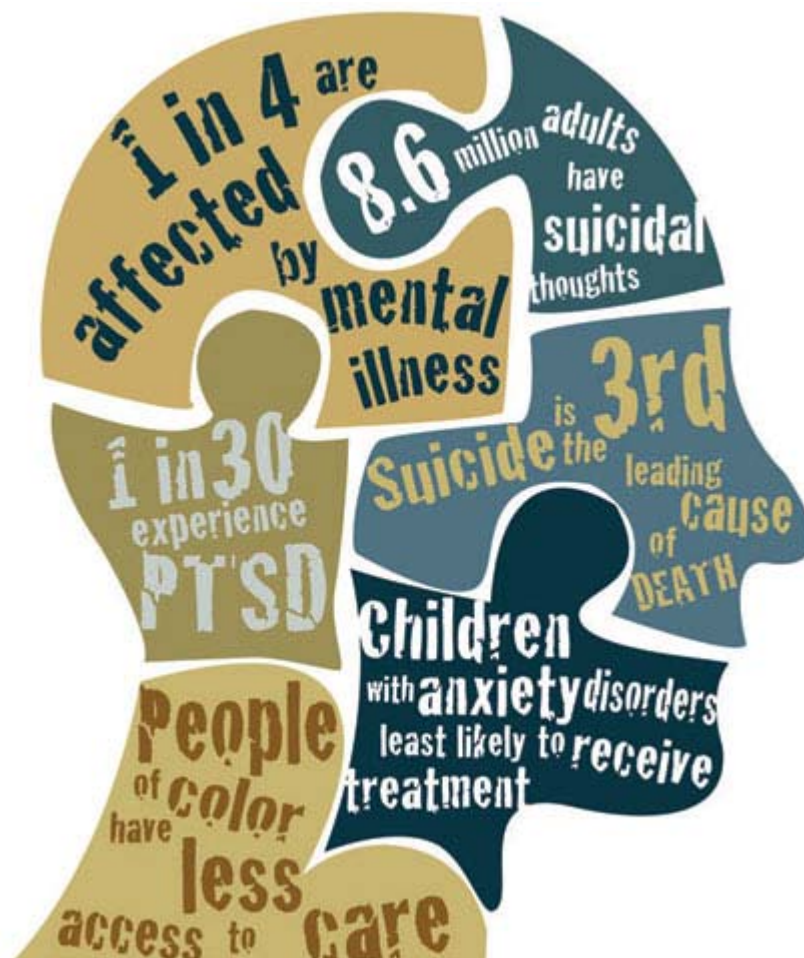
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# National Volunteer Week

Scott Walker  
Governor

Jon E. Litscher  
Secretary



## State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections

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**DATE:** April 12, 2016

**TO:** All DAI Staff

**FROM:** Jim Schwochert, Administrator  
Division of Adult Institutions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Schwochert', written over the printed name in the 'FROM' field.

**SUBJECT:** National Volunteer Week – April 10-16, 2016

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974, to encourage individuals to take action, make contributions to their communities, and discover the personal rewards of being of service to others. DAI's rehabilitation mission is enhanced when community volunteers come into our prisons. DAI also benefits when staff members engage in the community and come to work rejuvenated and inspired from their service experience

*Volunteers don't get paid...not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless. ~Sherry Anderson*

DAI volunteers contribute thousands of hours each year in support of our mission to assist inmates in their reentry to society. Volunteers support AODA self-help groups, education tutoring, religious programming and pastoral care, employment training and job fairs, recreational activities and much more. Community volunteers serve as role models for inmates, and provide a tangible connection to the outside world. We respect the constructive activities and new skills inmates learn from volunteers, which enhance our work as correctional employees and make the community safer.

*Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer. ~Author Unknown*

I also recognize that DAI employees provide major societal contributions both in the workplace and during your personal time. DAI employees are active across Wisconsin, coaching little league, raising money for charities, supporting veterans, organizing community events, repairing homes for elderly, assisting food pantries, helping the homeless, and so much more. The value and impact you make to the community cannot be measured

*Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in. ~Author Unknown*

With congratulations and appreciation,  
Jim Schwochert

I was recently reading a magazine article telling of the move of God in the Middle East among Muslims. It was a Christian magazine. This kind of thing though newsworthy would not be featured in our secular media. I believe, however, that the time is going to come and I hope that I am a witness to it, when what God is doing will be so undeniable that it cannot be ignored. We are all very naturally concerned about what goes on in the Middle East because it is so in your face that it gets our attention. What is not paid attention to is what Jesus is quietly doing. He is creating a revolution of His own.

The article tells the story of Tyler Connell with the Ekballo Project. Tyler has been touring college campuses across America sharing stories and video from his most recent trip to the Middle East, where he documented a dramatic move of God among Muslims, particularly with refugees. FROM THE ARTICLE: "In the last few months, he and his team visited Harvard, MIT, Iowa State, Clemson, and the University of Georgia, among other campuses. "In every stop we saw the presence of Jesus break in to these college campuses and touch students, with bodies healed, people saved, and people giving their lives to serve in the mission field," Connell exclaims. College students are amazed to learn what God is doing in Iraq and the surrounding region. "Jesus is moving in these Middle East nations," he says. "Many there are disillusioned and broken and just want to know the truth. Now more than ever there is a harvest among Muslims that has not been seen in history." They are encouraging young people to live for something bigger than themselves.

## Jesus appeared to the FAMILY with a specific message regarding their future.

Tyler's first film filmed in the middle East details the true story of a 24 year old missionary named Daniel from Vermont (whose name has been changed for security reasons). The article continues: " Daniel moved to the Middle East to work with Syrian refugees. "They go house to house and visit these Muslim families and sit with them and talk with them and find out their names, their stories, and love them. As trust is built, they begin to open up about the Gospel." One afternoon Daniel walked into a white tent with a family of eight people inside. "Hi I'm Daniel and I'm

here to tell you about Jesus," he announced. He wasn't quite prepared for their reaction. "The family freaked out, they looked at each other, almost turned white. The father was excited, yelling." What's going on? Daniel wondered. The interpreter explained that the night before Daniel's visit the whole family was sitting in their tent having tea together and a man in white opened the door to their tent and stood at the entrance. The man was glowing. "Hello, My name is Jesus and I am sending a man tomorrow named Daniel to tell you more about me." Then he disappeared. So when Daniel arrived at their doorway and told them his name, they were completely undone. "They asked him to tell them more about Jesus and he gave them the Gospel and the whole family gave their lives to Jesus," Connell reports. The father had been a part of the Free Syrian Army. "He had known bloodshed. He was a devout Muslim. This man and his family are now planting underground churches and are seeing a harvest among Muslims."

"We felt God told us to go to these places, the dark places, and capture what He is doing thru the lives of missionaries that have given their lives, left everything they had here to live overseas. We follow them with our camera and capture what God does and show it on college campuses to ignite students to live for something bigger than themselves. In May 2015 his team spent eight days in the Middle East, going house to house among the refugees. "They were all Muslims but they all said they were disillusioned with Islam and they didn't know what they believed anymore," he observes. "They asked, 'What is the truth?' There was a

*(Continued on page 28)*

# LIVING FOR SOMETHING BIGGER THAN OURSELVES

By Bishop Nancy Drew

*(Continued from page 27)*

perfect cocktail of circumstances that caused them to be open to the preaching of the Gospel."

The decision to go to the Middle East was not without apprehension. Anything bigger than we are always challenges us. Tyler and his team had to deal with their fears and the possibilities that could exist there. Tyler continues, "We realized that intimidation and fear was only a smokescreen. On the other side of that fear was our greatest breakthrough of joy and laying down our lives and seeing Jesus move like we never imagined."

Excerpts from: <http://www.charismanews.com/world/55173-muslim-family-says-jeTyler%20continues,%22sus-appeared-to-them-with-a-specific-message> Mark Ellis, Reporter. 5/9/16





*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. John 3:17*

"Doublespeak" is using soft terms to say hard things.

A few examples of doublespeak would be saying someone was downsized, when in fact they were fired.

- \* A company may say it's "reducing costs," when it cut people's salaries.
- \* I'm a "golden-ager," which is a nicer way of saying "I'm as old as dirt."
- \* A prisoner of war becomes a "detainee" in doublespeak.
- \* No longer do we have a suspect for a crime; in doublespeak we have a "person of interest."
- \* A SWAT team may take someone down, which is doublespeak for "killing someone."

The list goes on.

- \* We can lose our breakfast, lunch or dinner, but we don't get nauseous.
- \* We can be "three sheets to the wind," but we would never be drunk.
- \* We can have an "ethnic cleansing," which is the doublespeak version of committing genocide.

Now I've been told the Office of Justice Programs no longer wishes to use harsh terminology for people who have committed crimes or served time in prison. Doing that, according to a Justice person, drains their sense of self-worth and perpetuate(s) a cycle of crime ...."

And what words shall we use for such folk? In 2013 Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter said that his people should refer to released convicts as "returning citizens."

It should be noted that the Lord does not indulge in doublespeak.

When it comes to wrongdoing, God is forthright and honest when He says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). He tells us that "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). He tells us that the world was condemned by the sin of one man (see Romans 5:12).

But the Lord is equally straightforward when He shares the Good News that comes to us through the Savior. For example, God states, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

In another place the Lord shares that we "know that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, because by works of the Law no one will be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

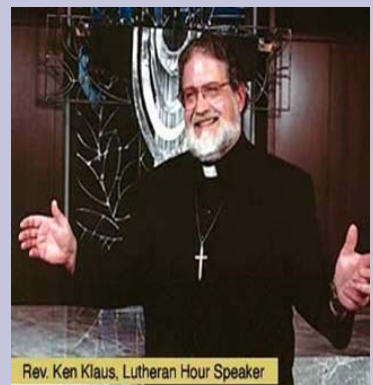
And that's the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord, I give thanks You have always been clear in the things You share with us. Open our hearts to hear of Your will and way, which saves. This I ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.

In Christ I remain His servant and yours,



Pastor Ken Klaus  
Speaker Emeritus of [The Lutheran Hour](#)®  
Lutheran Hour Ministries



Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour Speaker

# The “Back Page”

This week I was reading the headlines which is always enough to give me indigestion.

I read where the Pope said that Christianity and the Jihad of the Muslim were basically the same thing. I also read where the Pope also told a group of Muslims that he was washing the feet of, that we all worship the same God! I don't think so (see page 15)

I see where Donald Trump “will save Christianity once and for all” (see page 23 on Mental Illness), and then how African Methodists worry about the church that brought them Christianity.

This is truly a Maalox Moment. Double-speak is the new language and the more you spin the truth the better it is. Time to throw out that outdated Bible (see page 17), I don't think so. Time to sit down, take a deep breath and open that Bible? You bet!

*Galatians 1:1-12 From Paul-an apostle chosen not by any group or individual but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who brought him back to life- (2) and all the believers who are with me. To the churches in Galatia. (3) Good will and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ are yours! (4) In order to free us from this present evil world, Christ took the punishment for our sins, because that was what our God and Father wanted. (5) Glory belongs to our God and Father forever! Amen. (6) I'm surprised that you're so quickly deserting Christ, who called you in his kindness, to follow a different kind of good news. (7) But what some people are calling good news is not really good news at all. They*

## From the Editor

Deadline for Fall magazine is August 15, 2016. I will try and put it together in the best light and we will all praise God in the process. May the blessings of Christ be with you all. ED.



Is he done yet?

# More Doublespeak...

*are confusing you. They want to distort the Good News about Christ. (8) Whoever tells you good news that is different from the Good News we gave you should be condemned to hell, even if he is one of us or an angel from heaven. (9) I'm now telling you again what we've told you in the past: if anyone tells you good news that is different from the Good News you received, that person should be condemned to hell. (10) Am I saying this now to win the approval of people or God? Am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant. (11) I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the Good News I have spread is not a human message. (12) I didn't receive it from any person. I wasn't taught it, but Jesus Christ revealed it to me.*

This could have been written yesterday. It is as relevant today as it was then and will be a thousand years from now.

As much as the world and the “Big Thinkers” in it would have you believe that everything changes, the more we need to stand fast on the Rock that NEVER changes.

Here is the real party line:



Steve & Teddy 9/28/1951

John 3:16 (KJV) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Want it updated?

John 3:16 (GNB) For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

John 3:16 (GW) God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

Three Bible translations, one message. God's Word does not change!

If anyone tells you different they are lying to you, I don't care if is the Pope or Donald Trump.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

Everything else may change but not God's Word.

Believe it, trust it, repeat it!

*Pastor Steve*

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