



The Humbleheart Messenger

"Contending For The Christian Faith"

Fall
2010

"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."



Of all the religions in this world why should I choose Christianity? Why should I not choose Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism or any others? If I choose Islam what type of Muslim should I be, Shiite, Sunnite, Ishmailite, Zaidite, Ahmadiyan or Sufi? Should I happen to choose Judaism would I be Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed, and/or considered a Zionist? If I choose Christianity should I be a Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Assembly of God, Church of God, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Seventh Day Adventist, Episcopal or nondenominational? Maybe I could be a member of the "Full" or "Four Square" Gospel Church? Perhaps I could find religious peace in the tribal spiritual teachings of Native American Indians? What about a goal and journey to become a Buddhist Monk or Hindi guru? What would happen if I decide to choose none of the above and instead remain neutral or form my own religion? I'm stuck in the fog so I'm considering the training to reach the pinnacle point of a "CLEAR" (defogged) if I join the Church of Scientology or make it even easier on myself and become a Unitarian Universalist!

These comments and questions may sound rather foolish, pathetic, or even somewhat humorous, but they are a real reflection from the minds, the pens and lips of real people. Especially younger people many college students included. Humbleheart Ministries has fielded such questions and comments for more than twenty years. Religion can seem like a foggy cloud that blurs our vision and understanding. Confusion, fear, frustration or apathy may set in. If ever there were a time to use the phrase "Foggy Religion" it

would certainly fit well today. We need to find the way through the foggy religion that blinds the minds of the unbelieving and confuses or frustrates those who honestly do believe. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:1-4

"Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Paul refers to Satan as the "god of this world." He also wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:33 *"For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."* In Titus 1:10-11 Paul talks about rebellious men who upset whole families by teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. He says they should be silenced, obviously not permitted to speak or teach in the Church.

So we can understand that the Devil, Satan, the liar and the father of lies (John 8:44) is ultimately the one who causes foggy religion, not just by what we read in these few passages of Scripture but throughout the Bible. This is not so hard to understand or accept as truth, that is, unless of course you do not believe the Bible is God's Word or that the Devil actually exists.

What Is Foggy Religion?

In June 2010 I began writing and preaching from a series I've entitled, "The Way Through Foggy Religion." It represents a culmination of real facts on the potential spiritual chaos and crisis of faith facing 21st Century Christianity.

The Barna Research Group and other well-known organizations that have been providing us with statistics for years have a more difficult time with their surveys when it comes to Christians and Churches. An accurate account of church attendance is nearly impossible. House Church, Market Place Church, Television & Radio Church, Internet Online Church in many cases has replaced what they call the Organic Church where people physically attend a local Church as a congregation. Mainline churches are scrambling to keep up with the times and find any way they can to hold on to their congregants. Especially when it comes to the youth and young adults with children. Here in lies the motivation for trying to be more attractive in

appearance, contemporary worship, less sermon with more singing, less Bible study and more socializing and above all "less dogmatic" about anything. This is really nothing new. It's been going on for years. Now is the time for comeuppance.

The Bible tells us to bring our children up in the ways of the Lord. So we teach them at home by reading God's Word and develop in them the moral laws of God like what is sin, what is good or evil, right or wrong etc. We try to live as faithful Christians in our homes as well as in public. We learn about the great men and women of the Bible and it develops character in each of us as we strive to be like them. More importantly we strive to be like Jesus as He told us we should.

Then we go to public schools and the college campus where we are taught there is no God, no need for church or any religion, sin is not sin and there are no absolutes. We are told that God did not create the world or human beings instead we evolved and therefore by today's standards being gay, lesbian or bisexual in behavior is natural and not to be called sin. This is the world!

We go back to our Christian homes and hopefully have family conversation concerning God's Word and His will rather than accept the ways of the world. We understand the difference and choose to follow Jesus Christ. We are also comforted on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights as we gather with our Christian brothers and sisters to pray, worship, fellowship and study the Bible. This strengthens and encourages us as believers.

Then suddenly we are overcome by the news that our Church has a new revelation concerning creation. Our denominational leaders claim that human evolution is scientific fact and therefore true and compatible with Christianity! Our Church leaders have also determined that a person can be born a homosexual! So in such a case it cannot be considered sin and that person is welcome to serve anywhere in church leadership, even as a pastor! These changes have occurred because our Church denominational leaders have concluded that the Bible cannot be taken literally, but to appreciate and enjoy its wonderful metaphors.

This is only one but a real example of "foggy religion" at work among many churches. Recently I've been asked, "What should I do about my situation with my family and the Church I've attended for a long time?" These are people who have discovered that their own Church leaders (denomination) have caved into the pressures of the world by adulterating the Word of God. "Is it a question of fight or flight," they ask. My only response can be if you are truly a Bible believing Christian then God's Word must come first. You cannot appease the god of this world (the Devil) by compromising your faith in the Holy Scriptures.

Winston Churchill said, "*An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile – hoping it will eat him last.*" Charles Swindoll says, "*The swift wind of compromise is a lot more devastating than the sudden jolt of*

misfortune." These are good words of wisdom when we consider the consequences of compromising God's Word and the essential doctrines of the Christian Faith. This is the leading cause of foggy religion.

Please don't just take these words I'm writing or preaching alone. Check these things out for yourself. Talk with your Pastor and Church leaders to see where they stand. Read your Church Constitution, Bylaws and Statement of Faith including any revisions or recent positional statements. Beyond your local congregation you should be clearly informed about any changes or positions stated as a denomination.

Troubled times begin the moment we start drifting away from Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we lose sight of Jesus Christ who is the head of His Church and in the hearts of believers our teaching and our walk becomes foggy. When this happens the message becomes unclear and Biblical truth is compromised. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:1 "*But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.*" He followed up in his second letter to Timothy with these words, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.*" (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

The "later times" have come with the progressive falling away from the faith. How do we find our way through the fog? Paul tells us "*But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*" "Be sober" means to be clear when it comes to teaching Scripture and the historic Biblical truths of the Christian Faith! "Endure hardship" means fight the good fight and keep the faith even while afflicted by all forms of persecution that may come from clearly teaching the truth. "Do the work of an evangelist" and "fulfill your ministry" means don't forget your primary mission is reaching out to the unsaved souls by preaching and teaching God's Word. Although these two pastoral letters penned by Paul are addressed to Timothy they are included as Scripture for all to obey. (2 Timothy 3:16) "All" Scripture is God-Breathed! Take the time to read even the first chapter of Genesis where it clearly tells us about creation and the origin of human beings.

I'll continue this article in our next Humbleheart Messenger. Remember that wherever God's Word is, there also is The Holy Spirit. ☐

MARANATHA!

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