

Haven Newsletter

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Against the Man

One of my favorite movies growing up was "The Ghost and Mister Chicken" starring Don Knotts. In one of the funnier scenes in the movie, Don's character was charged with fraud concerning an alleged "haunted" house. One of the character witnesses brought in to support him was an "expert" on the paranormal. Under strict questioning he appeared to be rational and quite scientific. Then the District Attorney asked the witness where his last paranormal society meeting was held? "On Mars" the witness replied! The courtroom cracked up and it was obvious to the viewing audience that the credibility of the witness was forever destroyed.

The short version of this is called Ad Hominem or Against the Man. It means the credibility of a person's point of view or argument can be undermined by character flaws (real or imagined) of the person themselves. In the realm of philosophy, it is considered a logical fallacy and therefore illegitimate to use. For example the fact that the famous philosopher Heidegger was also an unrepentant, scum sucking Nazi party member, who never to his dying days renounced his party membership or denounced the Nazis in any way, is considered irrelevant as to whether his philosophical position is rational, valid or correct. (A philosophical paper is going to come out of this someday I promise, but as a teaser for you philosophical types out there - why is it ok for David Hume in his famous argument against mira-

cles to list criteria for witnesses he would consider reliable, when said list includes many moral qualifications, and then somehow not ok to bring up the disastrous personal lives of people like Bertrand Russell, Rousseau or Foucault?)

According to my analysis of this, there are two distinct versions of the ad Hominem argument. The first "ad hominus gratuitous cheap shottus" is simple to recognize. One popular variation of this version is "anyone who thinks differently than me is an idiot" (see virtually all left wing websites and main stream editorials since the election for numerous examples of this!) The second and much more important version of this is "ad hominus justifiadicus punch in the mouthus". This simply means that some attacks are justified in and of themselves. Similar to the distinction between to the poor version of guilt by association (Jesus is bad because he was seen talking to "sinners") and the correct version of this (Heidegger was consorting with Nazis because he was in fact a Nazi himself), the two versions of the ad Hominem that I propose here is useful in witnessing to many different groups of people.

The first version is wrong on any possible account. Mere name calling or cheap personal attacks do not help to spread the Kingdom. It is also very important that we understand that it can never serve the purpose of the Kingdom of God to lie or even exaggerate about another person or religion. Christians are commanded to speak the truth in love. There is no exception clause for deal-

ing with cults or false religions. To take an issue with Michael Moore over his lies, misconstruals and outright fabrications is very appropriate. To call him a "fat slob" (seen on many right wing websites) is hardly germane and goes nowhere if the purpose is to convince or dare I say, even convert him to your "side" or the Kingdom of God or whatever else.

The second version I believe is by contrast quite useful in talking to people. For example in talking to Mormons, I find it quite helpful to address the issue of the supposed prophet hood of Joseph Smith. Trading verses seems to go nowhere as the Mormon reads the Bible through "Joseph Smith" glasses. And your opinion means nothing to them when the Prophet speaks otherwise. So in place of that dialogue I am in the habit of addressing the moral character of Joseph himself. Mormons are raised to believe that he was the most moral man who ever lived. Opponents of the church point out inconvenient facts like the fact that Joseph and his father were both professional con artists who made a living cheating people, but this goes over unheeded as the fruit of evil "antimormons", tools of the devil and so on. So what I do is to ask the typical Mormon what she would think if their spouse came home one day and said "You know honey, I was looking at the girl down at the bowling alley, and I prayed to God about it, and God told me that it would be fine if I married her as well". Every Mormon I have asked this question too has responded negatively and that they would be furious if their spouse were to try and pull this off. I

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Against the Man cont.

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explain that I really appreciate their response and that we both agree that this would be a terrible thing to do. But then I ask them if they knew that this is what Joseph did numerous times? According to faithful Mormon author Todd Compton's book "In Sacred Loneliness - the Plural wives of Joseph Smith", nine of Joseph's first twelve wives were married to someone else when Joseph pulled the "God told me so" line. In most of these cases Joseph and his new "wife" failed to inform the husband of the new situation. Joseph also sent many of these men off on mission trips so that he could play house with his new toy. Hardly the most righteous man scenario that Mormons have grown up with is it? This puts the Mormon in a box. They can't accuse Compton of being an "antimormon", nor can they understand why they have never heard this sort of thing before. The "glasses" have suddenly become problematic. Thinking is good, seeds are planted and the Mormon has to somehow make the square peg fit into a circular hole.

Some would respond that this argument is insulting and drives Mormons further away. If only we accede to as much as we can (as apparently established by the Mormons themselves!) then we can all bridge the divide and become one big happy family. This type of ad Hominem is seen as mean spirited and divisive and therefore undesirable.

However the Bible seems to take exactly the opposite point - that one's personal life is just as important criteria for credibility as is their argument. In the First Epistle of John we see both doctrinal tests for orthodoxy as well as life-style tests. An example of the latter

is found in 1st John 4:20 the Apostle says "If someone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar..." Clearly here the actions must coincide with the words. To make this case even stronger, Jesus himself attacks the personal character of the Pharisees and Scribes. "Hypocrites", "Vipers", "Whitewashed graves" are just a few of the invectives that Jesus used about these people. I could go on with numerous other similar references but the point already is made. Did these statements make Jesus a mean spirited unloving person? Or was His statements exactly what these people needed to hear? I think Jesus loved the Pharisees as much as he loved the woman caught in adultery

Hypocrisy of action undermines credible speech.

that he treated very kindly. Both were guilty, but both were not prideful. He gave both what they needed at that precise moment.

Hypocrisy of action undermines all the credible speech in the world. The interesting thing about this is that most people already understand this. The charge (real or imagined) against Christians is something I hear literally every day. The best response against charges of hypocrisy, is of course not to be one! Having failed that, we can ask God for forgiveness and try again. If we love people as God has commanded us, and speak the truth to them, then the charge has no bite. I am a hypocrite and that is why I need a Savior. The charge against Christians of hypocrisy does not disprove Christianity; rather it actually proves one of our central ideas - that we are all sinners and hypocrites, and all of us need Jesus as our Savior.

"If someone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar." 1 John 4:20.

Non-Profit Update

Here a prophet, there a prophet, everywhere a prophet! There are so many bad ones out there it is hard to keep track. The Apostle James warned us that not many should be teachers, because of the great responsibility, but we seem to be swimming in people who claim an even higher role and therefore an even higher responsibility - that of Prophet of God. Not that this is a new problem. Moses spoke of it in Deuteronomy 18:21 when he says "How shall we know

Here a prophet, there a prophet, everywhere a prophet!

the word which the Lord has not spoken?" Great question to this day. Moses goes on to answer that if the "prophet" speaks something which does not come true, then the prophecy is not from God. Simple enough isn't it? If God says it, it will come true, if not then not! We spent a lot of time recently with Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and were reminded of how critical this issue is. To follow false prophets (easily documented in both these cases) has an eternal and practical price tag. But we have the same problem inside the house as well. Major "prophets" such as Paul Cain and Bob Jones, (not to mention the rent a prophet crowd at TBN every night) have been caught in gross immorality and drunkenness repeatedly, and we don't

want to forget their innumerable times they have been wrong when they predict or pronounce something. However in the minds of many this does not disqualify them as Prophets. How much we have "grown" since the time of Moses! One has to wonder if the job of prophet, much like a government bureaucrat, is a position that you have to commit murder in order to lose your job! (Unless of course you are a union member or have a great lawyer - then even murder may not do it!)

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Prayer Requests

- 1) Please pray for my family's salvation. I have had some good chances to talk to them recently and would covet your prayers for them.
- 2) Pray for those whose marriages have been damaged by sin and destruction through cults and personal failure. Pray for Bruce and Diane, JJ and Marc, Don and Peggy, Mike and Cheryl, Jeanette and Brad.
- 3) Pray for our friends with chronic disease problems. As my wife Terri is now part of this request, please include her along with Rebecca, Sherri, Liz, Julie and Josh.
- 4) Pray for our troops at war. We have many young friends who serve our country and need your prayers. One member of one of our supporting churches was killed recently in Iraq. Please pray for his family as well as the other families.
- 5) Praise the Lord for his continual protection and provision. We are so blessed to have so many who take an interest in our ministry. Please pray that the Lord will raise up new supporters and encourage our existing ones to continue their help in this ministry effort. And those who are giving, please remember in order to get a tax receipt for this year your gift must be postmarked by December 31! Thanks.
- 6) We have had some wonderful conversations with Mormons, JW's and many other people in different religions lately. Please pray that our efforts to share the Gospel will be fruitful and that we will be faithful in this work at all times.
- 7) I am on my third draft of my dissertation proposal. Pray that I get it right one of these times!
- 8) This has been the busiest I have ever been in regards to my speaking schedule. Pray that I will be faithful and be diligent to spend my time wisely with ministry and family concerns.
- 9) Pray for some individuals who are potential new members of Haven Ministry. We always are on the look for others to grab an oar and start rowing!
- 10) Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Hard times are coming.

Strategy

We have decided to change our missionary giving strategy this year. After watching much of "Christian TV" we have now come to believe that if you give us money, God will give you a million times what you give us. We don't want to be pikers like those guys on TV - they only promise a hundred fold return. We are going for the real "blessings" of God! NOT! In contrast to that kind of nonsense, someone recently sent me a quote from a book dealing with the underground church in China. It reads "it (suffering) may be the only way for you to learn how to serve. In house churches we have little to hope in but our God. In America, you have much to hope in besides God. None but He can bear the weight of your hope. But that is often forgotten. The test of prosperity is not easily passed". Ouch. Remember widows, orphans and maybe Christian ministries as you consider your giving this year. Will you pass the test? Will I? God's mercy on us all.

Website Update

We have put numerous audio seminars on the website since our last newsletter. Many thanks to our new friend John and our intern Matt for their help with the website. If you want, you can download them onto a cd and give them away as well. Mark Roggeman will also have his paper on "The Mankind Project" and the so called Christian version "Marked Men for Christ" on the site soon as well. Keep coming back and take a look!



Speaking Schedule

- January 4,11,18,25 - Weekly Bible Study
- January 10, 24, 31 - World Religions class at Rocky Mountain Bible Institute
- January 16 - Foothills Fellowship Baptist Church, Littleton, CO
- January 24 - Haven Ministries Board Meeting
- February 8, 15, 22 - Weekly Bible Study
- February 7,14,21,28 - World Religions Class at RMBI
- February 10-12 - Christian Ministries Convention - Denver
- February 18-20 - Church conference in Atlanta, GA. Details to be posted on the website.
- February 23 /26 - Evangelical Ministries to New Religions Conference in Kansas City, MO. Details to be posted on the website.
- February 27 - Tiffany Assembly of God evening service. Tiffany, MO.
- March 1, 15, 22, 29 - Weekly Bible Study
- March 14, 21, 28 - World Religions Class at RMBI
- March 7-9 - Calvary Chapel Regional Conference, Tucson, AZ
- March 12-13 - Psychic Fair at the Merchandise Mart in Denver, CO
- March 14-17 - World Religions Seminar at YWAM, Arvada, CO

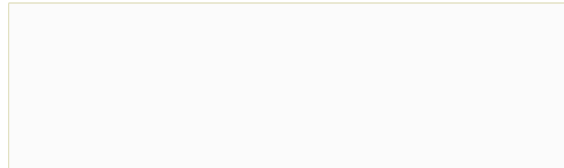


As usual there are many other engagements pending. Don't forget to check the website for further information.



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Address Note:

We thank you with all our hearts for your prayers, your support, your encouragement and all that you do for us. May our Father, who we remember at this time gave us so much, be blessed by our response to you and to others. Have a great Christmas.

Bill, Terri and the Crew

Address for Ministry Support:
 Haven Ministries
 P.O. Box 460366
 Aurora, CO. 80046-0366

Address for Adoption Fund:
 Hand in Hand International
 Adoptions
 Lynn Klint
 6523 S. Kearney Circle
 Englewood, CO 80111



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