

think

CURRENT ISSUES FROM A DISTINCTLY CHRISTIAN VIEW

APRIL 2011

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THE VEIL**

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A RELIGION OF VIOLENCE OR PEACE?

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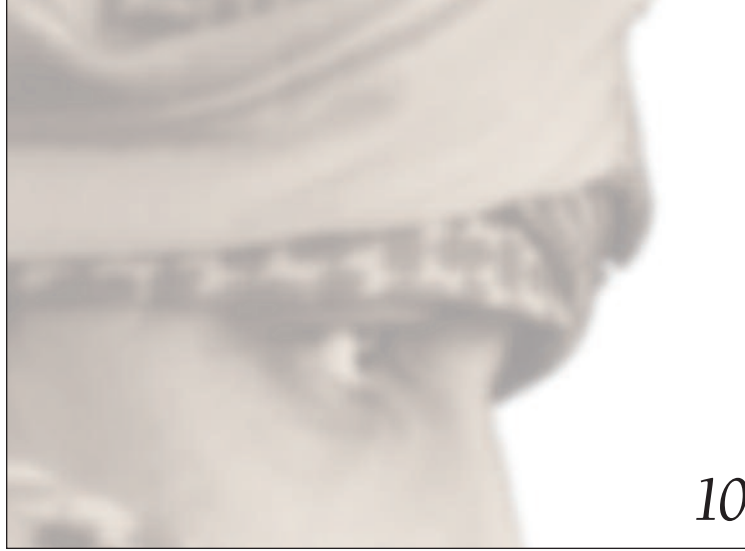


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1 John 5:13



“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”



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Is coexistence a reality?



BRAD HARRUB



GLENN COLLEY



DAVID SHANNON



DAVID LONGLEY

In the past twenty-five years, there has been a dramatic shift in our culture away from Christianity. Media, movies, and textbooks are often extremely critical of Judeo-Christian theology, whereas other belief systems, such as New Age or Islam, frequently receive a free pass or are celebrated by media outlets. Add to this that in many classrooms our children are being instructed to be tolerant of others—tolerant of alternative lifestyles and tolerant of various religious beliefs. Again, the exception appears to be tolerance toward Christianity. What is going on here and just how dangerous is this attitude of tolerance?

We hear the terms *Islam* and *Muslims* almost every week. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have brought this religion front and center. Suicide bombings have become just another segment of the news. However, outside of what the mainstream media spotlights, our knowledge of this religion is often weak, at best. Many have proclaimed that true Islam is a peaceful religion. We are encouraged to embrace our differences and promote unity. Anyone even questioning the construction of a mosque in his or her own neighborhood is chastised as intolerant or hateful. After all, we are told that all of the bombings and killings are the acts of terrorist extremists—not true Muslims.

Most Americans can remember back to the Iran Embassy hostage crisis of 1979. While the name Ayatollah Khomeini may ring a bell, most are unfamiliar with the fact that the term *Ayatollah* designates a high-ranking Islam leader. Just four short years later, there was an attack on the Marine barracks in the Beirut, Lebanon, embassy. This was also carried out by individuals who identified themselves as Muslim. In 1988, a Pan-Am flight to New York from Lockerbie, Scotland, was bombed—again by individuals claiming to be Muslim. In 2000, the *U.S.S. Cole* was bombed in Aden, Yemen—and once again, it was Muslims taking “credit.” And then on September 11, 2001, the war was brought to our own shores—with Muslims taking control of four commercial airliners and plunging them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and one crashing into a field in Pennsylvania. Every one of these was carried out by individuals who identified themselves as Muslims.

So exactly what does this religion teach? How does it compare to New Testament Christianity? What does jihad really entail? And how does this religion treat women? While many would say that there is not that much difference between Islam and Christianity, we beg to differ. Consider the following contrasts:

The Bible vs. The Qur’an
Jesus vs. Muhammad
Evangelism vs. Jihad
God vs. Allah
The Cross vs. The Crescent

Christians need to be armed with the Truth.

Most people have seen the “Coexist” bumper stickers that advertise all types of belief systems. But can such varied beliefs truly coexist? What happens if one of the very tenets of one of those belief systems (Islam) is world dominance? And this dominance is not by spreading the truth in love, but rather by war and the sword. Is coexistence a reality—and furthermore is it in the best interest of everyone involved?

The Bible is crystal clear that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Jesus Himself went on to say that “no one comes to the Father except through Me.” While many may find that narrow-minded or legalistic, it does not alter the inspired Words of the Son of God. Add to this that the Bible is explicit that we are not to add or take away from the Bible (Revelation 22:18-19) and that the Word of God furnishes us “unto every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We recognize that this particular topic is highly controversial. We also realize that threats have been ushered towards individuals who would speak out against Islam or Allah. However, we believe that Christians need to be armed with the Truth. We hope that you will grow in wisdom with this issue, and the end result will be more souls who come to the knowledge of the Truth and spend eternity with Him. As always, we hope you will *Think* on these things. ▲

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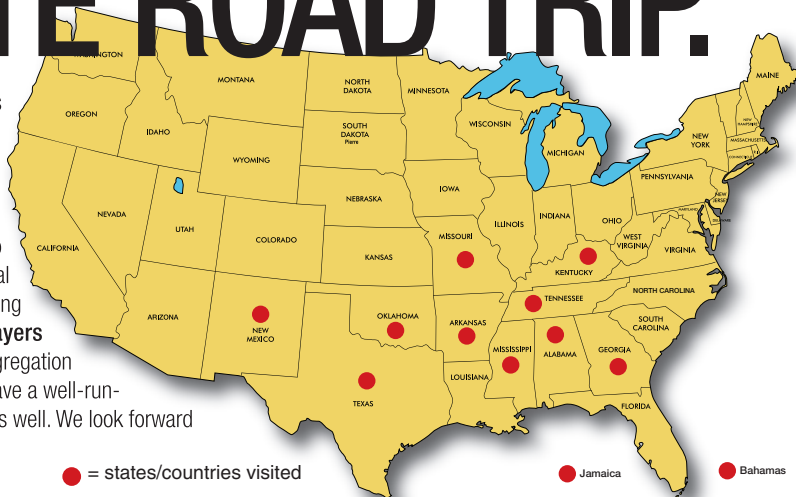
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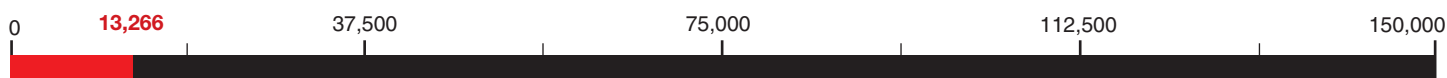
It has been said that for the past few decades Christians have had their heads buried in the sand, only to pull them up and realize our society has been hijacked by atheists, humanists, Muslims, materialists, and evolutionists. We believe it is time to awaken from our stupor and to once again become that city on a hill—the light to the world. Over the next two years, Dr. Brad Harrub and Joe Wells aim to crisscross the nation, helping to awaken Christians who have fallen prey to apathy. We aim to rekindle the fire that many have allowed to grow dim. Our goal is to engage people in all 50 states, covering over 150,000 miles—demonstrating that we can once again turn the world upside down. **We solicit your prayers as we kick off Mission Awaken.** If you have questions or would like your congregation to participate, please contact our office at 615-324-5870. Additionally, if you have a well-running RV that you can donate to this non-profit effort, please contact our office as well. We look forward to updating you each month on the progress of this nationwide campaign.



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BRAD'S AND JOE'S ROADOMETER READING



T. HILL

Thank you for sending this message out. It came at a perfect time for me, as I recently wrote a short essay on anthropogenic climate change for my geography class in college. Thank you very much for sharing the powerpoint!

ROWD AND JENNIFER

Thank you all for the great products. Please keep standing firm for the Truth. We hope to be able to continue to support this work!

B. HAYWOOD

Thanks for the info. Your material has been a tremendous resource. We have a church in our area celebrating Evolution Sunday. We decided last year that we would address the issue. This is our second year. I am attaching a link for a thirty-second spot that we are running on local cable stations. By the way, we just baptized a lawyer that spent years as an avowed atheist. She loves *Think* and *Convicted*.

CAROL

When Tahoe Family Encampment was Yosemite Family Encampment, Brother Jack Exum would speak to the teens. He would always say, "Sex isn't something you do, it is who you are." Today's society has taught our young people that sex is like eating pizza or snow boarding. They believe it is just something you do and that wrong thinking is destroying who they are.

R. CURTIS

I wanted to give you an update on our project with the youth. We had plans to publish a youth magazine but due to cost and other factors that didn't pan out. However, I think something better happened instead. We started an online magazine. There were so many more reasons to go to an online website. For starters, it's cheap, anybody can get to it online, and they can access it through their phones, computers, iPods, and even put links to it on their Facebook. The results have been pretty amazing. Since January, when we started, we have had over 900 hits and over 800 viewers from several states. The kids have been very excited about it, and it is really making them think about issues in a different way. They are writing about personal experiences and what the Bible says about them. This whole project was the result of your adventure of *Think* magazine, and it inspired us to look for ways to reach the lost in our world.

The site is www.teenchatmagazine.com.

The kids have taken ownership of it, and God is using them in this project.

Also, I plan to get the bundle of the new *Think* magazines for our kids because purity is so important. Thank you for publishing the magazine on that subject! ▲

from the road ...

Any parent who believes getting your child to a church building is "enough" better think again. When I go out and speak, there are many occasions when I look out and see young people who are physically present, but mentally they are miles away. For instance, one Sunday morning during worship, I was preaching on why we are losing our children, and yet one teen was in the foyer texting his girlfriend. (Irony!) Many of these teenagers possess a similar look that my wife and I describe as "already gone" (based on the book and research by Ken Ham and Britt Beemer). To me, the tragic part is the parents are still living under the notion that everything is okay because they are "at" the building. It is time we help our young people learn to mentally engage themselves to worship Jehovah God! **BH ▲**



BRAD HARRUB, Ph.D.

presents the **Truth about Origins** seminars. By combining science, secular history, and Scripture, he makes an overwhelming case for the Biblical account of creation.

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JOE WELLS, M. Min.

Joe is not traveling this month. He and his wife are expecting their fourth child!



Volume 6, Issue 4 • APRIL 2011
© Focus Press, Inc. 2011

published monthly by Focus Press, Inc.

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Annual Subscription Rate:

\$30 individual or gift

\$27 group rate—5 or more to multiple addresses

\$24 bulk rate—5 or more to one address

\$45 Overseas & Canada Airmail

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THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH

"I've heard people in church say, 'I may not have this, I may not have that, but praise the Lord when I get to Heaven on the other side.' Well, honey, God wants you to get it on this side." That quote from Creflo Dollar Jr. is indicative of a message believed by so many people about the relationship between giving and financial prosperity. If it is true, then through the avenue of God's hand I have uncovered a sure-fire investment plan. Who would not be interested in that?

The oft-used Scripture in support of this gospel of wealth is found in Malachi 3:10: "'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.'" Sounds pretty good, right? If you will give God the tithes and offerings that He expects, then He will make your life overflow with blessings. While writing to the Corinthians about their offering for their brethren in Jerusalem, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:6, "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully." Both of these Scriptures teach that God will supply material needs in the lives of faithful Christians.

On the other hand, I am still struck by the thought that if the principle of giving more to God means He will give more to you is true then someone forgot to tell Jesus! Someone forgot to tell Paul! In Matthew 8:20 Jesus warned a man, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Not only did Jesus not have a big fancy house, He did not even have a bed to call His own. Paul was not a man who lived a life of luxury as he moved from city to city. Instead, many times Paul had to support himself by working as a tentmaker on top of his work as a preacher of the Gospel (Acts 18:1-4).

So the question becomes, how do we reconcile these two seemingly opposite positions? As is generally the case, the truth is found between two extremes. God does warn us that material possessions

are something that ultimately have very little value or meaning for His children. At the same time, He has promised us that He will take care of us in this world. Consider the contexts of some of the Scriptures given in support of the gospel of wealth. In 2 Corinthians 9:6 Paul tells the Corinthians that God will give to them based on how they give to Him. In verse 8, he reassures them of the purpose behind those blessings. Paul writes, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have abundance for every good deed." What Paul is telling his brethren is that if they give liberally, God is going to make sure that they have a sufficient amount to meet good needs that will continue to come. God is not promising them that if they give liberally He will give them even more money so that they can afford that new SUV. God is promising them that He will ensure that they continue to have money to meet their personal needs and other spiritual needs that might arise.

God cares for His children. He will always make sure that our needs are met while we are in the flesh, but He has not promised us a life of luxury here on this earth. Many righteous men have lived humble lives in respect to their wealth. Many wicked men have lived prosperous lives. The truth is that wealth is not an accurate indicator of a right life before the Lord. In Matthew 19:27 Peter asked the question, "Behold we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" Jesus replied in verses 28-30, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last; and the last, first." The true reward for the Christian life will not come in this life, but in the life hereafter. ▲

Dressed to the Hilt, and Dyeing

Here comes Peter Cottontail; there goes the bank account. I have always really looked forward to all the holidays, especially the ones where we got out of school. I thought, for instance, that Columbus was a TV detective in a trench coat, but I always celebrated his birthday in grand style. The best holidays, though, involve chocolate, which is why Easter is a biggie. The joy of Easter truly extends beyond the day and into many nights when I raid the baskets after bedtime.

The chocolate is fabulous; the fashion demands? Not so much. Easter, also known as New Expensive Dress Sunday, can be exciting when you have a six-month-old first daughter that you've been smocking for since you were eleven. It's an altogether different thing when there are six of you to clothe, one of which is a sixteen-year-old male who discriminates between dress clothes and casual clothes by how many holes are in the jeans.

Maybe he's extreme, but it's just that way with the boys from the beginning. It's kind of difficult when Easter rolls around if all your girlfriends have baby girls except for you. Their little ones totter into the church building looking somewhat ethereal, complete with a halo of baby's breath entwined with grapevine. Fairy glitter literally falls from their hems in the shapes of hearts and stars. I wonder, for a moment, if I had a wreck on the way to church and am being met with cherubs to escort me Home. Then there's my kid. It's kind of unfair that the closest thing they make for boys to the ethereal department is a brown and navy argyle sweater vest, which he loudly protests in favor of the batman cape. Still, he looks kind of cute, even with the fresh Count Chocula stain on the front, as he plows his way through the angelic host like a John Deere backhoe through the Rose Garden.

I guess we should be thankful for boys' wear—no fancy handwork, no French seams, no going cross-eyed at 1 a.m. on Easter Eve trying to smock a pony hoof. Just a \$28.95 sweater and nine dollars in Wet One wipes. My friend Sarah just couldn't succumb to the Y chromosome thing. She wanted to hand-embroider just one more frilly outfit, so that Easter she compromised by making a true big boy's dress shirt, but added a pastel embroidered choo-choo to the back. I didn't think he'd wear it.

He did. Under a jacket for the entirety of Sunday School and "big church." Sarah pled with him until practically no one was left in the building but the janitorial staff. He finally bargained to take off the jacket if he could swing from the sound booth to the pulpit on a drop cord. Deal! He actually survived, but no such luck for the shirt.

It's just an unwritten law. The more assets you sink into imperial batiste cotton and chiffon, the more quickly those assets liquidate in the form of recycled baby formula and mashed peas. Also, the more expensive the designer purse, the nearer in proximity it is to the liquidation.

I'm glad Easter's about a lot more than the clothing catastrophes, and that at least part of the holiday revolves around something sensible like hard-boiling eight dozen eggs for a family of six, and then putting five coffee mugs full of permanent dye on a mahogany-finished table with the four people who are solely responsible for the total collapse of the pantry shelving system.

"You mean we're going to do this inside?" my husband asked.

The next year, we thought we might substitute with the candy eggs, which come already colored and individually wrapped. That was before we tasted them. "What's in this?" my husband asked, "Organic linoleum?"

As the hour for Peter Cottontail's arrival nears, we prepare by leaving containers out that would hold large amounts of milk choco-

late. My children were surprised to learn that other children have brightly colored baskets woven in Taiwan with disproportionately long handles which serve no other purpose than to strew candy and eggs all across a lawn so that a more fortunate child can find them. They didn't know other kids have shreds of pink plastic grass lining their baskets that serve a better, more decorative purpose of wrapping around the vacuum cleaner belt until the thing won't turn.

"How come we don't have baskets like that, and pretty grass?" they ask us.

"We're going green," we explain. "It's why we save ice cream buckets all year."

There are many more memories that go along with the holiday: memories that involve licking the fluorescent icing and coconut grass off the cupcakes before throwing the jelly beans away or at your sister; memories of 3:00 a.m. panic at who might be in the middle of the dog fight in the front yard in which pink fur is reported to be flying; and countless memories of near straightjacket encounters with plastic eggs that are designed to be snapped apart, but not back together.

We love Easter. There are families at church that we see only once a year; we watch "It's the Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown," and read the complete works of Beatrix Potter. We eat potato salad heavy on blue-tinted hardboiled eggs until we're pretty much shaped like one. And when all is said and done, we have spent another Sunday reflecting on the sacrifice of an amazing Savior on our behalf, and His miraculous resurrection—something we reflect on, by the way, fifty-two Sundays a year.

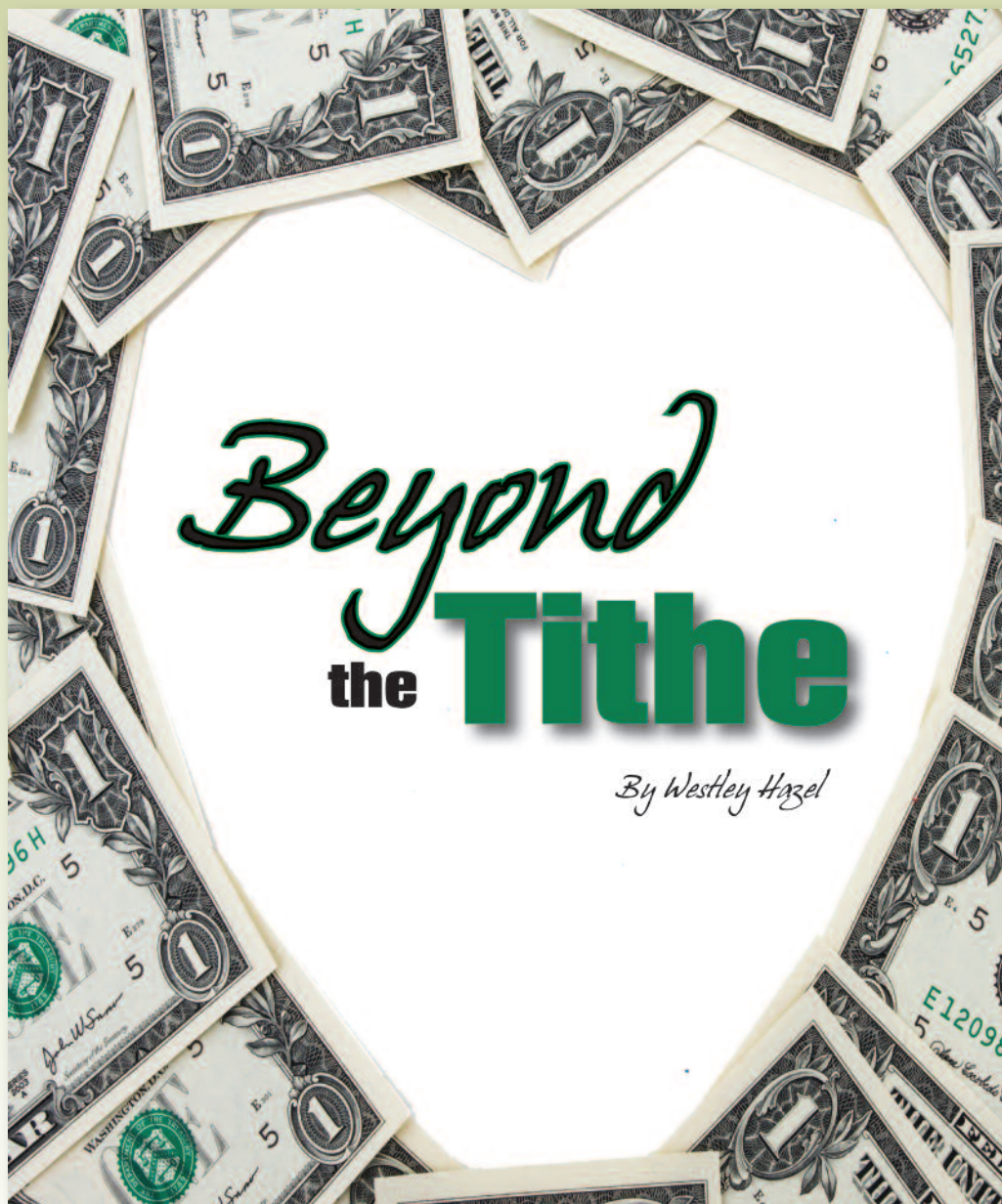
And that's really the best part. All the rest is just chocolate. ▲

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Dean Buchanan

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT ISLAM

Christianity, defined broadly, is the largest religion in the world, claiming over two billion adherents, with Islam being the second largest, claiming around one and one-half billion followers. Christ established His church two thousand years ago (Matthew 16:13-18), and Muhammad Ibn Abdullah founded the religion of Islam around fourteen hundred years ago. The Bible is the authority for Christianity, and the Qur'an is the authority for Islam.

Most of the Western world knew very little about Islam before radical Muslims flew two commercial airliners into the twin towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, resulting in the deaths of some three thousand people. Since that time, Islam is in the news daily in this country and around the world. Some claim that Islam is a peaceful religion that has been hijacked by a small radical element that uses terrorism as a tactic in their effort to spread Islam in all nations. Even if that were true, a small minority of one and one-half billion people would be several million individuals who are responsible for the violence in countries everywhere.

Just before Christ ascended back into Heaven, He said to His apostles, "All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). This commission began with the Apostles and was extended to include all Christians, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Christians today should desire to see all people saved, including those who are Muslims, for the invitation of our Lord is a universal appeal as demonstrated by the apostle Peter at the house of Cornelius when he said, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34-35).

So the Great Commission is the first and most important reason we should be concerned about Islam, which includes over a billion souls. To echo the words of the apostle Paul when he stood before King Agrippa, we should desire that all people would become like Paul, that is, Christians (Acts 26:28).

Christianity is a religion that lives in the midst of a secular world. Jesus taught this fact when His apostles questioned Him about whether or not it was lawful to pay taxes to the Roman government. Asking for a coin, He used the image of Caesar to teach the Apostles that Christians should pay their taxes to the state. The apostle Paul addressed the issue when he wrote to the church in Rome and pointed out that civil governments existed by the authority of God and that Christians should be subject to such governments except in cases where those governments required them to do something contrary to God's commandments (Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:28, 29).

Christianity and Islam are both religions, but are vastly different: Islam is a package containing a theology, and ideology, a civil law and political worldview that demands complete control of the lives of its adherents. Ravi Zacharias states in his book, *Beyond Opinion: Living the Faith We Defend*, "Muslim scholars state that Islam is an encompassing system—a sociopolitical system, a socio-religious system as well as socio-economic system that governs every aspect of the lives of its adherents, their relationship among themselves and with those who are non-Muslims."¹ The vehicle that controls the lives of adherents to Islam is called Sharia law.

In an article by Lisa Gardiner titled "American Muslim Leader Urges Faithful to Spread Word," Omar Ahmad, founder of Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), said, "Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. The Qur'an should be the highest authority in America."² Ibrahim Hopper, Communications Director of CAIR said, "I wouldn't want to create the impression that I wouldn't like the government of the United States to be Islamic sometime in the future . . ."³

Sharia (Islamic) Law is rooted in the Qur'an, the highest authority of Islam, and claims to have been revealed directly to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel during the last twenty-three years of the prophet's life. The Sunna or Hadiths are accounts of the sayings and acts of Muhammad. Sharia law was put together from those sources after the death of Muhammad. In Saudi Arabia and other countries dominated by Islam, Sharia is the law of the land for all things secular as well as religious, controlling the lives of individuals from personal hygiene to the court systems.

From the beginning, Christianity has been

spread by preaching the Gospel to the world according to the instructions of Christ and this teaching did not include force (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). The Apostles and evangelists were to go and preach the Gospel, baptize those who believed, and move on. The motivation behind the teaching of Christ was the love of God for all mankind (John 3:16). Hence, the worldview of Christianity recognizes the existence of the secular world made up of all those who are not Christians.

The worldview of Islam expects the entire world to become Muslim. In fact, the Qur'an teaches that all people were created Muslim: "So set thou thy face truly to the religion being upright, the nature in which Allah has made mankind: no change (there is) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the true Religion: but most among mankind know not" (Surah 30:30).⁴ Instilling fear through terrorism is a tactic used by Islam to make converts and prevent their adherents from leaving the faith. In nations controlled by Islam, other religions are not allowed. For example, in Saudi Arabia there are no church buildings. Christians who are there visiting or on work visas are not allowed to meet publicly.

In many of the news items we read from day to day, acts of terrorism committed around the world by radical Muslims are referred to as "jihad." Jihad is defined as "Holy war," a Divine institution of warfare to extend Islam into the *dar al-harb* (the non-Islamic territories which are described as the "abode of struggle."⁵ Islamic apologists will sometimes say jihad describes an inner struggle for self-improvement. One who was born and educated as a Muslim in Egypt until she came to America at age thirty said,

When we understand the principle of deception is part of Islamic teaching, how can we believe anything Muslims have to say in the public media.

This "inner struggle" business is hogwash. In the Arab world there is only one meaning for jihad, and that is a religious holy war against infidels. It is a fight for Allah's cause. Ask anyone in the Arab street what "Jihad for the sake of Allah" means and he will say it means dying as a shahid for the sake of spreading Islam. I have never heard of any discussion of inner struggle in my thirty years living in the Middle East.⁶

The Islamic Doctrine of Taqiyya, which is defined as "The principle of dissimulation of one's religious beliefs in order to avoid persecution or imminent harm,"⁷ is one more reason for Christians to be concerned about Islam. One of the verses in the Qur'an often used in implementing this deception states, "Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters Unbelief, except under compulsion, theirs will be a dreadful Chastisement" (Surah 16:106).⁸ Raymond Ibrahim stated in a recent article,

According to Shari'a—the body of legal rulings that defines how a Muslim should behave in all circumstances—deception is not only permitted in certain situations but may be deemed obligatory in others. Contrary to early Christian tradition, for instance, Muslims who were forced to choose between recanting Islam or suffering persecution were permitted to lie and feign apostasy.⁹

This principle of deception is especially useful to Muslim terrorists in their efforts to cause chaos and instill fear in non-Muslims around the world. When we understand that Taqiyya is part of Islamic teaching rooted in the Qur'an, which is Islam's highest authority, we have to ask ourselves how we can believe anything Muslims have to say in the public media.

No doubt there are many Muslims around the world who do not believe in violence as a means of spreading their faith and who desire only to have the opportunity to work and rear their families in a peaceful way of life. It would be of great help if more of these Muslims would speak up and denounce the Jihadists who daily are killing hundreds of people around the globe. These are only a few of the reasons Christians should be concerned about Islam and pray that God will help us to begin with prayer and use every Scriptural means available to preach the Gospel of Christ to the world. ▲

1 Ravi Zacharias, *Beyond Opinion* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007) p.62

2 "American Muslim Leader Urges Faithful to Spread Word," *San Ramon Valley Herald*, 4 July 1998

3 "Reader Says Use of 'Fundamentalist' Hurting Muslims," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 4 April 1993

4 Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an* (Lahore-Pakistan: Fine Offset Printing) p. 339

5 Cyril Glasse, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (North America: AltaMira Press, 2002) p.240

6 Nonie Darwish, *Now They Call Me Infidel* (United States of America: Sentinel, 2007) p. 201

7 Glasse, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, p. 450

8 Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an*, p. 219

9 "How Taqiyya Alters Islam's Rules of War," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2010, pp. 3-13

Jim Mettenbrink

FROM JIHAD TO STEALTH JIHAD

WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE MUSLIMS DO

Six days after 9/11, President Bush stated, "Islam is peace." However, the Qur'an states, "The religion before Allah is Islam (submission to his will)" (Surah 3:19, cf. 3:85). When people filter this statement through their American religious cultural image, they envision folks who are tolerant and non-violent. So, was President Bush mistaken or confused? With so much violence connected to Muslims, it seems contradictory to declare, "Islam is peace." What does Islam really mean—peace or submission? In fact, to the Muslim the result of Islam is peace. Really—with so much violence?

HISTORICAL ISLAMIC JIHAD

The spread of the history of Islam has been via the sword—its instrument of evangelism. It began with Mohammed, who in 610 A.D. claimed to have had a vision in a mountain cave near Mecca, hearing the call from the angel Gabriel to be Allah's lone and last prophet. He claimed revelations from Gabriel continued over the next 20 years. After the first 10 years, Mohammed's method

death sentence upon anyone who did not recognize him as the caliph. Over the next 25 years, the Sunni caliphs' armies conquered Mesopotamia (Iraq) Persia (Iran), Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Armenia, the Caucasus (southern Russia), Cyprus, Damascus and Jerusalem. Within 100 years the Iberian Peninsula was also conquered for Islam.

In 656, the Shiite Ali took the title of caliph, which was immediately opposed by Mohammed's daughter Aisha whose army lost to Ali. With the assassination of Ali's son in 680, this 50-year family feud finally marked the irreconcilable division between the Sunni and Shia. From 680 until the formation of the Ottoman Empire in 1258, the Sunnis ruled majority Islam. Today, 90% of the Muslim world is Sunni and about 10% Shia. The Organization of the Islamic Conference boasts a membership of 57 nations (approximately 23% of the world's population)—achieved mostly by the sword. Religion of peace?

The 1400-year history of Islam is evidence that it is more than a religion. Unlike Christianity, in which God invites people to indi-

primarily by military conquest and the infighting has continued (e.g. 1980-88 war between Iran [Shia] vs. Iraq [Sunni]), in the last 50 years the strategy "radically" changed. Radical terrorist groups, referred to as Islamicists, Jihadists, or radical Muslims, have supplanted the marching armies. Regardless of what our politically correct culture calls them, they are not radical. They are true believers—orthodox Muslims—following the dictates of the Qur'an to establish worldwide Islam under one caliph.

The obvious method of small group Jihad (so-called "radical terrorists") is evident in sporadic Islamic attacks within the U.S.A., (e.g., 1993 World Trade Center bombing, 1995 Murrah Federal Building bombing [Iraqi supporters] and 9/11 WTC attacks), supported by Middle Eastern organizations such as Islamic Jihad (est. 1980, Egypt, Sunni) and Al-Qaeda (est. 1988-89, Osama bin Laden, Sunni). For the year 2010, the Religion of Peace website reports 1,987 jihad attacks in 46 nations resulting in 9,175 deaths and 17,436 injured. Is Islam a religion of peace? Although historically Jihad initially spread to non-Muslim countries with armies, in recent decades small terrorist groups have served to foster non-violent intimidation to support the subversion of non-Muslim democratic republics to install an Islamic state and the Shariah.

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Following the abolition of the caliphate when the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the vacuum gave rise in 1928 to the Muslim Brotherhood founded by the Egyptian, Hasan al-Banna (Sunni), which became anti-Western in the 1940-50s and is mostly supported by Saudi donors. It helped create the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and al-Qaeda. The Brotherhood's global Islamic theocracy and the U.S. Constitution and its associated freedoms provide the ideal platform for an almost unnoticed Islamic revolution to establish the Islamic Republic of America!

In 1960, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) expanded its tentacles into the United States. The Brotherhood's dictum is: "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way! Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope." At least 40 Muslim organizations are now under its umbrella, directing and controlling the American stealth Jihad often by interlocking board directors. The most prominent are (1) Muslim Student Association (MSA), est. 1963; (2) Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), est. 1982 by MSA graduates with 600 local chapters, serves as the counterpart to

The U.S. Constitution and its associated freedoms provide the ideal platform for an almost unnoticed Islamic revolution to establish the Islamic Republic of America!

was to form a band of raiders that eventually grew to several thousand to take Medina, a town with a significant Jewish population. In 629, he took over Mecca, cleansing the town and the *Kaaba* (lit. "black cube," a house in Mecca), which was the pantheon where the gods of the various nomadic tribes were kept. Mohammed declared Mecca the "Holy City of Islam;" thus by the sword, the center of Islam was established.

Infighting following Mohammed's death (632 A.D.) to settle the question of who would lead Islam resulted in the two major Muslim sects—Shia and Sunni. The Shia sect believes the rightful heirs were Ali (Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law and first male convert—having a direct bloodline to Mohammed) and his descendants. The Sunni faction believes Mohammed's father-in-law (father of six-year-old Aisha, one of Mohammed's wives), the first adult male convert, should lead Islam.

The Sunni father-in-law pronounced a

vidually and willingly become Christians, Islam's goal is to dominate the entire world. In the 18th century, the Muslim scholar Wahhab taught a more pure form of Islam to the tribes in the eastern Arabian peninsula. The effect was contained until the Ottoman Empire fell following World War One. In the 1930s, the al-Saud family seized power and established the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which in turn gave Wahhabism the birth of worldwide Islamic restoration to its purity. The Congressional Research Service states that Wahhabism is now "arguably the most pervasive revivalist movement in the Islamic world." The Saudis make up 1% of the Islamic population, but support through Wahhabi venues pay 90% of the expenses of Islam. It supports 80% of the U.S. mosques and has established schools. In the past, Wahhabists believed this reform can only be implemented with the sword and the gun—Islam means submission!

Although historically, Islamic Jihad spread

the American Bar Association, and the formerly endorsing agent of Muslim chaplains in U.S. prisons; (3) the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), est. in 1994, located in Washington on Capitol Hill and the most vocal, serves as a counterpart to the NAACP publicizing every perceived complaint of discrimination against Islam; (4) American Muslim Council (AMC), 1990 a primary charity organization.

The few actual terrorist attacks, especially 9/11, simply serve as intimidating warnings to Americans of Muslim determination to not only be accepted but to be accommodated. America is afraid! Literally! Because of geographic location, no Muslim army can invade the U.S.A., except the army that is homegrown by stealth. In fact, the U.S.A. is under attack by stealth Jihad—the Islamic Holy War.

Little needs to be said about the significance of the destruction of the World Trade Center. Muslim jihadists destroyed the world's center of trade. On the surface, it appears to be some insane violent Muslims exacting revenge. However the announcement of a mosque near that site reveals the import of the destruction. The "Ground Zero" mosque was first called the "Cordoba Initiative" by Muslims until its meaning was understood by the media. Then henceforth, the media appears to have accommodated with "Ground Zero." In this case "Cordoba" served as a stealth announcement to the Muslim world that Islam was now, or would soon be, dominant, in the U.S.A. Why "Cordoba"? When the Muslim advance conquered the Iberian peninsula, a church was destroyed in Cordoba (Spain) and a mosque was built on that site (742 A.D.). This served as a symbol of conquest over Christianity. For a time, Cordoba was the seat of the divided caliphate (10th century), overtook Constantinople (seat of Eastern Orthodox Christendom) in population and prosperity, and became the leading center of Islamic cultural influence. In view of this, the Ground Zero, imam Rauf poses as a moderate Sufi Muslim, but his book, *What is Right with Islam* (2004), reveals his desire that Shariah become U.S. law and for the "rejuvenating" of Wahhabism in the U.S.A.—the most virulent arm of Islam. This explains the "Cordoba Initiative" following the 9/11 World Trade Center conquest—truly a stealthy announcement to the Muslim world.

While Homeland Security is scurrying about looking for airport terrorists, the Saudi-supported Wahhabists, aptly called "the fifth column," are active in prisons, schools,

and mosques, creating the base for a non-violent Muslim conquest of the United States. Upon any thin-skinned confrontation, CAIR howls foul—"bigot," "racist," "First Amendment," "intolerance," "violation of civil rights," et al. The government at every level responds with accommodation, fearing the charge of violating religious freedom. Although officials seem to fail to recognize that this non-violent Jihadist method is really a subversion of the Constitution, they timidly accommodate Muslims charges, remembering 9/11—violent Jihad!

While American non-Muslim soldiers wear gloves so as not to defile halal food or the Qur'an they give to Muslims in Guantanamo, the Saudis are arresting and deporting anyone who reads the Bible and they also burning the Bible. In the U.S., where

Seventh-grade textbooks describe Islam in glowing language, while portraying Christianity in harsh light.

Muslims are in the minority, the Muslim intolerance is more subtle, demanding accommodation. In 2007 the Salt Lake City International Airport had a building set aside for taxi drivers and a quiet room to rest and eat their meals. The Muslim taxi drivers cleared it of chairs and tables, put in prayer rugs, Qur'ans, and prohibited wearing shoes into the room. Essentially, it became a min mosque on government property. The airport closed the whole building rather than risk being accused of being intolerant or worse.

Following the removal of the six imams from a flight in Minneapolis in 2006, local Muslims demanded a separate prayer room

for Muslims: "Where you have Christians and Muslims praying at the same time, it will create a problem," said Fuad Ali, a Somali leader.

First airports, now universities! George Mason University set up a "meditation space" available to all students. Muslim students quickly changed it into a mosque and made it clear this was a Muslims-only room by demanding non-Muslims remove their shoes and that women be separated from the men. Accommodating the Muslim demands, an elementary school in Illinois banned pork from the school meal menus. Not satisfied, they demanded that their children be separated from the non-Muslim children during meals. These examples among hundreds of others in recent years might seem trite, but they point to the Muslims' sense of superiority and separatist entitlement. Ironically, the 20th century civil rights movement fostered equal rights, treatment, and integration, but the 21st century civil rights plea is for Muslim entitlement and segregation. Every accommodation to the demands of Muslims is one more step closer to total submission, the formation of the Islamic Republic of America!

Perhaps the most stealthy Jihad is being accomplished under the noses of unaware parents—propagandizing our children via school textbooks. Spencer states in *Stealth Jihad*, "... Islamic instruction in public schools presents a picture of Islam that is so pristine and peaceful that it sometimes crosses the boundary from mere pro-Muslim bias to outright Islamic proselytizing." The American Textbook Council, which evaluates the quality of school textbooks, concludes that 10 of the most widely used social studies textbooks used in middle and high schools present a distorted view by downplaying Christianity and glorifying Islam. The council noted, "While seventh-grade textbooks describe Islam in glowing language, they portray Christianity in harsh light ... Islam is featured as a model of interfaith tolerance; Christians wage wars of aggression and kill Jews. Islam provides harmony and civilization. Antisemitism, the Inquisition and wars of religion bespot Christian the Christian record." *Stealth Jihad upon your children!*

Ultimately by individual choice or force every person will be a Muslim—Islam means submission, not peace. However when all people are Muslims, and there are no longer any Muslim sects, there will be peace—the result of Islam (total submission)—The Islamic Caliphate of Earth. ▲

SUFFERING



the atheists' silver bullet

It started in an undergraduate philosophy class. I sat back one day and decided to observe the interchange between professor and students over the problem of suffering. We were going step-by-step through the usual array of arguments and seemed to be getting nowhere.

At the heart of the first argument was a claim that went like this: Suffering is not good in and of itself, but it can lead to something that is good. Perhaps it can mold and shape us into better people. We need to think of this world as a "vale of soul making."

The atheist professor has a ready reply: But what about those people who suffer and never have the opportunity to improve themselves in the face of hardships and trials? What about the infant who dies at an early age? What about those people who just give up on God altogether?

So we move on to the next argument: Maybe suffering is necessary for good. We cannot know love without hate. We cannot know compassion without pain. We cannot know courage without danger.

The professor has another reply at his fingertips: But do the momentary flashes of kindness outweigh the horrendous acts of evil? Is a world with both good and evil really better than a world with good alone?

Next, we spend a lot of time on the free will defense. A world with free moral agents like us is better than a world with thinking creatures who are little more than animals or robots.

The atheist immediately seizes on this point: But do we really have the freedom to choose? Are we not just thinking animals? Are we not wholly the product of blind, natural forces?

Most of the students balk at this point, for all the obvious reasons. The professor senses he is losing ground and launches into a cascade of accusations: Why make a world in which sin and suffering were possible in the first place? Why make moral beings able to choose evil? Why make anything at all, knowing what would happen to this world? Why God? Why?

But a very subtle rule of order has been introduced along the way. You see, the students who cared enough to defend their faith had been trying to respond from Scripture. Eventually, they were shut down with this simple statement from the professor: "But I don't believe the Bible."

It was then that I knew what had gone wrong. Historically, apologists have offered philosophical answers to what is perceived to be the philosophical problem of suffering. These students had a completely different approach. As Bible-believers, they were trying to answer from the Bible. Imagine that!

My personal wakeup call was to realize that these guys were on the right track. They simply lacked the confidence to call the professor's bluff. I suspect that many believers know exactly what to say on the subject of suffering, but are intimidated into thinking that their Biblical answers don't count.

Atheists keep telling us that the existence of so much suffering in the world is a challenge to theism in general and the Christian faith in particular. As Christians, we readily acknowledge the existence of suffering in this fallen, sin-sick world. At the same time, we acknowledge the existence of an all-powerful, all-loving God. Both of these beliefs are based on Scripture (Romans 10:17). So if the atheist alleges an inconsistency among these beliefs, he will need to hear a Biblical answer in response. Whether he believes the Bible is true, authoritative, or inerrant is beside the point.

Unfortunately, many of our replies are primarily philosophical with a sprinkling of Scriptural proof-texts. What we need, and what we already have, is a systematic theological response. Of course, most atheists don't want this kind of discussion because they know nothing about theology.

So my advice is this: Go ahead and speak the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31). You have the answers. They're right there in your Book. Don't let anyone challenge your faith and then tell you that the source of that faith is off limits.

It's a great irony to me that suffering should be considered the atheists' silver bullet, the one-hit KO against theism. Notice that I said "suffering," and not "the argument from suffering." I suspect that Christians are troubled more by the argument's ambush alleys and senseless cul-de-sacs than the reality of suffering in their daily lives. It's an irony because Christians experience pain and loss like everyone else (if not more, at times), and yet they continue to pray and to praise. Are they too dumb, too foolish, to see the inconsistency that the atheist sees? I don't think so. I think they see the Son of God suffering on the cross for their sins, and they have their answer. Mind you, it's a Biblical answer. ▲



Brad Harrub, Ph.D.

Behind the Veil

Ofentimes the sight of a *burqa*—the traditional cloak worn by Muslim women—causes us to pause and stare. This vision, and the world it represents, is so foreign to most Christians, that for many, it floods us with questions and maybe even fear. What really lies behind that veil? If those eyes could speak, what exactly would they say?

Anyone with even a nodding acquaintance of the Qur'an recognizes that the Islam religion treats women as property. I continue to wonder why the American mainstream media—the same media that fervently promotes feminism—gives this religion a free pass. It's as though they are either talking out of both sides of their mouths, or maybe they really are ignorant of the tenets of this religion.

Most of the behavior toward women can be traced back to Mohammed and his personal life. At 25 years of age, Mohammed married a woman 15 years his senior. After Mohammed was expelled from Mecca, an admirer brought his six-year-old daughter for Mohammed to marry. Muslim tradition claims that Mohammed (for obvious reasons) did not consummate the marriage until this young girl was nine. He then began adding wife after wife to his harem—all with Allah's full consent.

While a few individuals in the Old Testament possessed multiple wives, God's original plan of one woman and one man did not change. God did not condone this behavior. Paul made this clear in his writings (1 Corinthians 7; 1 Timothy 3:2, etc.)

How did Mohammed justify this behavior? Basically he hid behind the Qur'an. For instance, the Qur'an records: "Prophet! We [God] have made lawful for you the wives to whom you have granted dowries and the slave girls whom God has given you as booty; ... This privilege is yours alone, being granted to no other believer [We grant you this privilege] so that none may blame you. You may ... take to your bed any of them you please" (Qur'an 33:50-51).

This is a religion that allows and promotes concubinage. "Save with their wives and slave girls; for these are lawful for them" (Qur'an 70:30; see also 23:5). Mohammed advised men who were tempted to marry "other women ... two, three, or four of them" (Qur'an 4:3). Note that two is the minimum number Mohammed suggested—not one! How can one read this and harmonize it with God's Word, which strictly forbids fornication and adulterous relationships. The writer of Hebrews indicated: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed

undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

Additionally, Sharia Law also permits the possession of women slaves. While external public pressure caused slavery to be declared illegal in Saudi Arabia in 1965 and the Sudan in 1991, the practice continues in northern Africa (and is quietly practiced in many places in the Middle East). Consider the following passage in the Qur'an regarding the treatment of slave women: "Do not force your slave girls into prostitution in order that you may enrich yourselves...." That may sound good, until we read the remainder of that Surah, which says, "... if they [slave girls] wish to preserve their chastity." Mohammed then continues, "If anyone [i.e., any slave owner] compels them [forces chastity-choosing slave girls to be prostitutes], God will be forgiving and merciful to them." In other words, don't force them if they want to preserve their chastity, but if you do God will forgive you.

One obvious question is how did Mohammed get to this point, and how has it persisted? History records that when Mohammed was still alive and marauding caravans, he made promises of women and girls to the men who fought with him. This resulted in the conversion of many. Some of the men began to complain that if they were killed while marauding they would not get to enjoy the promised sex. Unabashed, Mohammed made a claim that is still recited by millions today—they would receive virgins in Heaven.

In other words, Mohammed turned Heaven into a brothel. Loyal Muslim men who paid the price of martyrdom would allegedly find a host of virgins—called *houris*—who would forever satisfy their sexual cravings. Some might question how these women would remain in the virgin state after many having relations with the martyrs and having been there for years. Mohammed had an answer for this as well. The Qur'an describes the houris as "a rare creation ... we have made them ever virgins" (Surah 56:34-36).

One of the truths that many Muslims do not want spoken is that many "pagans" were converted to Islam on the promise of sexual fulfillment. As a result, Muslim men did not want their own wives and daughters to become objects of so much increased sexual desire. Therefore, Muslim men began covering and even hiding their women.

These concerns were then made law by Mohammed in the Qur'an. "O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the faithful to draw their outer-garments (*jilbabs*) close around themselves; that is better that they will be recognized and not annoyed. And God is ever Forgiving, Gen-

tle" (Surah Chapter Al-Ahzab Ayah/33:59). Another portion of the Qur'an reads, "And say to the faithful women to lower their gazes, and to guard their private parts, and not to display their beauty except what is apparent of it, and to extend their head coverings (*khi-mars*) to cover their bosoms (*jaybs*)" (Surah 24: Nur Chapter: The Light, Verse 31).

However, this is only the beginning. The Qur'an requires women to remain veiled in public (33:59) and to remain strictly segregated from male society. A woman is to be seen "as Satan" when a man is sexually tempted—thus they are to take steps to prevent this. One of the traditions of Mohammed is that the majority of people going to Hell are women.

But again, this is only one aspect of how women are treated as second-class citizens in Muslim nations. The news media has all but remained silent on the common practice of clitorrectomy. The widespread practice of "circumcising" females in the Muslim faith is done to prevent women from feeling pleasure. Mohammed himself affirms this in a hadith. It is also one of the first practices legalized by Sharia Law.

The Qur'an demands Islamic control—via Sharia Law—over civil authority.

Our Constitution forbids murder, slavery, and prostitution—all of which are endorsed by the Qur'an. Should the Immigration and Naturalization Service be required to point out this innate contradiction between the Qur'an and the U.S. Constitution? Should Muslims be asked: "Do you condemn Sharia Law and vow to uphold the U.S. Constitution?"

Here's the rub. The passages from the Qur'an above are taken word for word. Which means those who follow this faith system find themselves in one of three possible categories: (1) They agree with them and try to abide by them; (2) They know they are there but don't practice this part of their faith; or (3) They don't know they are in there because they are unfamiliar with the actual teachings of the Qur'an. Friends, all three of these categories are unacceptable! To practice this behavior toward women is appalling. To not actually hold firm to the tenets of your belief system is pusillanimous. And to not know what your belief system actually teaches is unconscionable!

Do these teachings sound like the Golden Rule? Are these practices reflected in the teachings of Jesus Christ? Is this what we want our children to be "tolerant" of in the classroom?

Having spent some time studying this religion, two glaring issues should not be overlooked. First, Muslims are not assured of redemption (in fact Allah can change his

mind even in Heaven regarding someone). Having said that, there is one exception: The only "sure-fire" way to know you are Heaven-bound is to die in the service of Allah! How does this compare to "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13)? Simply put, Muslims can never "know" unless they are committing an act of martyrdom. Martyrdom is thus a welcomed event to many (therefore, they perceive suicide bombing as a ticket to Heaven). Second, while the media claims Islam is a peaceful religion, Islam's goal is world dominance. "He it is who sent his messenger ... that he may cause it [Islam] to prevail over all religions" (Qur'an 9:33). The blood of Christ and the blood of Jihad stand in direct contradiction to one another.

New Testament Christians need to learn to use quotes from Mohammed's Qur'an to undermine Muslim confidence in him and his writings. We must share this information with our friends, neighbors, and coworkers. We must hold our elected officials accountable to know about this religion and the dangers of its beliefs. We must comprehend that they may be "warring" from within ... and discuss the reality that massive immigration can have on our freedoms. And finally, we must realize that behind the veils are precious souls—souls that will one day spend eternity in either Heaven or Hell. Their destination will likely depend on whether or not we reach out and teach them the Truth of Jesus Christ! ▲

Islam's goal is world dominance.



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KEISHA SMITH

Keisha Smith is a mother of six who has a strong passion for Jesus Christ. She is also someone who converted from Islam to Christianity. She found a few minutes in her busy schedule to sit down and talk with us. We hope you find this interview informative and useful.

FP: How did you first learn of the Muslim religion, and what caused you to adopt their belief system?

KS: At a young age I would go to the library a lot, sometimes taking home 30 or more books at a time. I would study eastern religions and meditation at the early age of twelve because I viewed Christianity as a religion full of theatrics and false hopes. I never really associated Jesus with the religion, just people that claimed to be Christians and preachers that begged for the collection plate. I saw Islam as a way of peace and structure, and so I would study hard to learn everything there was to learn about this new-found way of life. I soon became one of the Muslim women who would teach the new converts how to pray and how to live.

FP: What are some good qualities of Islam that most Americans may not know of or consider?

KS: I love how serious Muslims take their religion, even to the point of death before dishonor. Most Americans see them as murderers, and I'm not here to dispute that, but these are also people that love their faith, and believe in God; they have just taken the wrong road and have excluded the main component, Jesus. They believe in God; they just do not believe Jesus is the Savior. Muslims would make good Christians because of their zeal and tenacity. Some Christians don't even have the same devotion and love for their religion as many Muslims do. We have to understand that Islam is culture to them and to do anything other than be faithful to the faith could result in death. I believe Christians could learn a lot from their dedication minus the will to kill others for not believing as they do. Its almost like "You can take my life for believing in Christ, for to die is gain, but to take the life of another because they do not believe is to lose the entire message of Christ ... love."

FP: How did you come to learn about Christianity?

KS: My mother was a woman who read her Bible every day and when I told her of my faith she would be patient with me and would always let me know that she was praying for me because I was baptized when I was younger. I knew that her prayers were not that I grow stronger in Islam but to find the true way. One day while I was preparing my lesson for the Muslim Women and after studying the Bible to find contradictions, I discovered the truths in Jesus right there in the jab (Muslim scarf) and all. So that was odd having to tell them that I could not go forward as a Muslim.

FP: Why did you convert to Christianity?

KS: I didn't know how to really place Jesus, but I knew that He was more than just a prophet. I converted to Christianity because it all made sense. I would study the life of Hagar and Isaac as a Muslim and the story ended with the creation of the Islamic faith, but the story went on in the Bible, and it ended with Jesus. It was, almost as if I was reading the Bible, and stopping here, and then finishing in the Qur'an because of the story of Hagar and Isaac, so I wanted to finish the story were I started it, in the Bible and I could not deny the truth. With Islam I had to learn the prayers in Arabic and mentally convert the intention in my head because I speak English. I would never miss a prayer, and I would study so hard to show God that I was worthy. Works of the flesh, praying and fasting and doing repetitive verses for approval and it never seemed to be enough. I was baptized about a year ago as an adult and have been living for Christ every since. I stand now as a Christian professing Jesus boldly never to hold Him again as my little secret. Its still death before dishonor but now I hold firmly to Christ as my Lord and savior...Amen and Amen.

FP: How are you now viewed in the Muslim community?

KS: Well, my best friend is still a Muslim, and I send her a Bible verse every morning. In her heart I know she sees me as a traitor, but she will never say so. They may believe that I'm going to hell, but of course I don't believe so. Jesus is indeed the Way the Truth and the Light. To them its one thing to be a Christian, but to be a Christian that was once a Muslim is a whole different form of betrayal.

FP: What would you tell people who are currently Muslim to consider regarding their faith and Christianity?

KS: Search the scriptures with an open heart, and the Lord will reveal Himself to you. Understand the history of this all, and it will all lead back to Jesus. When something is true it will surface; you just have to look in spite of the fear. I would tell them not to be afraid because to believe out of fear is not a belief at all, it is a threat. I would not beat them over the head with many scriptures because many of them know the Bible better than most Christians. That is why I say that we have to know the Word truly for ourselves in order to reach them because to quote scriptures will only turn some of them away. I would tell them just to give Jesus a chance and He will give you life John 17:2.

FP: How can Christians reach out to those within the Islam faith?

KS: I reach out almost every time I encounter a Muslim to tell them about the love of Christ, but I have to be patient and pray because there could be a big misunderstanding and in some cases even violence. So with this in mind, I sometimes walk slowly into the conversation and feel my way around, but if asked, I speak the truth and that is that Jesus is the way. A Christian could reach out by planting the seed and allowing the Lord to provide the increase. You have to come to them with love as Jesus would have done when He walked the earth. ▲

Trent Wheeler

Do Muslims Believe in JESUS?

I will never forget my first encounter with Islam. It was a blistering, hot night in a small village in Ghana, West Africa in 1987. I was preaching on the topic of "What Crucified Christ," when two men in black robes (Muslims) started shouting, "Christ was not crucified, Christ was not crucified." Since that time, my work in Africa has revealed that Islam is the single greatest threat to the decades of mission work accomplished in Africa.

Muslims are quick to tell Christians that they believe in Jesus. They will tell you

His name appears 25 times in their most holy text—the Qur'an. What you don't often hear is that the Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an is vastly different than the Jesus we read about in the Bible. Here are just a few examples:

- 1.** Muslims believe Jesus was just a man having the same beginning as Adam. "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is that of Adam; He created him from the dust then said to him; Be, and he was." (sura 3:59). This is far different from what we read in Colossians 1:16, "For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."
- 2.** The scope of Jesus' ministry was limited in nature. In a commentary found in the English translation of the Qur'an we read, "His life was incomplete, his ministry barely lasted three years, his mission was limited, and he was not called upon to deal with the many-sided problems that arise in a highly organized society or State. We pay our respect to him because he was Allah's messenger, but that is not to say that his message covers the same universal ground as that of Al-Mustafa (Muhammad)."
- 3.** Jesus did not die on the cross. This is an absolute certainty for Muslims. My experience in Ghana is a chilling reminder that despite the lip service many Muslims pay to Jesus, they deny His death, burial and resurrection. "That they said, we killed Christ Jesus the Son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah; but they killed him not, nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for a surety they killed him not." (Surah, 4:157-159). Islamic scholars attempt to disprove the Gospels by claiming that none of Jesus' followers were present at the crucifixion, though the Bible teaches that John and Mary and numerous witnesses were present at His death (John 19:25). Islamic clerics offer a number of explanations of what happened including these: a) Jesus hid while another died in his place; 2) Allah made Judas to appear like Jesus and take his place; 3) Satan was placed on the cross as punishment for his opposition to Allah.
- 4.** The most significant teaching of Islam regarding Jesus is that Jesus is not God. "Christ the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him" (sura 5:75). The Qur'an teaches that a doctrine such as the "sonship" of Christ, or combining the divine nature of Allah with the nature of man would extinguish Allah's light (sura, 9:31), and those who would teach such a doctrine have committed the ultimate sin. This is why of the 25 references there are to Jesus in the Qur'an, 23 of them refer to him as the "Son of Mary." This teaching is far different from what we read in Colossians 2:9-10, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority."

As followers of Jehovah, our confession of faith is not, "I believe in Jesus, but "I believe that Christ is the son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16). ▲

Mushaf Al-Madinah An-Nabawiyah, ed., The Holy Qur'an (Saudi Arabi: King Fahd Printing Complex, 1956), 686.

Trent Wheeler is the Executive Director of African Christian Schools. His work in Africa has revealed the growing threat of Islam to Africa and the United States. He is currently offering a free one-day workshop for churches entitled, "Islam Unveiled," that provides an excellent introduction to the history, beliefs and challenges we face from the Islamic world. For more information you can contact Trent at trent.wheeler@charter.net



There is an intimidating yet bewitching wind sweeping across the heartland. Its name is Islam, and its purpose is to obliterate everything in its path. No religion can wear one face on the West Coast and yet another to the multitudes on the East Coast without finally forgetting which face is which.

As you travel through our heartland, you may see increasing numbers of unfamiliar but strangely attractive structures rising from above the fruited plains—called mosques. As we witness the building explosion of these mosques and shrines, we may wonder: What is that? What do they do in there? What do those people believe?

Understand that Muslims have been in America since the 1700s. Countless books and official slave records in South Carolina and Virginia have noted the presence of Arabic-speaking slaves who refrained from eating pork. Further, there is evidence that perhaps a fifth of all slaves brought to America from Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in some inexplicable mindset worshipped their god Allah and yet did not follow the Qur'an. Most were later converted to Christianity. Did they convert to Christianity to ingratiate themselves with their "masters," because Christianity appeared to be the religion of their new land, or because they came to believe in the principles given in the Bible? We will never know.

PHANTOM SOURCES

The first dynasty of caliphs (661-750 A.D.) in Damascus had no scruples in promoting fabricated lies in some sacred religions form, and they were only concerned about finding pious authorities who would support these falsifications with their power. Incidentally, there was never any shortage of these supposed teachings and sayings of Mohammad called Hadiths. These were liable to be fabricated for even the most trivial ritualistic details. Falsification included the suppression of existing utterances that might be friendly to the rival party.

Eventually, storytellers made a good living inventing entertaining Hadiths eagerly lapped up by the gullible masses. The storytellers stopped at nothing in their quest for crowds. Early on, the handing down of these sayings sank to a business level. Opportunists traveled throughout the countryside from village to village searching for anything that resembled the teachings and utterances of Mohammad. Their greed succeeded in creating phantom sources of the Hadith, and with increasing demand there sprang up an ever-increasing desire to be paid in cash for the material they furnished. Does this remind you of any of the worldwide, faith-healing "evangelists" today? Dear reader, you have not seen anything yet. It only gets worse.

The chain of those transmitters—pseudo-researchers—which went all the way back to the "prophet," began to be widely used around the mid-eight century. Ironically, the more elaborate and formally correct a transmitter (the chain of authority preceding a hadith) appeared to be, the more likely it was to be false.

ISLAM LAW—WHEN AND WHAT?

Here is the eye opener, the shocker to all those calling themselves serious students of the Qur'an. The prophet Muhammad died in 632 A.D. The earliest material that we possess on his life was written by Ibn Ishaq in 750 A.D., 120 years after Muhammad's death. The question of authenticity becomes even more critical because the original form of Ibn Ishaq's work is lost and is available only in parts in a later revision or amendment by Ibn Hisham who died in 834 A.D., 200 years after the death of Muhammad.

Uthman Ibn Affan, who ruled as caliph (644-656 A.D.), was third caliph after Muhammad. He began an attempt to compile Muhammad's writings. The Arabs, under the influence of the Samaritans, proceeded to cast Muhammad in the role of Moses, and, as the leader of this new movement, they had to compose a sacred book.



LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE

Burt Jones

Orthodox Muslims of today, please take note. The Qur'an you have is the one based on compilations of Uthman. Muslim orthodoxy also suggests that Uthman's Qur'an contains all the revelation delivered to the people, faithfully preserved without change or variation of any kind. **This position cannot be supported by the historical evidence!**

This brings us to a dismissal of the previous traditions. Arabian origin for Islam is highly unlikely. The Arabs gradually formulated their creed as they came in contact with Judaism outside Central Arabia, as many scholars have suspected.

CREATING AUTHORITY

The early Muslim community was anxious, almost desperate, to establish the credentials of Muhammad as a prophet somewhat on the order of Moses. This meant there had to be a holy scripture which would validate, or be seen as testimony to, his prophet-hood.

Another gradual development was the emergence of the idea of the Arabic origins of Islam. This generated the thought of a sacred language, which, of course, must be Arabic. The Qur'an was said to be handed down by their god in pure Arabic. In contrast to the way Muslim holy writings were delivered, the Bible was compiled as "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Where are the prophecies foretelling of Muhammad? Where are the intricately woven, chronologically accurate, crimson threads of the religion of Islam guaranteeing the adherents a home in Heaven? **They do not exist.**

OUTREACH

Islam is an urban religion. Muslims have never been shy about moving into a city or a country and immediately engaging the local populous in the joys of Islam. Muslims look pretty much like the rest of us: two arms, two legs, two eyes, and two ears. But there is a passion inside them that does not allow for complacency in spreading the message of Muhammad. Islam grows in the United States because Muslim adherents believe it, live it, and are willing to work to bring others into it. That is sad because Islam has saved no one, and it will ultimately condemn billions to torment.

WHICH PROPHET DID GOD RAISE?

Moses obviously refers to Jesus when he speaks of the Prophet whom God would raise. But allowing Muhammad his time in the sun, let us accept the picture in 613 A.D. of Muhammad's taking on the role of a "prophet" as he sets out to make converts, much as you might grow a franchise or a worldwide miracle healing ministerial alliance. Sympathetic friends accepted his claim to be a prophet. As good friends do,

they worked tirelessly to grow the small band of converts to thirty-nine, then to seventy, then more. Most of the followers were men under thirty years of age. Their dedication to Muhammad brought persecution from their families. By 615 A.D. there was more active opposition to the preaching of Muhammad.

Even though all Islamic beliefs are supposedly based on the Qur'an, Islam has as many faces as there are countries in which it is entrenched. Some faces are peaceful, as are most of our Muslim neighbors in America, even though the evening news sometimes advises us of money being funneled from the United States to radical foreign elements. What is that holy book, the Qur'an, that so many claim to follow nowadays? Is it really a marvelous discourse that "guideth to all truth"? (Surah 72:12). Is the Qur'an really a revelation from Allah, coming six hundred years after the establishment of Christ's church? Is the Qur'an superior to the Bible? Is it equal with the Bible in authority? Can someone appear on the scene six hundred years from now, again claiming a discourse that guides to **all truth**?

QU'RAN

Written by Muhammad
Written in lifetime of Muhammad
Allah has no son
Jesus did not die on the cross

BIBLE

Written by 40 inspired men
Written over a period of 1500 years
God has a Son, Jesus
Jesus died on the cross

SKEPTICISM SURROUNDING QUR'ANIC PROOFS

The traditional Muslim accounts of the life of Muhammad and the story of the origin and rise of Islam are based exclusively on Muslim sources, namely, (1) the Qur'an; (2) the Muslim biographies of Muhammad; and (3) the Hadith or Muslim traditions compiled from the words, actions, and attitudes of Muhammad.

This has been the blockbuster, the shocker, the revelation of many of the claims of the Qur'an that are both maddening and very sad for the devout Muslim. It has called into question traditional Muslim accounts of the history of the formation of the Qur'anic texts and the powerful argument questioning the authenticity of the Qur'an itself.

We accept the Muslim claim that Muhammad died in 632 A.D. Yet the earliest material we possess on his life was written by Ibn Ishaq in 750 A.D., 118 years after the death of Muhammad.

Even though all Islamic beliefs are supposedly based on the Qur'an, Islam has as many faces as there are countries in which it is entrenched.

BOOKS OF TRADITION

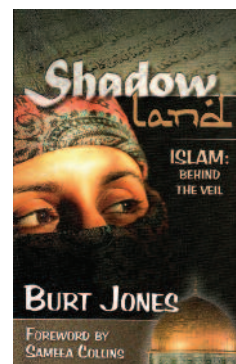
Most non-Muslims cannot really appreciate how greatly the Hadith is revered in the Muslim world. Remember, these books of tradition serve as the theoretical basis for Islamic law and, therefore, for Islam itself.

Far from being objective, the data rested on almost capricious fiction. The biographers of Muhammad were too far removed from his time to have true data. The biographers' aim was not really to know things as they actually happened, but to construct an ideal vision of the past as it ought to have been! And so, upon the bare canvas of verses of the Qur'an that need explanation, the traditionalists have woven, with either great boldness or pure foolishness, scenes suitable to the desires or ideals of their particular group.

Whatever negative things may be said of Muhammad, we must admit that he was a tenacious and persevering guide, holding onto his beliefs through years of increasing persecution. He was able to gain such devotion from his followers that they, too, clung to these beliefs, even to their deaths. While we sometimes pull back in fear from followers of Islam, we must realize that these individuals are lost, and they possess souls that are precious to God.

The Muslim world would be shocked to learn that wars are fought in part from the torment of boredom. Boredom is proof of our higher heredity and is good news in that sense, but the end of all flesh does not have to result in an eternal torment. However, the infinite in us can cause us to transform that boredom into a search for deeper truths of the Word of God. God, you see, hath set a very sublime and fascinating eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). There is a solution—and that solution is to teach and influence—to follow the Great Commission that Jesus Christ has put before us. ▲

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Tracy White

ISLAM AND THE Deity of Christ

In the long ago, Pharaoh asked, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" (Exodus 5:2). At a much later time, when Jesus arrived in the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13). Satan is relentless in his efforts to steal the truth out of the hearts of humanity regarding the true identity of Christ. Although the common opinion remains that Christ was a great one, multitudes have been deceived into denying that Christ is indeed the Greatest One who clothed Himself with human flesh that He might save His people from their sins. Jesus made the question of His identity personal when He asked His disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). Though many may argue that the answer makes little difference, they are certainly in error; for Jesus exclaimed, "Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24; see margin definition for "I am"). It unequivocally does make a difference what a man believes about Christ, for everything of spiritual consequence depends upon who the Lord is.

The first decade of the twenty-first century spawned events that elevated the religion of Islam into a topic of daily conversation in the world media. The growing interest in Islam in America means the church in this country must understand the differences of the core beliefs, not only to protect the hearts of our children, but that the church may learn to reach Muslim hearts with the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Regarding the nature of Christ, Islam and Christianity stand firmly opposed to one another. The vast difference appears from the Qur'an, wherein is stated, "Christ the son of Mary was no more than a messenger" (5:75). The Qur'an further states, "In blasphemy are those that say that Allah [God] is Christ the son of Mary" (5:17; see also 5:72). Hammudah Abdalati argued, "Jesus never claimed to be a god or the Son of God" (1975, p. 158); he contended that Christ was not unlike any other great prophet sent as a spokesman for God, e.g., Abraham or Moses. The Islamic views of Christ are not unique, but represent the primary departure from the truth concerning the true nature of Jesus Christ.

Today, self-styled Jehovah's Witnesses accuse Christians of claiming about Jesus what He never claimed for Himself, i.e., de-

ity. However, the Jews who conversed with Jesus positively understood His claims, hence: "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18). On a later occasion, they intended to stone Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God" (John 10:33). While on trial, the high priest implored, "'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' And Jesus said, 'I Am' . . . And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy'" (Mark 14:61-64). Jesus was condemned for blasphemy because the Jews did not believe His claim to deity.

The Bible is replete with evidence demonstrating the nature of Christ as God, and the glory of our salvation is unabashedly connected to His dual nature as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. The prophet Mic-

ah foretold the human nature of Christ in declaring His birth in the town of Bethlehem, but revealed His divine nature by insisting that "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2). Isaiah declared that "the virgin" would conceive and bear a son, and His name would be des-

ignated as "Immanuel," which actually signifies "God is with us" (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). Isaiah also announced the birth of the child whose name would be called "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6). The humanity of Christ is indicated by the terms *child* and *son*, and His deity is declared forthright by His unmistakable name, "Mighty God."
Jesus stood forth as God in man, revealing and explaining the invisible God of Heaven (John 1:1; 1:18). Even though He declared in His confrontation with the devil that only God is to be worshipped (Matthew 4:10), Jesus was openly worshipped no less than ten times while on earth, and not once did He decline such worship (Matthew 2:11; 8:2; 9:18, etc.). Far from being a peripheral issue, the deity of Christ is an essential belief of Christianity. To strengthen the church and reach out to Muslims, we must be able to impress upon all men the dual nature of the Savior, carefully exhibiting the same humility as Christ, "who, existing [present tense participle, TW] in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6; ASV), condescended to become man, that through death, He might save us from our sins. May every man in this life bow before Christ, confessing like Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Amen. ▲

Christianity
and Islam
stand firmly
opposed to
one another.

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References:

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ARE YOU READY TO RAISE THE BAR?

Have you been looking for a great Wednesday night Bible class? How about a DVD series to really give your Sunday morning teen class a boost to get them talking? This is it!

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Joe Wells, M.Min.

RAISE THE BAR

Understanding and Reaching God's Expectations



"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.'"

— Matthew 16:24, NKJV

From Lesson One: Where's the Bar?

Where did the teenage demographic come? Where is the bar currently set?

Lesson Two: God's Bar in Society

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HUSBANDS, IT'S A GOOD TIME TO QUESTION YOUR MARRIAGE

Most successful organizations, championship sports teams, and Fortune 500 businesses have something in common: they ask themselves the hard questions. They are questions that cause one to take true inventory of how things are really going on the inside. They are self-examining questions. They are questions that make you feel uncomfortable sometimes. Questions like, "Where are we weak?" "What needs to change?" or "What can we do better?" Questions like these are not only vital for the success of a company, but they are crucial for your marriage too.

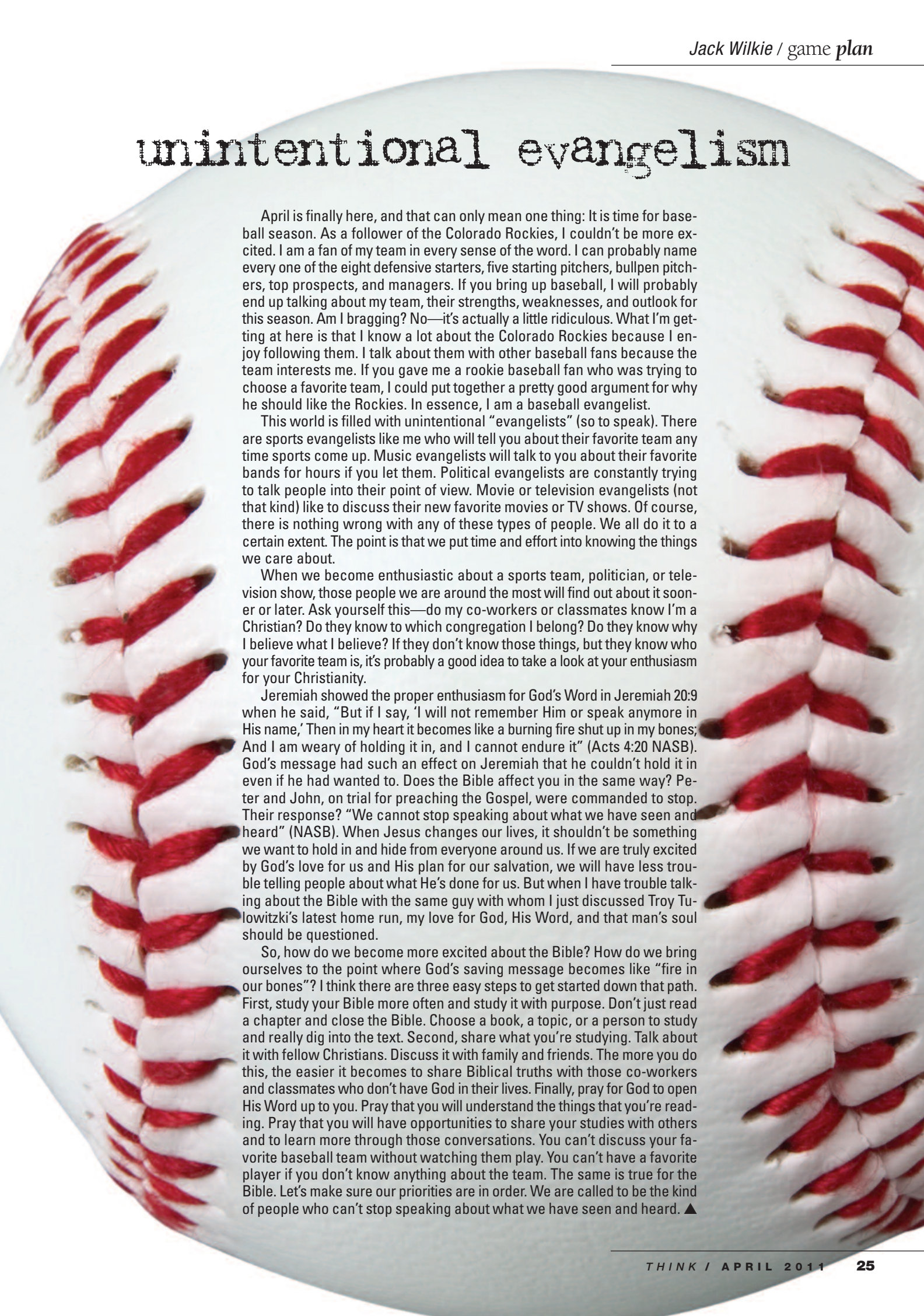
Christian husbands, it is a good time to start asking yourselves the hard questions in order to improve the relationship with your wives and, more importantly, to encourage you to raise the bar as godly leaders in the home. First, when the husband takes the initiative to be a servant in his home, he is fulfilling God's plan for his life, and second, he is building a legacy of a God-centered marriage for his children and grandchildren as they watch Dad be a spiritual blessing in the home.

Husbands, God wants us to be the spiritual light in our homes. He has called us to holiness, purity, courage, patience, and love. For these qualities to be in place, we must begin by asking the following questions:

1. Is it clear to my wife and children that God is number one in my life, far above my work, hobbies, or money? (Mark 12:30)
2. Is God's Word a constant presence in my home? (Psalm 119:44-48)
3. Am I faithful to my wife with my eyes and heart when it comes to what I watch on TV, the Internet, or how I treat other women at work? (Matthew 5:28; Proverbs 4:23-27)
4. Do I treat my wife with the utmost respect in public and private? (1 Peter 3:7)
5. Do I live with her in an understanding way? (1 Peter 3:7)
6. Do I serve my wife on a daily basis? (Ephesians 5:25)
7. Do I protect my wife from Satan and others who try to hurt her? (1 Peter 3:7)
8. Am I gentle and patient with my wife when she messes up? (1 Corinthians 13:4)
9. Am I directly involved in the training and discipline of my children? (Ephesians 6:4)

May God grant us the courage to question our marriages in such a way that helps us to be the spiritual leaders in our homes despite the ungodly culture around us. ▲

unintentional evangelism



April is finally here, and that can only mean one thing: It is time for baseball season. As a follower of the Colorado Rockies, I couldn't be more excited. I am a fan of my team in every sense of the word. I can probably name every one of the eight defensive starters, five starting pitchers, bullpen pitchers, top prospects, and managers. If you bring up baseball, I will probably end up talking about my team, their strengths, weaknesses, and outlook for this season. Am I bragging? No—it's actually a little ridiculous. What I'm getting at here is that I know a lot about the Colorado Rockies because I enjoy following them. I talk about them with other baseball fans because the team interests me. If you gave me a rookie baseball fan who was trying to choose a favorite team, I could put together a pretty good argument for why he should like the Rockies. In essence, I am a baseball evangelist.

This world is filled with unintentional "evangelists" (so to speak). There are sports evangelists like me who will tell you about their favorite team any time sports come up. Music evangelists will talk to you about their favorite bands for hours if you let them. Political evangelists are constantly trying to talk people into their point of view. Movie or television evangelists (not that kind) like to discuss their new favorite movies or TV shows. Of course, there is nothing wrong with any of these types of people. We all do it to a certain extent. The point is that we put time and effort into knowing the things we care about.

When we become enthusiastic about a sports team, politician, or television show, those people we are around the most will find out about it sooner or later. Ask yourself this—do my co-workers or classmates know I'm a Christian? Do they know to which congregation I belong? Do they know why I believe what I believe? If they don't know those things, but they know who your favorite team is, it's probably a good idea to take a look at your enthusiasm for your Christianity.

Jeremiah showed the proper enthusiasm for God's Word in Jeremiah 20:9 when he said, "But if I say, 'I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name,' Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it" (Acts 4:20 NASB). God's message had such an effect on Jeremiah that he couldn't hold it in even if he had wanted to. Does the Bible affect you in the same way? Peter and John, on trial for preaching the Gospel, were commanded to stop. Their response? "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard" (NASB). When Jesus changes our lives, it shouldn't be something we want to hold in and hide from everyone around us. If we are truly excited by God's love for us and His plan for our salvation, we will have less trouble telling people about what He's done for us. But when I have trouble talking about the Bible with the same guy with whom I just discussed Troy Tulowitzki's latest home run, my love for God, His Word, and that man's soul should be questioned.

So, how do we become more excited about the Bible? How do we bring ourselves to the point where God's saving message becomes like "fire in our bones"? I think there are three easy steps to get started down that path. First, study your Bible more often and study it with purpose. Don't just read a chapter and close the Bible. Choose a book, a topic, or a person to study and really dig into the text. Second, share what you're studying. Talk about it with fellow Christians. Discuss it with family and friends. The more you do this, the easier it becomes to share Biblical truths with those co-workers and classmates who don't have God in their lives. Finally, pray for God to open His Word up to you. Pray that you will understand the things that you're reading. Pray that you will have opportunities to share your studies with others and to learn more through those conversations. You can't discuss your favorite baseball team without watching them play. You can't have a favorite player if you don't know anything about the team. The same is true for the Bible. Let's make sure our priorities are in order. We are called to be the kind of people who can't stop speaking about what we have seen and heard. ▲

MARKETING TO TEENS:

How a Focused Effort Helped Shape America

Imagine walking into your old high school. The big metal door still has that same old squeaky noise, but your walk down memory lane comes to a screeching halt as you pass through the metal detectors. The office is in the same place, but it's been redesigned. The classroom doors open to the same space; however, you realize you're not in Kansas anymore, and the high tech wave has crashed landed here.

Your jaw drops as you notice the billboards—advertising electronics, books, and video games—plastered across the lockers. You enter the cafeteria and realize that you didn't escape the Twilight Zone—you only got deeper in it. You never expected Burger King to be the group sponsoring the posters about healthy eating. You quickly run to the library, thinking it will be a safe place, free from the marketing serpent, but you quickly realize, as the clown dressed in yellow with the red hair stands before a group of kids teaching them about literacy, there truly is no safe place.

Why would these companies invest so much money to advertise to our kids? What would they possibly stand to gain from placing ads in an environment where the majority of the people who would see them are under the age of 18? Maybe they know something we don't.

Are you aware ...

- Companies spend on average roughly \$17 billion each year to market to teenagers. That is a 170% increase just since 1983.¹
- Children under the age of 14 will spend roughly \$40 billion each year.²
- It's estimated teenage spending will total \$208.7 billion in 2011.³
- Estimates show that children ages 12-14 have an average annual income of \$2,167.⁴
- Teens 15 to 17 years old have an estimated annual income of \$4,023.⁵

It appears these marketing companies spend so much money each year trying to attract underage buyers because there is a huge amount of money to be made. While this tells us a lot as far as the "Why?", it doesn't point us to the "When?". For this, we must venture back in America to the end of World War 2.

Between 1939 and 1950, managers saw their incomes rise 45 percent. Supervisors' incomes rose 83% followed by production workers with a 106% increase. With this increase in salary, the average American family could afford middle-class comforts at rates never seen before. The number of car registrations grew to 40 million by 1950, an increase of 14 million from 5 years earlier. The number of single-housing starts grew from 114,000 in 1944 to close to 1.7 million in 1950. This increase in housing also meant an increase in furnishings. The war had taught many teens the valuable lesson of sacrifice; however, it also stirred their desire for some of the material products they had been denied—records, clothes, cars—the "stuff" of teenage life.⁶

With the pump being primed, Helen Valentine, a 51-year-old grandmother, noticed this, and in 1944, launched *Seventeen* magazine, beginning her campaign to convince retailers and manufacturers to target teenage girls.⁷ It didn't hurt Valentine's cause any that the very first issue sold out its first edition of 400,000 copies within two days and its second edition of 500,000 in the same time frame. Within 16 months, it was evident she was on to something as the magazine circulation topped 1 million subscribers.⁸

It didn't take very long before clothing manufacturers jumped onboard and worked with *Seventeen* in not only selling their products in the magazine, but in working with the magazine to design clothing specifically for their readers. By the early 1950s, the cosmetics companies jumped in with Ponds and Woodbury leading the charge with their brand of teenage makeup. Around the same time, grocery chains such as A&P and Grand Union were buying advertising space, as was Pillsbury. What at first had seemed like a useless demographic for retailers to pursue quickly turned into a captive, brand new market that, if retailers wanted to expand its customer base, had to start taking serious.

While marketing is a fact of life, and many of us are involved in it to some extent every day, we must not overlook that many times marketing strategies play off a person's weakness—the need for the latest product or brand name. It really is not about needs many times, but rather about accumulating "stuff" for happiness' sake.

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 5:10, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity" (NASB). He goes on to write, "Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting ... enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him" (vs. 18, NASB). With the marketing serpent attacking our children at younger and younger ages, as their parents we must be proactive in teaching, not only verbally but in actual practice, that true happiness is not found in "stuff." Rather it's found in a genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ. ▲

1 James McNeil quoted in Horovitz, B. (2006, November 22). "Six Strategies Marketers use to Make Kids Want Things Bad." *USA Today*, p. 1B. Retrieved March 2, 2008, from http://www.usatoday.com/money/advertising/2006-11-21-toy-strategies-usat_x.htm.

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Jack Norris

PROJECT 7

A PROJECT WORTH PROJECTING

It was a typical Monday for Johnny. He was at school, half asleep and watching the clock for lunch. Johnny was in biology class and his teacher told the class to turn to chapter seven. The chapter's title was "Evolution." For several days now the class had studied this chapter and it was almost time for the test. As a result, Johnny was discouraged. You see, Johnny was reared in a family that was faithful to God and attended church regularly. From a young age, he was taught that the world was created in six days and on the seventh day God rested. Johnny had been taught that man was made in the "image of God." Johnny had grown up with creation.

However, for the first time, Johnny was confused on the origin of mankind. The theory of evolution seemed to be the only accepted theory in the scientific field. When Johnny would raise his hand in class and begin to speak about creation, his teacher would immediately stop him, saying, "We can't discuss that."

Sadly, this is the case in many high school science classes. Only one theory is being taught on the origins of man, and it's evolution. We at "Project 7 Days" believe in "true education." What is true education?

First, true education is not indoctrinating students with only one theory on the origin of mankind. This is happening all across America, including the Alabama public school systems. True education is simply supplying the student with all the theories that have scientific evidence to support them. So the question is, "Does 'creation' (which is Intelligent Design) have science on its side?"

Absolutely! Whether evolutionists want to admit it or not, there is scientific evidence for Intelligent Design. For example, the Law of Cause and Effect and the Law of Thermodynamics make perfect sense when one believes in an eternal supernatural entity. In fact, these laws alone eliminate the plausibility of the "Big Bang" theory entirely. Also, consider the evidence of polystyrene fossils that support a young Earth or the evidence that humans actually coexisted with dinosaurs. Modern textbooks will not provide students with this information.

United and strong, the members of "Project 7" are composed of intelligent, enthusiastic, and honest high school students. The students were the first to initiate Project 7, and they are conducting this movement. Not only have students signed this document and

become members, but adults, educators, parents, and concerned community leaders have as well. What do the Project 7 promoters believe in? What does Project 7 stand for?

Project 7 is coined after the "creation week" recorded in the Bible. The members of Project 7 believe in one God, who is Jehovah of the Bible. We believe that He created the world and all that is in it.

We are not asking for evolution to be taken out of Alabama high school textbooks or for teachers to stop teaching the theory. We simply want "Intelligent Design" to be taught in public schools alongside evolution. As members of Project 7, we don't believe that evolution and creation are both correct, which happens to be the belief of some people. We believe fully in Intelligent Design, which springs forth from the creation account found in the Bible.

What is "Project 7 Days" hoping to achieve? What is our goal? If you read our Mission Statement on our Facebook page, then you will receive the answers to these questions fully. Also, we would love for you to follow us on our Facebook page and remain updated on our progress. One of our main goals is to have one million Alabamian signatures on the petition for Intelligent Design by 2012! (That will be the next education reform in Alabama.) We are not asking that evolution be taken out of the Alabama public school system, nor are we asking for religion to be taught. We are simply asking that Intelligent Design be taught alongside evolution, so that the student can be better informed when he chooses which to believe. Our goal is to give future generations of Alabama the education they deserve. They deserve true education, don't you agree? ▲

*If you are a citizen of Alabama who would like to sign the petition and take a stand for "true education," you can e-mail Jack Norris at maddox12@charter.net



The Brown Bag Experiment

"The best way to a man's heart is through his ..."

I know ... you're already rolling your eyes. This age-old aphorism is the meat-and-potatoes of gender clichés. But this modern lady infused some fresh life into a weary marriage recently with this very bit of wisdom.

Being a mom to a preschooler and an infant, and a part-time teacher, I sometimes barely have enough energy to drag myself into bed at night. After a night interrupted with midnight feedings and our older daughter's bad dreams, the last thing I wanted to do was roll out of bed when my husband's alarm went off at 6 a.m.

Like slicing up a pungent onion, conviction got my attention. My husband got home late one night, and as I heated his dinner plate in the microwave he mentioned that he hadn't eaten that day.

Not only was this his first meal, it was the first time we'd spoken all day.

I felt about as useful as an empty saltshaker. How could I possibly be fulfilling my role as a "helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18)? This was a revelation: dots suddenly connected before my eyes. I was not being helpful to my husband. I was not suiting my life to his so that I could accomplish my purpose. He works long hours every day to support our family; the least I can do is help support his body with a healthy breakfast and lunch.

I'm not saying preparing three meals a day for everyone in your family is explicitly mandated in the Bible. But for me, this brown-bag experiment in submission worked.

The next morning found me up while the house was still dark and silent, with only the sounds of my husband's shower running and the coffee dripping as I slathered mayo onto wheat bread. As he dashed around the house grabbing his supplies for the day, I carefully filled a brown paper bag with his sandwich, an apple, and some pretzels. When he came into the kitchen, he had no time to sit down and eat breakfast, but I had a to-go breakfast and lunch ready for him. We had a quick conversation about our day as I filled his work bag with food and drink, and then we kissed good-bye.

When he left, I had a pot of coffee and half an hour before my girls would wake. Upon my husband's return that evening, I reaped even more rewards by continuing the affection and conversation we'd begun that morning.

I encourage you to find a small, tangible way to serve your husband, maybe through the age-old route of his stomach, or maybe through something else that suits his needs. Carve out time from your day to spend with him, serving him. That's why we were created after all.

When you achieve your purpose—in this case, being a suitable helper to my husband—it's as satisfying as a healthy meal. Meat and potatoes are okay, but serving up submission is as tasty as chocolate cake and just as addictive. ▲

Motherhood PART 2

I am hopeful that some are encouraged after reading last month's article on motherhood to work only out of the home when that is not the "Christian" norm. Others may be upset or angry because they are working outside the home.

What about all the women who are working outside the home? Are they sinning by not staying at home being "homemakers"? Let me say right off that it may not always be wrong for a woman to work outside the home. The answer is not a simple yes or no. The answer has to do with the heart and can be found in one of a few category types.

HOMES WITH HUSBAND, WIFE, AND CHILDREN:

In these homes, I believe (for reasons Scripture pointed out last month), that it is best for a wife/mother to stay home to rear her family and make the home a place or refuge from the world. When they do work outside the home some questions need to be asked:

1. Why am I working outside the home? Is it because of wants or needs? Is my job providing the extras that we want or true genuine needs? If the job is simply providing for a larger house, a more expensive car (truck), etc., these may be "wants". Should a family look at its current situation and decide that a change is needed, it may not happen quickly. However, goals should be set for the lady of the house to get out of the workplace. On the other hand, if the work is being done so a specific goal is met, such as removal of debt so that the family will no longer be a "slave to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7), then, in this example, there is a means to an end.
2. Am I working outside the home to get away from "those" responsibilities? For so many women, home life is seen as dull, boring, and fruitless. Nothing could be further from the truth! It is the home that ultimately directs and affects culture, the church, and the nation! The woman in the home of Proverbs 31 used her home and household as a vessel for education, teaching, nurturing, industry, benevolence, and godliness. The woman of Proverbs 31 did not "leave" her home. Her home was a part of her in everything she did, including making money.
3. Am I wanting to have goals and careers of my own or to make a name for myself? Ultimately, what use is there in making a name for ourselves, having personal goals or personal careers? (Men included.) Anyone can go down to his local cemetery and see that the rich and famous end up the same as the dirt farmer who could barely make ends meet year and year out. On the other hand, what about the family that works at a job together at a primary "bread-winning" business, or even a side home business? Wouldn't this promote unity and togetherness in a family since the members have a common vision and goal?
4. Husbands, are we making/requiring that our wives work outside the home because we see them as lazy? Gentlemen, many of us have learned that turning a home into a house and keeping as such is no easy task. Keeping it a home is a never-ending task that requires constant supervision and diligence.

HOMES WITH ONLY MOM AND CHILDREN:

Unfortunately, many Christian homes do not have a father due to divorce or death. Surely we can all agree that this is not what God had in mind at creation. Because sin entered into the world however, many Christian women are having to live with both curses—pain in childbirth and working by the sweat of their brow. Men, though, never live both curses!

In this particular situation, a mother of her children has to work both in the home and outside the home in order to provide for their physical needs. That is, if there is no other alternative or place to go for help such as family or the church. I am compelled to point out here that if a man "does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). I am not convinced this excludes the parent and/or grandparent from taking his family back into a protected environment to help care for them for a short time or indefinitely depending on the reason (see Leviticus 22:13). Reading further in 1 Timothy 5:16 we are told, "If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who really are widows."

Yes, the answer has to do with the heart. A woman's heart, just like a man's, should be turned toward family and home. No one can judge the heart but God. No one can call a family "sinning" because the lady of the house works both in and out of the home. I believe it is Satan himself who is trying to tear the family apart. Over the past 100 years he has turned the family out and made an "empty" Christian home the societal norm. Our roles and responsibilities must be measured against God's Word and not man's ideas. ▲



Having looked into the tearful eyes of parents whose children have abandoned the Faith, I have learned there are a million miles between our children "going through the motions" in reference to their spiritual lives versus our children possessing hearts that dictate their actions. In this column, I plan to share with you what I hope to instill in the hearts of my own children and those whom I love.

It is getting harder and harder to avoid them—cuss words. We hear them at ball games, we read them in novels, we listen to them on television (even commercials now!), and we see "friends" use them on Facebook. As our society continues to lose its moral footing, our language falls deeper and deeper in the gutter. Long gone are the days when a single word—as was uttered in *Gone with the Wind*—will cause the nation to pause and consider what is moral and right. Instead, we have song lyrics today that would cause many sailors to blush.

So where is the church in all of this profanity? Have we allowed our voices to be heard, or do we just turn a deaf ear? How many times have we heard that the latest blockbuster movie was "really good, except I think it had a few bad words in it." The truth reveals many Christians have become desensitized to cursing. The contagion of "potty mouth" has influenced and infected far too many Christian homes today. Add to this that many congregations continue to put on blinders as their young people type obscenities and euphemisms in the public domain of Facebook.

Here's what I intend to teach my children about cursing and cussing.

So, it's confession time. There was a time when your dad did not use wisdom in choosing his words. In fact, there was a time that I possessed a potty mouth. It bothers me to say that, but I want you to know the truth and the struggles that I endured with it. I am not proud of it and am thankful that the blood of Christ is able to forgive the sins of my past! Never forget that once you make the poor choice of incorporating profanity into your vocabulary, it is extremely hard to weed it out. It is better to never start than to have to consciously remind yourself that Christians do not use that language. (This is why we try very hard to filter what is coming into our house!)

There are three categories of cursing/cussing. The first involves cursing God. When the Ten Commandments were handed down to the Israelites, God made sure they understood He

would not stand for this. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7; see also Deuteronomy 5:11). Make no mistake about it—you are not to ever curse God or use His name in a derogatory fashion!

The second category is cursing someone or something. Again, the Bible is very clear that cursing is not something Christians should be doing. There is often a very negative connotation associated with individuals who curse. Consider passages like Psalm 10:7, "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is trouble and iniquity." (See also Psalm 59:12; 109:17; Romans 3:13-18; James 5:12; Leviticus 19:12). Decisions about eternity belong to God, not us. Use your words very carefully and do not get into the habit of cursing someone or something.

The third category is what we might commonly refer to as cussing or profanity. This one is a little more tricky—kind of like nailing Jell-O to a tree. There is not a specific list of words in the Bible that I can point you to and say, "Do not say those." Our language changes—as does the meaning for some words. What might have been considered profane fifty years ago may no longer be a word that is used, or it may mean something different. As such, my words to you in this category are to use wisdom and consider your influence. Christians should be conscious of their speech and use it for good. Paul admonished, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29; see also Proverbs 25:11). You will know what words are considered "bad words" and which are not. As Paul urged the church at Colossae, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6).

Again, in Paul's letter to the church at Colossae, he reminded the Christians to put off all of these: "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth." I pray that as you grow and mature you will use your mouth to build up and encourage. Nowadays, when I hear people curse, I often wonder if they choose those words because they have such a poor vocabulary? As the writer of Proverbs said, "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips" (16:23). ▲

Love, Dad





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