



## The PZ Insider Report – The Coming Extremists

Monday January 8, 2007

Hello PZ Insiders,

This is the year were we as solid bible believing Christians are going to start seeing the intolerance grow towards us more and more. Can you guess where the majority of these attacks will come from? The mainstream churches.

One of the most surprising predictions was made several decades ago by one of my favorite pastors, J Vernon McGee. He predicted that true believers – even here in America - will eventually have to go “underground.” But he also added...

“The attacks against them will come from the denominational churches” (1)

I agree with this whole heartedly. Look at the atmosphere being created in the world today. Anyone who takes a stand on the scripture is branded an extremist and radical fundamentalist. There is also a horrifyingly fact, this is being accepted and taught by the mainstream churches today.

The battle against extremism is being waged; we are in the pot of boiling water slowly being turned up.



**Warren predicts that fundamentalism, of all varieties, will be**

**"one of the big enemies of the 21st century."**

**The Pew Forum Interview**

**"Muslim fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism, secular fundamentalism - they're all motivated by fear. Fear of each other."**

**The Pew Forum Interview**

Here is how “they” define extremism.

### **“Defining Extremism**

“Extremism is a complex phenomenon, although its complexity is often hard to see. Most simply, it can be defined as activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a person or group far removed from the ordinary.” (2)

“Particularly note that those who hold end-time eschatological views are considered to be “extremists.” Note also that “extremists” are considered to be mentally ill:” (3)

**There are not very many things that cause me to get shivers down my spine. In fact, very few articles cause this effect in me. Recently I was given an article written by The Discernment Research Group titled “A Back-Channel for P.E.A.C.E”**

**This article sent chills down my spine big time and I have included it in this issue of The PZ Insider Report.**

**Folks, if you do not read any other articles in this issue, read this one.**

I am pleased to present the following articles in this issue of The PZ Insider Report.

Hal Returns to TBN... What You Thought – Prophezine

How to Know When the Emerging Church Shows Signs of Emerging in Your Church - By Roger Oakland

Honest Sinners and Phony Christians - By Paul Proctor

To Love His Appearing - By Al Gist

The Gospel According To Paul - By Jack Kelley

Charting a New Course - By Barbara Henderson

A Back-Channel for P.E.A.C.E. - By The Discernment Research Group

This is a new year with new adventures. Please keep us in your prayers. Prophezine is on the forefront of the battle beginning to being waged.

In His Service,

Ray & Tracye Gano  
Prophezine

### **Endnotes**

1- Prophecy 20/20 – Profiling the future though the lens of Scripture – By Dr. Chuck Missler. Pg 224

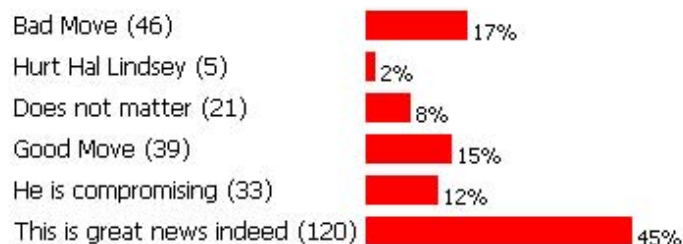
2- <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2006/12/back-channel-for-peace.html>

3- [http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dealing\\_extremists/](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dealing_extremists/)

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## Hal Returns to TBN... What You Thought

### 1. Hal Lindsey Back on TBN - What Do You Think?



There Are many of us that every day pray that TBN goes off the air.

As much as I love Hal Lindsey, I think even the process of paying for air time is in essence supporting TBN. At the same time, Hal's message is important and needs to get out there. I'm sure he has prayed about this, as has his ministry staff. I just wish there was another way for him to be heard without having to support the apostate, and down right disgusting organization called TBN.

I will join Hal in praying for wisdom and God's will in all of this.

PZ Insider - J.R.Hall

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Hal Lindsey is making one mistake after another. TBN is nothing more than a "hodge-podge" of apostates and heretics. In the past he has mingled, and joined-in with many of the apostates that frequent TBN and Paul & Jan Crouch in violation of the plain teaching of God (2 Corinthians 6:14-15). By purchasing airtime from TBN he is helping an apostate organization financially - and that's wrong! I tell it as it is and I make no apologies! God's Word is clear on this kind of association with apostates.

PZ Member – BobRachel

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I think this is good. Hal reaches a lot of people with the truth he would otherwise miss. Hal Lindsay just stayed true to the Lord, and the Lord made a way for him to return and without compromise. Now he will reach even the Muslims with the truth!

PZ Insider - Jan Self

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I trust Hal is being guided by the Holy Spirit to return to TBN. Preach the truth loud and clear Hal, and God be with you. I am seething that he has to pay for his own air time. I pray that people who will lend their ear to his program will send their contribution directly to Hal..... NOT TBN. as for TBN.... It was my understanding that TBN wanted to edit Hal's broadcast of anything that might be offensive to the Arab or Muslim people. Excuse me, ....does money change that? so.... now if Hal pays for is own airtime he can say whatever he wants and TBN is no longer concerned at offending someone.....Ha! I believe TBN lost so many viewers that they NEED the money and for "MONEY" TBN is willing to compromise their cause, which tells me it wasn't really a "cause". I think they just didn't realize the crown jewel Hal was for their programming. This has only caused me to have less respect for TBN...the Crouches and anyone else that is making these irrational decisions based upon \$. PZ Insider - Joyce K.

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ALL I HAVE TO SAY IS BE CAREFUL HAL . USE GODS WISDOM ..  
PZ Member – thermo

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"The Hal Lindsey Report" officially aired for the first time on TBN at 7:30 p.m. Central time tonight (Friday), which appears will be its regular time slot.

The production values were sharp, and this was the Hal Lindsey I've grown to appreciate. Hal stated at the beginning of the show "I'm not a prophet, but a careful interpreter of Bible prophecy." His geo-political analysis and discernment of current events and how they relate to the End Time prophecies of the Bible are insightful, and I've never heard him utter or read anything from him that wasn't doctrinally sound.

Hal left TBN at the end of 2005 after he was told by TBN officials to "say nothing negative" about Muslims on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

According to Jack Kinsella, Hal's associate, "Hal is purchasing airtime from TBN, thus enabling him freedom in what he wishes to teach and speak about with no editorial interference..."

With TBN's false prophets and wolves in sheep's clothing abounding on their network, it's good to see Hal back at TBN preaching the Truth. Some are not happy Hal is having to pay TBN to not be censored, saying "Not happy to hear that he has to pay for free speech." But considering the times we're in, Hal's situation should not be surprising:

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." (Luke 21:17 KJV)

But Hal knows where his fortune lies, which is why he's doing what he is:

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:12 KJV)

PZ Insider - Keifer



## **How to Know When the Emerging Church Shows Signs of Emerging in Your Church**

**By Roger Oakland**

The world is changing. So is the Christian evangelical church. There was a time— not that long ago—when the Bible was considered to be the Word of God by the majority of evangelical Christians. Now that we are well into the third millennium and the post-modern, post-Christian era, the term evangelical can mean almost anything. What has happened? Why is this happening and what is the future for mainstream Christianity?

For the past several years, I have been speaking around the world on current trends that are impacting Christianity. After these presentations, I am approached by Christians who come from many different church backgrounds. Many are expressing their concerns about what is happening in their churches, troubled by the new direction they see their church going. While they may not always be able to discern what is wrong, they know something is wrong and that it needs to be addressed.

Further, many have told me they have attempted to express their concerns with their pastors or church elders. In almost every case, they were told they had a choice to make—get with the new program or get out of the church.

This move towards a reinvented Christianity (one designed to “reach people”) seems to be here for the long haul. It is not just a passing fad. I am often asked by concerned brothers and sisters in Christ to provide an explanation in order to help them understand what they have encountered. They want to know why these changes are underway and what to expect in the future. As well, they want to know what, if anything can be done, to stem this tide. It is for this reason I am writing this commentary—to provide biblical insight regarding the Emerging Church and where it is heading in the future.

### **The Gospel According to the Scriptures**

Throughout church history, various trends have come and gone. While culture changes from place to place, biblical Christianity has always been based upon the central message of the Bible which is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message never changes.

This gospel message is about who Jesus Christ is, and what He has done. A child can understand the gospel message. This message proclaims that life here

on planet earth is finite and that life after death is eternal. The good news is that we can be saved from our sins if we will repent and simply ask for forgiveness and follow Him.

How we respond to the gospel message during the time we have on earth determines where we spend eternity—heaven or hell. Jesus, the Creator of the universe, provided a way and the only way we can spend eternity with Him. It is a matter of making a personal decision whether or not we will accept the plan He has provided.

God's adversary does not want mankind to understand the simple message. His plan is to deceive the world. If he can blind people from the gospel or convince them that they believe the gospel when indeed they do not, his plan has been successful. Throughout the ages, countless billions have been duped, either rejecting the truth, or believing that they had believed the truth when instead they had been deceived.

### The Gospel According to Postmodernism

Times change! However, the gospel must remain the same no matter what else changes. We are now living in the postmodern era. In a sincere attempt to reach the postmodern generation with the gospel, it seems many Christians have become postmodern in their thinking.

Perhaps the term postmodern is new to you. Let's examine what it means.

First, the modern era was characterized by a time of rational thinking based on factual observation. Many claim the modern era ended in the mid 1900s.

The postmodern mindset moves beyond the rational and the factual to the experiential and the mystical. In other words, in the past it was possible to know right from wrong and black from white. In the postmodern era all things are relative to the beholder. What may be right for you may be wrong for someone else. There is no such thing as absolute truth. The only thing that is absolute is that there is no absolute.

We now live in a time in history that is characterized as postmodern. Professors at universities teach students there is no right or wrong. All things are relative. The gospel message to the postmodern mindset is far too dogmatic and arrogant. They say it is necessary to find a more moderate gospel that can be accepted by the masses.

Many church leaders are now looking for ways to reach the postmodern generation. They believe they can find the appropriate methods to do so without changing the message. However, in their attempt to reach this postmodern generation, they have become postmodern themselves and have changed the message. As the gospel is fixed upon the Scriptures, the gospel cannot change,

unless of course it becomes another gospel. I believe this is what is happening in the Emerging Church.

### He Didn't Come

Many have noticed that since the turn of the millennium, their churches have changed positions on Bible prophecy and the Second Coming of Jesus. Many have given up on the return of Jesus. From the '60s on there was an excitement about the imminent return of Jesus. The Jesus People were excited about Bible prophecy and could see signs that Jesus would descend from the heavens for His Bride at any moment.

The year 2000 was of particular importance. When Jesus didn't show up, it seems many were apparently disappointed. "Perhaps Jesus has delayed His coming," some have said. Others are even taking the position that He may not be coming at all, at least not in the manner we have been taught. They are now convinced that we need to be busy about "building His Kingdom" here on earth by "whatever human effort is required."

### The Gospel of the Kingdom

One of the main indicators that something has changed can be seen in the way the future is perceived. Rather than urgently proclaiming the gospel according to the Scriptures and believing the time to do so is short, the emphasis has now shifted. No longer are "signs of the times" significant. The battle cry is very different. A major emphasis among evangelicals is the idea that the world can be radically improved through social programs.

This concept, while on the surface may sound very good, has some serious biblical implications. According to the Scriptures, there will be no kingdom of God until the King arrives. All the human effort man can muster up will fall short of bringing utopia. In fact, according to the Scriptures, fallen man will lead us further down the road to a society of despair and lawlessness just like it was in the days of Noah.

Thus, this purpose-driven view of establishing global utopia may be a plan, but it is "driven" by humanistic reasoning and not led by the Holy Spirit. While it is of course good to do good unto others, all the goodness that we can do will not be good enough. Pastors and church leaders who get involved in such man-driven programs can usually be identified by certain characteristics:

- \* Sound biblical doctrine is dangerous and divisive, and the experiential (i.e., mystical) is given a greater role than doctrine.
- \* Bible prophecy is no longer taught and is considered a waste of time
- \* Israel becomes less and less important and has no biblical significance
- \* Eventually the promises for Israel are applied to the church and not Israel (Replacement Theology).

- \* Bible study is replaced by studying someone's book and his methods
- \* Church health is evaluated on the quantity of people who attend.
- \* The truth of God's Word becomes less and less important
- \* God's Word, especially concepts like hell, sin and repentance, is eventually downplayed so the unbeliever is not offended.

## Spiritual Formation and Transformation

Much of what I have described provides the formula for a dumbing-down of Christianity that paves the way for an apostasy that will only intensify in the future. This trend away from the authority of God's Word to the reinvented form of Christianity has overcome all evangelical denominations like an avalanche. Few Bible teachers saw this avalanche coming. Now that it is underway, few realize it has even happened.

However, there is another big piece to the puzzle that must be identified in order to understand what is emerging in the Emerging Church. While biblical Christianity has been dumbed-down and the light of God's Word diminished, another avalanche of deception is underway that is equally devastating.

This is best described by the Word of God giving way to experiences that God's Word forbids. The best way to understand this process is to recall what happened during the Dark Ages when the Bible became the "forbidden book." Until the Reformers translated the Bible into the language of the common person, the people were in darkness. When the light of God's Word became available, the gospel according to the Scriptures was once again understood.

This trend, which is underway today, shows us that history is in the process of repeating itself. As the Word of God becomes less and less important, the rise of mystical experiences is alarming and these experiences are being presented to convince the unsuspecting that Christianity is about feeling, touching, smelling and seeing God. The postmodern mindset is the perfect environment for the fostering of what is called "spiritual formation." This teaching suggests there are various ways and means to get closer to God. Proponents of spiritual formation erroneously teach that anyone can practice these mystical rituals and find God within. Having a relationship with Jesus Christ is not a prerequisite.

These teachings, while actually rooted in ancient wisdom (the occult), were presented to Christendom post-New Testament and not found in the Word of God. The spiritual formation movement is based upon experiences promoted by desert monks and Roman Catholic mystics – these mystics encouraged the use of rituals and practices, that if performed would bring the practitioner closer to God (or come into God's presence). The premise was that if one went into the silence or sacred space, then the mind was emptied of distractions and the voice of God could be heard. In truth, these hypnotic, mantric style practices were leading these monks into altered states of consciousness. The methods they



used are the same that Buddhists and the Hindus use as a means of encountering the spiritual realm

Such methods are dangerous, and are not sanctioned in the Bible – God gives no instruction for this. On the contrary, he warns severely against divination, which is practicing a ritual or method in order to obtain information from a spiritual source. While proponents of spiritual formation (like Richard Foster) say these methods show that the Holy Spirit is doing something new to refresh Christianity, I would suggest that what is happening is not new and is not the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual formation movement is being widely promoted at colleges and seminaries as the latest and the greatest way to become a spiritual leader in these days. These ideas are then being exported from seminaries to churches by graduates who have been primed to take Christianity to a new level of enlightenment.

As well, these contemplative practices are being promoted by emergent leaders such as Brian McLaren, Robert Webber, Dallas Willard and others. Publishers like NavPress, InterVarsity and Zondervan are flooding the market with books promoting contemplative practices based on Eastern mysticism. Pastors and church leaders read these books and then promote the ideas as if they were the scriptural answer to drawing close to God.

### Signs the Emerging Church is Emerging

There are specific warning signs that are symptomatic that a church may be headed down the emergent/contemplative road. In some cases a pastor may not be aware that he is on this road nor understand where the road ends up.

Here are some of the warning signs:

- \* Scripture is no longer the ultimate authority as the basis for the Christian faith.
- \* The centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ is being replaced by humanistic methods promoting church growth and a social gospel.
- \* More and more emphasis is being placed on building the kingdom of God now and less and less on the warnings of Scripture about the imminent return of Jesus Christ and a coming judgment in the future.
- \* The teaching that Jesus Christ will rule and reign in a literal millennial period is considered unbiblical and heretical.
- \* The teaching that the church has taken the place of Israel and Israel has no prophetic significance is often embraced.
- \* The teaching that the Book of Revelation does not refer to the future, but instead has been already fulfilled in the past
- \* An experiential mystical form of Christianity begins to be promoted as a method to reach the postmodern generation.

\* Ideas are promoted teaching that Christianity needs to be reinvented in order to provide meaning for this generation.

\* The pastor may implement an idea called “ancient-future” or “vintage Christianity” claiming that in order to take the church forward, we need to go back in church history and find out what experiences were effective to get people to embrace Christianity.

\* While the authority of the Word of God is undermined, images and sensual experiences are promoted as the key to experiencing and knowing God.

\* These experiences include icons, candles, incense, liturgy, labyrinths, prayer stations, contemplative prayer, experiencing the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist.

\* There seems to be a strong emphasis on ecumenism indicating that a bridge is being established that leads in the direction of unity with the Roman Catholic Church.

\* Some evangelical Protestant leaders are saying that the Reformation went too far. They are reexamining the claims of the “church fathers” saying that communion is more than a symbol and that Jesus actually becomes present in the wafer at communion.

\* There will be a growing trend towards an ecumenical unity for the cause of world peace claiming the validity of other religions and that there are many ways to God.

\* Members of churches who question or resist the new changes that the pastor is implementing are reprimanded and usually asked to leave.

What does the Future Hold?

If the Emerging Church continues unfolding at the present pace, mainstream evangelical Christianity will be reinvented and the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures will be considered too narrow and too restrictive. In other words, the narrow way to heaven that Jesus proclaimed will eventually be abandoned for a wider way that embraces pagan experiential practices. I call this reinvented, re-imagined form of Christianity that is unfolding—“Christian Babylonianism”.

This new form of Christianity will replace biblical faith with a faith that says man can establish the kingdom of God here on earth. The Word will continue to become secondary to a system of works driven by experiences.

An ecumenical pattern towards unity with Rome will become more apparent. Those who refuse to embrace this direction will be considered spiritual oddballs that need to be reprimanded. Those who stand up for biblical faith will be considered the obstructions to the one world spirituality that is promoted as the answer for peace.

The best way to be prepared for what is coming is to gain an understanding of what is happening now. While there are not many who seem to discern the trend underway, there are some. Without the Bible and the Holy Spirit as our guide, the

darkness that is coming would be overwhelming. However, the light of God's Word penetrates the darkness and there are those who are being delivered from deception and see what is taking place.

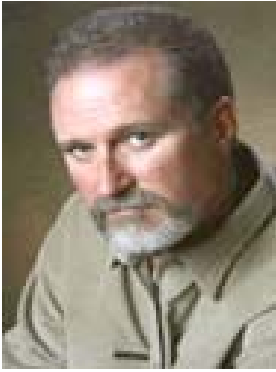
I am convinced we are seeing apostasy underway, exactly as the Scriptures have forewarned. This means that this current trend is not likely to disappear. We must continue to proclaim the truth in the midst of deception with love. As Paul instructed Timothy:

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2: 24-26).

There are still pastors and churches who are dedicated to proclaiming the truth. Find out where they are and support them. If you are in a location where this does not seem to be possible, seek out materials that are available from solid Bible-based Christian ministries and hold Bible studies in your own home.

And keep looking up! Jesus is coming soon.

Visit Roger's website at [www.understandthetimes.org](http://www.understandthetimes.org)



## Honest Sinners and Phony Christians

By Paul Proctor

I don't know about you but I'd rather be around an honest sinner than a phony Christian any day. I don't like faux anything. I have almost no tolerance for liars in general and even less for lying Christians. And much to the chagrin of my critics, I unashamedly accept the fact that my writings echo that, week in and week out. Lies are not compassionate - they are cowardly, crooked and void of any confidence in God and have been at the heart of every wicked act since Eve took of the forbidden fruit.

A couple of weeks ago I received an email from a lady in Australia who, after thanking me for my latest article on Rick Warren - a piece in which I pointed out his "penchant for duplicity and doubletalk" - chided me for my "condemning words:"

"Paul, don't you see that your 'tongue' has an unchristian sting? I can accept that you want to have your opinion to be heard on top of the truthful warnings you express in your letters. But why, oh why, do you use condemning words such as 'escapades, infatuated flock, wily ways, wink and wiggle tactics, calamitous, fake humility, egocentric nature, penchant for duplicity and doubletalk, shameless and self-absorbed behavior'...I do like your letters and they are important but I want to share them with others also. Some of my friends, though interested in your reports of dangers, are put off by your throwing of condemning words."

Well, I responded with the following:

"Did Jesus' words have an 'unchristian sting,' as well?"

'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.' - Matthew 23:27

'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' - Matthew 23:33

'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' - Matthew 3:7b

'O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' - Matthew 12:34

And how about Stephen's words in Acts before they stoned him to death?

'Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.' - Acts 7:51-53

The point is this: Jesus had zero tolerance for liars and phonies Himself - and His language reflected that. In fact, His harshest words were always directed toward the devoutly disingenuous - religious rogues and professional pretenders who empowered and esteemed themselves by misleading the masses and keeping them in the dark and out of the Kingdom of God for the bounty and benefits of an earthy kingdom over which they, in some degree, reigned.

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully..." - Jeremiah 48:10

If I've learned anything over the years about our fallen nature, it's that truth is almost always considered harsh to the unrepentant, regardless of the words that are used to convey it. I dare say the impenitent are more afraid of truth than anything in this life; and more often than not, will accuse their accuser as a diversionary tactic by charging them with being "unloving" and "unchristian," when in reality, they mean intolerant.

You see, after the dialectic church successfully redefined "love" as "tolerance," it became evil to criticize any brother or sister in Christ for their sinful behavior - especially an errant pastor, preacher or church leader - which is precisely why the church is in the sorry state it's in. But as I've said many times before, telling someone the truth is the most loving thing you can do for them, even when they end up scolding you, shunning you, slandering you and turning others against you for doing so. That's why sinners nailed Jesus to a cross, stoned Stephen to death and beheaded John the Baptist - for telling the truth.

Sadly, few Christians today would dare risk their ministry, career, finances, family or friendships, much less their lives, to tell the truth. In fact, I would go so far as to say pastors and preachers are among the worst. Of course many will talk among themselves about another errant clergy member, but typically in private and always off the record. It's like they were required to swear a secret oath back in Seminary to never challenge or criticize a fellow minister publicly for his erroneous teachings or shameful conduct. Instead of making our pulpits profound places of proclamation and poignancy, pastors hide behind them now in a perceived piety that makes the word "Christian" appear synonymous with coward.

"Speaking the truth in love," from Ephesians 4:15, means your remarks are fair and accurate with a dedicated desire to not only warn the unwary of danger and deception but also to see repentance and righteousness from its perpetrators. In spite of the disgraceful example being set by many of those pastoring churches today, love does not answer evil with false flattery and flowery fluff in hopes of being rewarded later with cooperation and camaraderie. (Results & Relationship)

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." - Proverbs 27:6

Unfortunately, the church has been beguiled into believing that withholding the truth is "love," which is why the vast majority of faith-based news agencies, magazines, articles and editorials, both in print and online, are much like today's seeker sermons - little more than cotton candy commentary designed to keep Christians congenially compliant to the corrupt collective by unseen hands that steer society's religious rudder toward a one world religion of peace and unity. (Results & Relationships)

Oh, they delight in chiding the non-compliant for their brazen behavior from the safety of the high-minded herd, especially when it garners them praise and profits from followers; but rarely will today's laodicean leaders or laymen risk anything dear to them by stepping out of the "Christian" crowd to rebuke one of their own for blatant and unrepentant sin, because peace and unity always trumps truth in the business of ministry. You see, it's not about purity anymore - it's about progress and personalities. (Results & Relationships)

And so I conclude another year and another column citing the same quotes I ended my response to the lady from Australia with, in hopes that all of us - sinners on both sides of God's grace - will be more honest in the coming year about ourselves and others and less phony about our faith in Jesus Christ:

"One cannot be the 'salt of the earth' without occasionally stinging the open sores of sin."

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." - Matthew 5:13

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### **About The Author**

Paul Proctor, a rural resident of the Volunteer state and seasoned veteran of the country music industry, retired from showbiz in the late 1990's to dedicate himself to addressing important social issues from a distinctly biblical perspective. As a freelance writer and regular columnist for NewsWithViews.com, he extols the wisdom and truths of scripture through commentary and insight on cultural trends and current events. His articles appear regularly on a variety of news and opinion sites across the internet and in print.

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## The Mission Field

By Troy Koehne

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV)

So, where is the mission field? Some say that it's over seas. Others will tell you that it's in our backyard. Still, there are those that say the greatest field is in the schools.

Regardless of what you think the mission field is, we are all given a job to do. Go and Teach.

Shouldn't be too complicated should it? There are people in our lives daily that don't know Jesus Christ. You may think they are saved because they are a good person and have the greatest attitude but that person is your mission field. How do you know they have Jesus as their Lord and Savior? You don't.

One of the biggest problems we have with the mission field is that we don't want to offend anyone. It's alright to assume that people in Africa need Jesus. Then we look at our neighbor and say, "Well, they might know Jesus. It's not my place to judge them. After all. Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matthew 7:1-2 KJV)

So let me get this straight. We are more concerned about being politically correct then making sure someone knows Jesus or not.

Who then is right? Jesus who said to GO and TEACH or those of us who say, "Who am I to judge?"

When we decided to move back to Kansas, we were told not to come to the smaller towns. They were to conservative, I was to much of a fundamentalist. I was told I wouldn't be liked, no church would want me. I needed to be in a big city where God could use my talents to reach all kinds of city folk.

But don't you have to go to the small towns to get to the big city. Do the small towns not matter to God as well as the big? Wasn't the blood of Jesus shed on the Cross for all of us?

I can't seem to find in scripture where Jesus died for some of us. He didn't say that he came to die for those in just the big cities.

It was for us all. Red and yellow, black and white, we are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Thank God He loved me. Thank God that Jesus shed his blood on a cross so that I wouldn't have to.

Our church had an old fashioned tent revival not long ago and one of the messages that was taught was that of Hell. It is real and those without Jesus will burn. That is the bottom line. It's an absolute we can't change. The only thing we can do about it is this.

1. Don't tell anyone about Jesus and hope they find him on their own.
2. Tell everyone we meet that Jesus is the way the truth and the life.

Now it's true that not everyone will listen to the Gospel message.

Remember the parable of the sower. Some seed fell on the hard ground and some seeds got eaten by the birds and some got entangled by the thorns and weeds choking the life out of it.

We are the sower and we are to toss the seed everywhere. That is our job here.

Many people have told me over the years, "I'm not called to that sort of thing." "If I live the life before them that will be enough." "Well, I love them and that's enough. They can see Jesus through me."

I am here to tell you that if they don't accept Jesus because you didn't tell them, they will go to Hell and before they go to the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth they will look at you and scream, "Why didn't you tell me?!"

Will your response be, "I'm sorry, I thought you knew." Perhaps you will just bow your head in shame.

I get tons of flack from people who tell me that I don't extend grace and love. They tell me that I use scare tactics to win people to Jesus.

I would rather scare you into heaven than see you go to hell! If the church isn't going to stand up and warn people that Judgment is coming then I will and so should you.

Jesus said, Go and teach them all I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV). Jesus told us that there was a Heaven and a Hell. Two very real places. Where you go will decide on what you choose to do with Jesus. Maybe we don't want to offend anyone because we are not too sure of our salvation.

Our mission field has to start with ourselves. Do we know Jesus? Have we made a commitment to follow him no matter the cost? Jesus told us that I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me.

Make things right with Jesus. Don't wait. The consequences of waiting could be the worst thing you ever do. Call out to him right now!

If you are on fire for God and know beyond a shadow of doubt that you are born again, then start reaching out to those around you.



Jesus is coming back. It could be today, literally right this second. Ask yourself this. How many people can I tell about Jesus before it's too late?

Got a figure in your head? Now go out and get busy. You are almost out of daylight.

**Visit Troy's site at <http://www.troykoehne.com>**



## To Love His Appearing

By Al Gist

I went away from home on a business trip for several months. During that time, I never once called home to talk to my wife nor did I even write her a letter, card, or email. Even though I knew that she was very concerned about my daily welfare and how things were going for me, it just wasn't important to me to actually call her and let her know how I was doing. In my heart, I knew how she felt... I knew that she was longing to hear from me, but I never once thought about calling her and telling her how much I love her, most less sharing with her the more trivial things in my daily routine. Previous to my departure, I had told her that I loved her and had even demonstrated my love by supporting her financially and taking care of her physical needs. So **WHY** was she so upset with me when I finally returned home? Didn't she KNOW that I love her? And I knew that if there were any problems at home, she would get in touch with me. So, **what's the big deal?** Why was I considered to be such an awful husband? I was still providing for her (even in my absence) and my last words to her before I left were "I love you." But just because I didn't "**check in**", I was now thought to be an inconsiderate, self-centered, jerk of a husband. **I just don't get it!**

Well, I guess all of you readers (especially the female ones) are fuming about now. You're thinking, "How could Bro. Al be that way? I never knew he was so cold and uncaring!" Well, the truth is... that little story is **totally** fictional. I would never do such a thing to my wife. You see... I really do love her too much to treat her that way. I have deep feelings for her well being. I would never put her through such distress and worry. But what's more... I could never do such a thing to Sandy because **I like being with her!** In fact, on those few occasions in our nearly 34 years of marriage when I have had to be away from her, I always **longed** to be back with her and would call her and tell her just how much I missed her.

Obviously, any person who says they love their mate, but in their actions show no desire to be **with** their mate, would raise strong suspicions about exactly what kind of love they're talking about! When you really love someone, you want to be with that person. And if circumstances force you to be away from each other for any length of time, you soon start feeling that emptiness in your heart that you know only the one you love can fill. Longing to be **with the one you love** is an integral part of the love relationship!

The Apostle Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote his final epistle to his young "son in the ministry" Timothy. God saw fit to preserve that letter for us as the 16th book of the New Testament, the book of "II Timothy". In it, Paul makes clear that he regards his execution as imminent. So, he delivers what he undoubtedly feels will be his last instructions to his young apprentice in the faith.

He exhorts Timothy to "Preach the word" (II Tim. 4:1-2) and to be always ready to reprove, rebuke, and exhort others with sound Biblical doctrine. He reminds Timothy that the day will come when people will not "endure" (put up with) sound doctrine, but will instead desire to have their ears "tickled" (have lying, complimentary remarks made

about them) by teachers that they will gather unto themselves (II Tim. 4:3-4). They will prefer the lying tales of men (fables) more than the pure truth of God's Word. But, Paul tells Timothy, be very careful about such things and if taking a stand on the truth brings you affliction, then endure that affliction while you do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5).

Then, Paul makes some very personal remarks about his own life. Realizing that death is imminent, he says he is ready for it (vs. 6). And in that most famous moment of reflection on a life sold out to Jesus, he evaluates his own performance by stating that has "*fought a good fight*" of faith unto the very end. And because of this, the Lord has a "*crown of righteousness*" waiting for him.

Now, think of this... Here is the Apostle Paul, a man who having once converted from persecutor of the Church, became arguably the most famous missionary and preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has ever lived. He was a man chosen of God to pen more of the Bible than any other. Of self-sacrifice for the cause of Christ, there has never been any greater. On five separate occasions, he received 39 stripes from the whip of the Jews (II Cor. 11:24-25) and was beaten with rods three times. One such beating often killed its victim. His back must have been a mass of scars! In his journeys, he was shipwrecked three times and spent countless lonely nights in prison, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness and cold. Paul was a man willing to forego the pleasure and joys of family life lest it burden him in his mission to carry the Gospel to a lost world that would for the most part hate him for it. Oh! If there was ever a man that lived on this planet who loved Christ and gave himself wholly to that devotion, surely the Apostle Paul was that man! More than his dedication to destroying the Church in his early years, his dedication to building the church soared ever so much higher. To tell people about Jesus and see them born into His glorious Kingdom was like an unquenchable burning coal deep in his soul that drove him beyond human limits. No threat could hinder him. No persecution could divert him. No hatred could dissuade him. No tribulation could discourage him. No person, great or small, could get past his Christ-like love and cause him to hate them. No king, emperor, governor, or general could silence him from telling that wonderful old story that never grows old. For the Gospel of Jesus, he lived, and breathed, and died. My friend, if ever there was a life that should be rewarded with that "*crown of righteousness*", surely it would be that of this humble spiritual giant... the Apostle Paul. Without a doubt, the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give it to him "*at that day*" (the day of His appearing when He will judge the living and the dead, II Tim. 4:1,8).

A study of his life might lead one to conclude that Paul was in a class by himself... that no one could possibly accompany him to the Bema Seat to receive that "crown of righteousness". **But wait! It is not so!** There have been and there are today many who will stand with Paul to also receive the crown of righteousness! Paul even declares it to be so: "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: **and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing***" (II Tim. 4:8)

Yes. There is a certain class of Christians who will walk right along side that great man of God, the Apostle Paul, up to the Judgment Seat upon which Jesus Christ will sit (I Cor. 3:11-14, Rom. 14:10-12) and receive that special reward called the "crown of righteousness". And Paul says clearly that it will be those who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. You might say that they, at that moment, will be in a class by themselves... a group that will be rewarded openly for their *righteousness*.

But notice. Paul doesn't say that one must endure the sufferings that he endured to be in that class. Nor does he say that one must be such a fully surrendered and dedicated missionary as he was to be in that class. In fact, he doesn't make any other requirements upon the members of this special class except that they "**love His appearing**".

Does that somehow seem minor compared to the great accomplishments of Paul? I mean, all one must do is "love His appearing" and he can be admitted to the great "crown of righteousness" crowd? right along side the great Apostle Paul?

The answer is "yes". Paul says it quite plainly... "*and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

If this somehow seems inequitable, then allow me to make two points of explanation:

(1) Do you remember the example I gave at the beginning of this article about wanting (or, not wanting) to be with the one you love? Using myself as a fictional character, I showed how all the outward, physical appearances of love (saying, "I love you", providing physical support, etc.) fell dreadfully inadequate when one has no real inward desire **to be with** the one he says he loves. Even the most crusty old codger who is long past those youthful days when he may have felt a twinge of romance in his heart would recognize the serious shortcomings of the selfish individual who never even misses being with his absent mate. I mean, it doesn't take a rocket scientist (as the saying goes) to understand that if a person doesn't long to be with someone whom he says he loves when that person is gone, then he probably doesn't really love that person. In fact, all the outward displays of affection are rather meaningless if you don't miss the one you say you love when they're away.

If there is one single thing that God wants from each of us more than any other, it's this: He wants us to love Him... to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. He wants your love more than your gifts. He wants your love more than your sacrifice. He wants your love more than your service. He even wants your love more than your words of praise. Another way of saying it is this: **He wants us to want Him**... to long for Him... **to love His appearing**. Embodied in that "yearning to be in His presence" is the very essence of what it means to love God.

Of course, when we really love God, then our gifts to Him, and our sacrifice for Him, and our service to Him, and our praise of Him will happen as naturally as water flowing downhill. That love will produce a natural flow, but offering those things without true love in one's heart is like expecting water to flow uphill. It just doesn't work that way.

(2) Secondly, in all the debates throughout all the ages about man's relationship with his Creator, there is one most sublime truth that stands above all other considerations: **God looks upon the heart.** (1 Sam. 16:7) All of the "trappings of religiosity" do not blur our Lord's clear vision of what a man really is. He sees with perfect 20/20 vision what we really are on the inside. Though we strive to convince others of our faithfulness, no argument or contrivances will alter what God knows about us... for He sees us for who we really are. He looks directly upon our heart.

Thus, nothing in all the world pleases the Lord more than finding a pure heart... a heart

that loves Him and wants to be with Him. Many “works motivated” Christians devote themselves to working their way into God’s heart. **They just don’t get it.**

***Now you know why some people do not “love His appearing”!***

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### **About AI Gist**

Maranatha Evangelistic Ministries is a Bible-based, pastor-oriented, Christ-centered ministry of faith. Our mission is to win the lost to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and to inspire and motivate the Church through the preaching of the soon return of Jesus.

Basically, our message to the lost is that we are living in the end of the age. Jesus will soon come for His bride, the Church, and all people who are not saved will be left behind to face a time of tribulation unlike anything this world has ever witnessed (Matt. 24:21). So, in order to avoid The Tribulation and more importantly, to avoid an eternity in Hell, "You must be born again!" (John 3:3)

Our message to the Church is, "Whatever you're going to do for Jesus, get on with it!" Time in which we can reach people for Jesus is running out! We cannot afford to waste one minute! "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." (Rom. 13:12) We emphasize this message through our preaching about the signs of our times that stand in fulfillment of God's Prophetic Word and tell us that His coming is near.

No one knows the exact day and hour of our Lord's return (Matt. 24:36). However, He gave us many signs to be looking for so that we might recognize the "season" of His coming. Then, He said, "...when ye shall see all these things, KNOW that it is near, even at the doors." (Matt. 24:33b) God's people should be able to KNOW that we are in the season of His coming! (I Thess. 5:4)

Visit AI's website at <http://www.maranathaevangelisticministries.com>



## **The Gospel According To Paul**

**By Jack Kelley**

The Rapture of the Church is getting closer by the day. There aren't any events that must precede it, and the way things are heating up in the Middle East, I can't imagine that we'll get through this year without some major confrontation. The Church's days on Earth are clearly numbered and whether we're taken up this year or not it's certainly not too soon to prepare.

Our preparation is Spiritual, not physical, and that means getting ourselves in a proper spiritual condition to endure the time that's left to us. We need to be clear on what we believe and why so we can speak persuasively about it when called upon to do so. We need to be strong in our faith, both to make our final appeals to those around us who aren't with us yet, and to remain steadfast in the face of ever more serious attempts, even (especially) by those within the church, to erode the foundations of our beliefs.

With that in mind we'll begin a study of Paul's Letter to the Romans, the Gospel according to Paul. We'll interrupt the study as current events dictate, to review their prophetic implications, but our focus will be on re-visiting the basics of our faith with the expectation that 2007 will be a year of major prophetic significance. Think of this as the spiritual equivalent of an athlete going into training to prepare for a big event.

### **Paul's Letter To the Romans**

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth in the spring of 57 AD. He hadn't been there yet, but was looking forward to ministering to the Church in Rome. This letter was intended to lay the groundwork for his visit, to prepare the largely gentile congregation there for his arrival.

After a review of the state of the world, the first eight chapters of Romans deal with doctrine, the building blocks of our faith. Chapters 9 thru 11 are prophecy, our hope. And chapters 12-16 focus on application, by which we express our love. And so the letter can be outlined in accordance with 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13, faith, hope and love.

The over riding message, woven through out, is that the Gospel is not a set of laws to be obeyed, nor is it a creed to be accepted. It's not advice to be taken, a religion to be believed, or a social order to be lived. It's a message about a person, a love story written in blood on a cross of wood. It's about God who became a man and died for us so that we could live with Him. Let's begin.

### **Chapter 1**

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his*

*resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1-6)*

Right up front, Paul declared who Jesus is; the biological descendant of King David through his mother Mary, herself a descendant of David's, and the Son of the Living God. Paul would call Him the visible image of the invisible God (**Colossians 1:15**) and the writer of Hebrews (Paul?) would say that He is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His being. (**Hebr. 1:3**) But the real proof of His deity came in His Resurrection, the Author of life achieving victory over death.

*To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:7)*

Paul's signature greeting, combining the Gentile "grace" from Greek culture with the Jewish "peace" from the Hebrew.

### **Paul's Longing to Visit Rome**

*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.*

*I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.*

*I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. (Romans 1:8-15)*

Paul had not yet visited Rome and neither had any other Apostle. He had been planning to come, to make sure that their grounding in the Faith was certain. But he felt obligated to personally deliver the offering he had been collecting for the impoverished church in Jerusalem. His letter would help prepare them while he finished up his other obligations.

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)*

This is a major point that Paul drove home repeatedly. Our righteousness is imputed to us by faith, from beginning to end. It's how we are saved and it's how we live. It's not by works, lest any should boast. (**Ephes. 2:8-9**) Nor is it something we acquire over time, by living a certain way. *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the*

*new has come! God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17, 21)* Our good works are an expression of gratitude for our salvation, not the basis for it.

Some have suggested that Paul wrote three letters based on this quote from **Habakkuk 2:4**. The righteous (Romans) shall live (Galatians) by faith (Hebrews). Of course this presumes that you believe, as I do, that Paul was the likely writer of Hebrews.

### **God's Wrath Against Mankind**

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)*

No one can legitimately deny the existence of God, or even question it. The creation makes it clear. *The fool says in his Heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)* The heart is the seat of emotion. Fools make this statement emotionally, because even they can't make it logically. God's existence is too obvious.

*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. (Romans 1:21-23)*

Ancient man gave images he carved himself the credit due to God. *He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god." (Isaiah 44:14-17)* We laugh at such silliness. But we've gone one better. We give the credit due to God to ... nothing. Random chance is responsible for the universe, and for mankind. It all just happened.

*Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

*Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. (Romans 1:24-27)*



We took the Lord's crowning creative achievement, human life, and called it an accident, the product of chance. It had no origin, it has no destiny, and therefore is of no value, we said. And so God said, "Fine. You say life has no value so I'll make sure you treat it with contempt and suffer the consequences."

The sacred act of procreation has devolved into casual sex. It's not a freedom, it's a curse that brings huge increases in abandoned children, teen suicides, and broken homes. In parts of Africa there's a whole generation missing due to AIDS, with babies being raised by grandparents. For others the gift of life has become a harbinger of death. Abortion is not a choice, it's a consequence of poor choices that not only ends a child's life but puts the mother's at risk as well. Homosexuality is also a deadly sin, with homicide and suicide rates many times the average, and life expectancy 2 to 3 decades shorter. These are not just sins, they're judgments. And public acceptance of them has always been a sign that a society is in the final stages of decay.

*Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*(Romans 1:28-32)

You don't have to look very far to see the evidence of this. Demand for the acceptance of pagan religions and alternate lifestyles, forbidding public displays of a Christian nature, the lack of integrity among public officials and in the corporate world, the treatment of personal tragedy as entertainment and the mockery of justice are but a few of the signs.

Things are hardly better on the religious front. We have church without Jesus, the exploration of other paths to salvation, evangelical homosexuals, and the elevation of Mary in some Charismatic circles. Surveys show that 54% of pastors have purposely viewed pornography in the past year and it's estimated that three pulpits every week are made vacant due to sexual sin of some form.

Paul wrote this letter in 57 AD, and after nearly 2000 years nothing has changed. If anything, it's worse. His message is as real to us as it was to them. The lesson for us is found in looking for the remains of 1<sup>st</sup> Century society. There are none. The mighty Greek and Roman cultures are gone, crushed under the weight of their own depravity. How can we expect anything less?

As it was in the days of Noah, *every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil all the time.* (Gen. 6:5) But just as He did then, God is doing now. He's sent another Ark, the Ark of our Salvation. And while the judgment's coming soon, the Ark is ready to receive us now. The door is open, and it's time to get on board. There's no limit, for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13) Tell your friends while there's time. 01-06-07



## Charting a New Course

By Barbara Henderson

*If you are looking for a way to set the world on fire for Jesus, wouldn't it be a good idea to light your own candle first?*

Do you want a better world in which to live and watch your children and grandchildren grow up? Do you want a world filled with true peace and kindness between all mankind. Do you want to help make such a world come to pass? You can be part of the global change that is coming. You just need to make a few wise choices.

First - you need to choose the way into heaven provided by Jesus Christ. This is the way called '**narrow**'. Apart from God, people are on the way called '**broad**'. Those on the broad way have plenty of room - but no strength to carry all their burdens themselves. To accept Jesus Christ is to step off the broad way and onto the narrow way.

The problem with walking down the narrow way is that most new Christians bring over all their burdens from the broad way. When Lazarus came out of the grave, he wore his grave clothes out. That is like a new believer. The lost person is 'dead' to eternal life. He is wrapped up in worldly possessions, dreams, and sorrows. When he gets saved, he is still wrapped in his grave clothes figuratively speaking. To effectively walk the narrow way requires surrendering everything from the old life to God. This includes material possessions, dreams, grudges, sorrow, bitterness, and anything that will hinder your walk with God. To hang onto things from one's pre-Christian life is like beginning a marathon with an army field pack strapped on your back. You might still be able to stagger down the race track - but good grief - why take the hard way when you can dump all those burdens and jog down the track freely? To begin your walk down the narrow path in earnest requires dumping everything from your old life.

On Old Testament example of someone choosing the narrow way is Elisha. First Kings 19:19-21 tells how Elisha began his walk with the Lord in earnest. Elijah, the great prophet was aging, and just too tired to carry on alone. So God sent him to Elisha. When Elijah found Elisha, Elisha was plowing in a field behind a yoke of oxen. There were eleven other people plowing in front of Elisha. Elijah walked by - and cast his mantle upon Elisha.

At that moment Elisha realized that his world had just changed. He had a calling, and he accepted it. He ran to Elijah and said something like, "Hey great prophet of the Lord, let me just run back and tell mom and dad what happened, and then I will be right back with you." Elijah said, "OK - go ahead my little prophet in training", and Elisha ran back home. When he got back in addition to speaking to his parents, he took a yoke of oxen, slew them, cooked them, and fed the people with the meat. Then he went back to Elijah and ministered to him.

When Elisha slew the oxen, cooked them, and fed the people, it was a way of marking that a specific part of his life was over. Because he was plowing in the field when Elijah came by we can surmise he was a farmer. In getting rid of the oxen, Elisha was burning his bridges behind him. He would not be able to return to farming without the oxen.

Elisha was already a believer in the God of the Bible, but at that moment he made public his full surrender of everything to the Lord. As believers, full surrender is required of us as well. Elisha wasn't going to need the oxen in his new life anyway. Anything that God doesn't give back to you is something you will not need in your new life either.

The narrow way is not a conveyor belt. You have to walk it. Are you clinging to things from your pre-Christian days that are hindering you and slowing you down? Can you imagine Elisha clinging to his oxen? They eat a lot; they require pasture and exercise. They were created to work, but following Elisha around they would have had nothing to do but eat. They would have been just a burden to Elisha. And that is what all of our things are to us, unless we need them in the work of the Lord.

The second wise choice you need to make is to **choose to obey the things God has clearly told you to do**. This means much more than outwardly doing the things people will notice. It means taking God's word into your heart. It means becoming a friend to God. You do this by living the Sermon on the Mount, which is probably the most well known sermon Jesus preached.

Matthew 5:3-16 tells us:

**3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

The poor in spirit are those who come to Jesus by faith instead of works. The poor in spirit know they cannot reach heaven on their own merits.

**4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.**

God comforts those who are of a sorrowful heart. I have heard it preached many times that 'those who mourn' refers to those who are mourning because of their separation from God because of sin. God comforts those who mourn first with salvation, and then with companionship. In the companionship of God the believer also gains comfort when they encounter the sorrows and trials of this world.

**5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**

The meek are those who understand - as Moses did - that their power and ability is just God working through them.

**6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.**

As God becomes our companion, we want to know Him better. A gnawing hunger and thirst to learn more of Jesus sits in the stomach of the believer. It's like a food craving - you just can't get enough of Bible teaching.

**7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

God gave us unmerited favor at Calvary. Can we do less for those who wrong us? Besides, mercy to an offender relieves us personally of the burden of carrying around bitterness and anger toward someone else. Christians who give mercy are truly greater benefactors than those who receive mercy.

We may or may not obtain mercy from those to whom we show mercy, but we most certainly will receive mercy from God.

**8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**

The pure in heart are those who work daily to get rid of the wickedness in their hearts. The outward appearance of a clean heart can be maintained to some extent, but the inward condition of the heart is clearly visible to God. He knows a pure heart from a heart that loves the world.

**9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**

A diplomat is not the one God is seeking here, because a diplomat is one who compromises in order to bring about an immediate peace. God wants those who will make peace with Him. There is no compromise in making peace with God. There is only surrender on the part of the sinner. Seek the peace that passes understanding. It has sustained believers throughout the ages with a strength that is beyond anything this world has to offer.

It's really ironic that in making peace with God we can make war with those around us. They may be unimpressed with the changes we are called to make in order to live at peace with God. Choose peace with God anyway.

**10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**11. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.**

**12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**

Hot dog!!! When a Christian gets to persecution - they have a treasure in heaven that will not fail. Real persecution to the point of torture and death are increasingly common around the globe. Ask a convert from Islam if they have placed their lives in danger by deciding to follow Jesus. Most of us have never faced anything close to life threatening persecution for following Jesus. Here in the United States persecution more likely includes being ostracized by society for our religious convictions.

Christians are now being legally forced out public view. People are so afraid of violating 'separation of church and state' they refuse to allow anything remotely Christian in most places. Sadly, there is no separation of church and state in our constitution. It simply says congress cannot make a state sanctioned religion. Really, unless congress required the ten commandments to be display somewhere, or a nativity scene at Christmas, or required prayer at public schools, they are not overstepping their boundaries. When a judge intentionally misread the constitution they are legislating illegally and should be impeached and tried for treason - because they are intentionally degrading the authority of the constitution.

If the Lord delays his coming, what do you believe the next step against Christians will be?

Are you a strong enough Christian to stay salty - or will you lose your savor as difficulties increase?

**13. Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.**

To be useful Christians we must stay salty. That is why taking to heart the first instructions given to us in the Sermon on the Mount is so important.

**14. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.**

The salty Christian lights the world.

**15. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick' and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.**

The light that shines in a Christian is a gift from God to that Christian and to those who know that Christian.

**16. let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

The will of God for each Christians is that he or she follow Jesus' instructions for living so others will see the work of God in his or her life, and be so impressed that they decide to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

I think it is safe to say the Elisha was already seeking to make his heart an acceptable home for God before Elijah passed by and called him out of the field. You can guess that Elisha already was a man who had no problem confronting sin in his own life and the life of those around him. He wouldn't have had a problem calling adultery adultery because the people involved were 'so in love', or 'family', or 'friends', or because they were 'prominent people in the community'.

It is also safe to say that even as he began his life as a prophet of God, he continued to make his heart an acceptable home for God. That is the duty of every Christian today. We are to obey what we know we are supposed to do - right where we are - right now. And then make 'heart improvements' as we learn more about the teachings of God.

Perhaps God will call you out of the life you are leading now. What he calls you to do will definitely be the best path to follow. It may not appear to be a better path to follow from a worldly point of view. Think about Elisha. There he was plowing behind his own yoke of oxen. Then he was called to be a prophet by Elijah. True, Elijah had done great works for the lord. Stopping rain, calling down fire from heaven, defeating Baal, and accurately predicating the fall of Ahab and Jezebel were all major accomplishments. Of course - there wasn't much money in it that as a career. In fact, Elijah had been living in cave recently, eating food the birds brought to him. Elisha followed the leading of the Lord despite its potentially harsh living conditions.

The Bible tells us of many others who also followed the Lord. Abraham became a man rich in material possessions, but to begin with he was just a man who followed God out of one place without knowing where God was going to take him. The one thing of which Abraham was certain was that he was going the right way. He knew he had charted the right course - even though he didn't know his destination. As you walk the path, you may or may not obtain material wealth or fame. It will end in a "Well Done!" from God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The song for this article is 'All the Way My Savior Leads Me'.

Thanks for reading my article. God bless you.

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<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/a/l/t/altheway.htm>

All the way my Savior leads me;  
What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy,  
Who through life has been my Guide?  
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,  
Here by faith in Him to dwell!  
For I know, whate'er befall me,  
Jesus doeth all things well;  
For I know, whate'er befall me,  
Jesus doeth all things well.

All the way my Savior leads me,  
Cheers each winding path I tread;  
Gives me grace for every trial,  
Feeds me with the living Bread.  
Though my weary steps may falter,  
And my soul athirst may be,  
Gushing from the Rock before me,  
Lo! A spring of joy I see;  
Gushing from the Rock before me,  
Lo! A spring of joy I see.

All the way my Savior leads me  
O the fullness of His love!  
Perfect rest to me is promised  
In my Father's house above.  
When my spirit, clothed immortal,  
Wings its flight to realms of day  
This my song through endless ages—  
Jesus led me all the way;  
This my song through endless ages—  
Jesus led me all the way.

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## A Back-Channel for P.E.A.C.E.

By The Discernment Research Group

“I’m always happy to be a **back channel for peace.**”

Rick Warren, [CNN](#), 12/15/06 [emphasis added]

“I will go anywhere in the world if I’m allowed to preach the gospel without hindrance. I’d go to Iran; I’d go to Syria; I’d go to North Korea. A lot of the criticisms have come from people who politicize the Christian faith. To them, politics is more important than winning people to Christ. In fact, I think one of the greatest damages to the church in the last 20 years has been the **politicization** of the church. I’m also tired of the church being known simply as a **political tool** and being co-opted by **politicians.**”

Rick Warren interview in [Christianity Today](#), 12/27/06 [emphasis added]

This is curious. This terminology “back channel” isn’t something that people use in their everyday conversation. What does it mean when Rick Warren says he is a “back channel for peace”?

To answer this question start out at [Wikipedia](#) and look up the term [back-channel](#). This term has specialized meanings in telecommunications, linguistics, diplomacy and business. The latter two meanings seem to be most relevant to Rick Warren’s usage of the term:

“**In Diplomacy:** A **back channel** in the language of [diplomacy](#) is an unofficial channel of [communication](#) between [states](#) or other political entities, used to supplement official channels, often for the purposes of discussing highly sensitive policy issues. See *also* [Track II diplomacy](#).”

“**In Business:** In [business](#), **back-channeling** is an inappropriate organizational practice that involves bypassing recognized or official communication processes, usually by sharing information anonymously up the reporting structure at least two levels, in order to create vulnerability at the level(s) skipped. It is a means by which lower-level members can manipulate perceived power differentials with a superior through a more senior accommodating manager in the organization. It is generally considered unethical and unhealthy for relationships within the organization.”

Why would Warren be seemingly working in secret when Jesus calls Christians to openly declare His Gospel?

Another definition comes from [www.thefreedictionary.com](#):

“**Back channel** - an alternative to the regular channels of communication that is used when agreements must be made secretly (especially in diplomacy or government); ‘they negotiated via a back channel.’”

This term “back channel” – most often associated with international diplomatic missions – raises some perplexing questions about precisely what Rick Warren was recently doing in [Syria](#), what he was supposed to do in [North Korea](#), and, of course, what he is currently doing in Africa with his Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan. Whatever does this “back-channeling” have to do with the spread of the Gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ? It is notable that Rick Warren characteristically [refrains from presenting the Gospel message of salvation](#) in his public appearances, other than perhaps a brief passing nod to it.

Perhaps relevant to this inquiry, note the transformation of the letter “P” in the acronym for P.E.A.C.E. Originally the term meant “[Plant churches](#)” – a solidly evangelistic idea that traditionally has to do with the spread of the Gospel message. But that letter soon began to have the additional meaning of “[Partner](#) with congregations.” Then it was expanded to the idea of [partnering](#) with other entities. Finally, a new meaning of the “P” in P.E.A.C.E. came out on the Fox channel’s Saddleback [Christmas Eve](#) service: “Provide hope.” This change may also reflect Rick Warren’s emerging new role as an international ambassador for “peace.”

### **Track II Diplomacy for P.E.A.C.E.?**

To answer the questions about back-channeling requires following the links. **Back channeling is** connected to the idea of **Track II diplomacy**. According to [Wikipedia](#):

“**Track II diplomacy** is a specific kind of informal [diplomacy](#), in which non-officials ([academic scholars](#), retired [civil](#) and [military](#) officials, public figures, and [social activists](#)) engage in [dialogue](#), with the aim of [conflict resolution](#), or confidence-building.[1] This sort of diplomacy is especially useful after events which can be interpreted in a number of different ways, both parties recognize this fact, and neither side wants to escalate or involve third parties for fear of the situation spiraling out of control. For example, a [Chinese](#) general recently commented that [atomic bombs](#) are not out of the question if the [PRC](#) and the [United States](#) should engage in low-level conflict over the [Taiwan](#) question. If the US immediately responded with heavy press coverage and speeches by major officials, the PRC would then be forced to take either of two stances: (1) admission that the general was incorrect, which would inflame the Chinese population and cause [grassroots](#) ire and [anti-American](#) feeling, or (2) claim that the general was correct, which would be detrimental to [world peace](#) and diplomatic relations. Instead, the US would engage in Track II diplomacy to try to understand whether the initial threat was as serious as it seemed to be. Dialogue would be deliberately invited in order to determine the stance of the PRC without creating a confrontational atmosphere.

“Although Track II diplomacy may seem less important than [Track I](#) (the work of actual diplomats at their [embassies](#)), it is many times far more important. Indeed its informal nature often reflects the fact that the issues in question are of deadly seriousness. In the above situation, the United States would at least ask that the other side clearly demonstrate their understanding that they were the ones to make the initial threat, even if no apology was eventually deemed necessary by either side.”

This definition raises many questions about the emerging new role of Rick Warren as a “back channel for peace” in world affairs. To do further research on Track II diplomacy follow the links. Follow the link at the bottom of the Track II diplomacy Wikipedia definition to: ["Track II \(Citizen\) Diplomacy"](#) posted at **The Beyond Intractability**



**Knowledge Base Project.** There one can learn the answers to the question: **“Who are Track Two Intermediaries and Diplomats?”** This article should be read in its entirety, including its many interesting links. Below are a few key excerpts:

“The term ‘intermediary’ refers to people who become involved ‘in the middle’ of a conflict. They are not [disputants](#), but rather people who try to work with the disputants to resolve the conflict or transform it to make it less destructive....

“At the inter-group or international level, the term encompasses a number of different terms: ‘track two diplomacy,’ citizen diplomacy, ‘[multi-track diplomacy](#)’ supplemental diplomacy, pre-negotiation, consultation, interactive conflict resolution, back-channel diplomacy, [facilitated](#) joint brainstorming, [coexistence](#) work. While differing in emphasis, agenda, and theoretical approach, these initiatives share many common goals. They attempt to provide an environment that is **low-key, non-judgmental, non-coercive, and safe, and to create a process in which participants feel free to share perceptions, fears and needs, and to explore ideas for resolution**, free of the constraints of government positions. The process is designed to encourage the development of mutual understanding of differing perceptions and needs, the creation of new ideas, and strong problem-solving relationships.

“Normally, informal intermediaries are non-governmental actors, such as **religious institutions**, academics, former government officials, [non-governmental organizations](#), humanitarian organizations, and think tanks, among others....” [emphasis added]

This article further goes on to describe the functions of these “Informal Intermediaries” in the role of global peace. Note the graphic diagram in this article. It is fairly easy to place Rick Warren’s [recent trip to Syria](#) in this Track II diplomacy context. Particularly note the references to the international “peace” process. The focus here is on building relationships between two warring parties. This goal may seem commendable on the surface, but dig deeper into the articles on this website and one begins to learn some disturbing information about how this “peace” process is conducted. These descriptions place Track II diplomacy solidly in the arena of conflict resolution, common ground and the [dialectic process](#).

Note the emphasis below on the assessment process to ensure that attitudes and relationships have been changed.

#### **“Contributions of Unofficial Interventions**

**“Assessing** the impact of unofficial intermediation in intractable conflicts is difficult. These initiatives are generally not designed to achieve the **goals** of traditional diplomacy; they are not designed to produce agreements, nor to affect major shifts in policy in the short term. Rather, they seek to affect more intangible factors of intractability, such as **attitudes** and **relationships** that are more difficult to **measure**, and whose contribution to change in the broader conflict environment is difficult to **assess**. Even when the impact of the interventions on participants’ **attitudes and relationships** can be **measured**, the significance of these ‘micro’ level achievements for the larger conflict resolution process is often not clear.”...

### **“Changed Perceptions of the Conflict**

“Unofficial intermediation also addresses the **psychological and social dimensions** of the conflict. Participants identify underlying **needs, values, and interests** that are compatible and that can form the basis for a **new definition of a common problem** that the two sides share an interest in solving. As a result of deeper understanding of the other side's needs, they also develop a greater openness to **abandoning** previous **non-negotiable positions.**” [emphasis under subheadings added]

This “peace” process entails strengthening the voices of moderates” and, at the same time, building “social networks” as an “infrastructure for peace.” In this context, it becomes necessary to ameliorate the extremes. And, according to some definitions, fundamentalist Christians could be considered to be extremists. There is a link to an article [“Dealing With Extremists”](#) which raises some deeply disturbing issues. It should also be read in its entirety. Again, notice the emphasis on beliefs and attitudes:

### **“Defining Extremism**

“Extremism is a complex phenomenon, although its complexity is often hard to see. Most simply, it can be defined as activities (**beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies**) of a person or group far removed from the ordinary.” [emphasis added]

Particularly note that those who hold end-time eschatological views are considered to be “extremists.” Note also that “extremists” are considered to be [mentally ill](#):

### **“Extremism emerges from apocalyptic, eschatological (end-of-life) ideologies.**

Extremist activities are often committed and valued because they are consistent with broader **myths** or systems of meaning....

**“Extremism is a pathological illness.** This perspective views **extremism as a disease** and a way of life where people look to **violence** to provide a feeling of aliveness. Greun (2003) writes, ‘The lack of identity associated with extremists is the result of **self-destructive self-hatred** that leads to feelings of revenge toward life itself, and a compulsion to kill one's own humanness.’[2] Thus extremism is seen as not a tactic, nor an ideology, but as a **pathological illness, which feeds on the destruction of life.**” [emphasis under subheadings added]

Notice also that those holding “extreme” beliefs are characterized as potentially violent. There is no provision for Christians who hold to fundamental beliefs, who non-violently (i.e., with non-resistance) peaceably live out their faith in conscience and conviction (“non-negotiables”).

Of relevance to this discussion is the section of this article that describes how to deal with extremists. These are strategies that many will recognize in the microcosm of problems they experienced while in purpose-driven churches. These strategies include: **elimination, divide and conquer, isolation, intergroup cooperation against extremism, expanding the middle, covert negotiation chains, contradictory strategies, intragroup work, overt engagement, and [Peace building](#).**

That last link to [Peace-building](#) is also an interesting article. Perhaps readers will draw some further parallels. In these contexts, Rick Warren's Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan begins

to plug it into the notches of “back-channeling” and “Track II diplomacy” to the point where there are some exact fits. Perhaps all of this clarifies the new role of the churches as a “[distribution network](#)” across the globe. It may also provide a few answers to the many questions raised about what he was doing in Syria. This is not what evangelical Christianity has been about -- that is up until now. Despite Rick Warren's protestations in the second opening quotation about how the church shouldn't be a "political tool," this activity is "politicization" on a global scale.

This isn't about evangelism.

**The Truth:**

*"Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:26-28)*

Visit <http://herescope.blogspot.com/>

You can find the original article at

<http://herescope.blogspot.com/2006/12/back-channel-for-peace.html>