

# Haven Newsletter

July 2004

www.havenministry.com

5796 South Lisbon Way, Centennial, CO 80015

(303) 766-3527, Honz1@msn.com

## Real Idolatry

Jeremiah 1:16 states "And I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands."

Most sermons one will hear and most images that comes to your mind when you hear the word "idolatry" involve statues, pictures or something else that serves as a physical symbol or object. I would like to focus now on the mental aspect of idolatry which occurs prior to the physical representation. When Jeremiah says that "they have forsaken me", it implies something going on that we need to look at. In Isaiah 42ff we get a

peek at the craftsmanship and artistry involved in making idols. This "art" involves a vision, something which the "artist" is trying to say or teach or represent. This to me is the more critical part of idolatry. This is the mental process, of both heart and soul, whereby we "create" out of nothing a god which we want to believe in. This later becomes a physical idol.

This creation process is at the heart of the violation of the

*Idolatry is the mental process, of both heart and soul, whereby we "create" out of nothing a god which we want to believe in.*

first commandment—to love Jehovah with all ones heart, mind, soul, and strength. To love anyone or anything else with any part of us is to swear allegiance to a mythical fiction. Sometimes idols are called the "vanity of our imaginations". German skeptic Ludwig Feuerbach in the 19th century thought that all religion was just that—the projection of our desires. This was the basis for Marx and Freud to argue the same thing. In one sense I agree with Feuerbach, when one looks at certain cultures one can see the projection of local thought and custom being justified by the "creation" of a divine version of their own thought. For example Mohammed compiled some Arab customs and thought, mixed in some ideas he illegitimately twisted out of Judaism and Christianity, and created a religion which justified his own violent and sexual thoughts.

But the God of Israel was different from all other "gods". There was to be no representation, no visual aid, no icon to limit who God really is. The very act of representation in this sense is idolatry in itself. But it always has the prior act in mind, that act of worship which creates in the shallow recess of our impotent minds something that is "bigger" than us.



Ludwig Feuerbach

All religion... is the projection of our desires.

The God of Israel is the God who reveals himself. He is not "our" creation. In fact it would be insanity to even think that we could. Feuerbach as a ideologically committed atheist had no possibility allowed in his system for a real God who really reveals himself to us. One simple way of seeing the improbability of his idea in relationship to the God of Israel is in relation to men and sex. You occasionally hear people remark that Christianity or Judaism is 'some old people making up rules.' ...and what group of men would make up rules that limit their sexual activity? Virtually all pagan cultures allowed men to sleep with each other, with their many wives, concubines, slaves, daughters, little boys, animals and so on. What group of men would stop themselves from doing what their fallen selves loved so much??? Nature does not teach fidelity to one's spouse, and we can see in our culture how the removal of Judeo-Christian foundations have created a flood of sexual "lifestyles" assaults on the traditional moral sense of the nation. Wiccan Phyllis Curolt rails against the Christian's destruction of sex, by putting "rules" on it. PhD's and MD's at Johns Hopkins and in the American Psychiatric Association have now gone on the record stating that pedophilia is not harmful to children and therefore should be considered as "normal". Princeton philosophers speaks approvingly of humans having sex with animals. We are a pagan culture. Our cultural idol is self, and our worship is whatever gives us pleasure.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Haven Newsletter

True Religion continued...

(Continued from page 1)

With the creation of this cultural idol, many have blatantly surrendered themselves to the new deities. But most church people have had to learn to be more subtle. It just doesn't work to be too obvious. So we create Christianized idols, ones designed to solve some of our own issues. We create a god who wouldn't send anyone to hell no matter what. We create a god who would never violate our "rights". In the name of inclusivism and pluralism, we abandon the Gospel and declare all religions ok dokey with god. All people are now good, and

"So we create Christianized idols..."

apparently only Adolf Hitler really deserves punishment. On the other hand, some create a god so full of hate and anger that they rejoice at the death of someone they don't approve of. They march at funerals and declare that "god hates fags" or wiccans or Muslims or fill in the blank. This god is always rejoicing at the opportunity to judge and destroy.

Unlike the Santa Claus inclusive god, this one seems to despise all. This god seems to be the supposedly Christian equivalent of Allah, actively seeking the destruction of this world and all those who don't believe.

In some ways this is the god that I had created in my own mind as a young person. My "god" was an old man with a club up in heaven, and every time I got beat up or busted by the cops, this was just "god" getting back at me for all the things I hadn't been caught at! One night I got invited to a church which was showing a movie. Not having any money for drugs and desperately

bored, I agreed to go. I heard about a different God. This God knew all about me and yet chose to love me. This I didn't understand. How could

"How could anyone KNOW me and still love me?"

anyone KNOW me and still love me? The Bible puts it this way "But God demonstrates his love in this; while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly". (Romans 5:8) It was this understanding of God that was crucial in God turning my life completely around. Anytime you paint an incomplete picture of God, you create an idol. This is what I had done. The Reformers understood this well. They knew that one must preach both law and grace in order to have a balanced understand the full counsel of God. Preaching the Law reminds us that God is holy and just and even though we don't like this when it applies to us, we generally like justice over injustice. Most of us don't want a world where murderers and rapists get away with their crimes. But the Reformers also knew that the Law by itself is not the whole picture. One must also preach the grace and mercy of God as shown in and through Jesus Christ. God's love for sinners is a constant

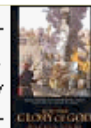
"Anytime you paint an incomplete picture of God, you create an idol."

theme of both old and new testaments. (By contrast, Allah of Islam hates the unbeliever.) The God we are called to worship is both holy and loving, just and merciful. This God reveals himself to mankind through the Bible and most importantly in the person of Jesus Christ himself. It is in Jesus that we see God's mercy towards unbelievers in its most radical form. God, the real God, not the one of our creation, knew what we are, knew what we would do, and still Jesus came to save us. This is why the

songs like "Amazing Grace" are so timeless: God's love is amazing—His grace overwhelms. It is this love and grace that has changed my entire life. God did not ignore my evil, nor does he ignore the evil of anyone else. Jesus came and died on the cross to pay for ALL that evil, even while those he loved despised him. The same love and power that raised him from the dead is available to anyone who believes in him today. This is what makes idolatry so sad and wrong; the real God has all we need. "Little children, keep yourself from idols" (1st John 5:21)

Book Note

I have just recently finished an excellent book "For the Glory of God" by Rodney Stark. It gives a tremendous amount of historical evidence related to the Christian church in its relation to Slavery, the Witchcraft trials, Science and so on. Rare for an academic, Stark actually "names names" in regards to false attitudes and false statements about for example, the relationship between Science and Christianity.



He gives the texts he was taught with at the University, and shows a wonderful range of resources and facts to show how so many of the popular misconceptions about Christianity ("Christians are anti-scientific") are just plain false. My favorite is the notion that the Christian church taught that the world was flat, Stark destroys this fairy tale and gives good evidence that the Christian church was talking about the spherical shape of the earth, hundreds of years before the Renaissance. (the Prophet Isaiah - Isa 40:22—also discussed the sphere of the earth 600 years before Christ!) I highly recommend this book.

Haven Newsletter

Prayer Requests

1. Please continue to pray for my family's salvation. Our son Scott seems to be doing much better so we are very thankful for that. But as always, please keep him in your prayers. Also our son Shawn has moved to New York City to work as an intern, so pray for his spiritual growth and protection. Pray for my family's salvation!!!
  2. Please pray for marriages that have been destroyed or damaged by sin, selfishness and cultic activity. Included here are Bruce and Diane, Don and Peggy, Mike and Cheryl, Jeannette and Brad, and many more.
  3. Please pray for many friends who suffer from chronic sickness, like Sherry, Rebecca, Liz, Julie and others. Our young friend Josh has been diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease. Seventeen months (now) after Terri's initial diagnosis of Lupus (false!) we still do not know what is happening. She has been through so many exams over the last several months.
  4. Please continue to pray for her and for the doctors to figure it all out.
  5. Please pray for the rest of our summer trip. Six kids in a van and thousands of miles is always "fun"!
  6. Praise the Lord for all of your help with our giving. Giving for many ministries has been down since 9/11 and so we continue to ask that you prayerfully consider supporting this ministry. We seem to be already down to the level we usually are at the end of the summer. We are so thankful for all of you and pray that we honor you with our effort to serve God's Kingdom. Please consider joining with us in this effort. And pray lots too!!!
  7. Please continue to pray for those that we are talking too. Pray for Habib, an Egyptian Muslim I have been talking to. Also pray for Amy and Laura, two new age types we spent quite a bit of time with at the psychic fair. Plus many others we have talked to online and in different situations. Pray for the people I talked to in Guam, especially a Buddhist lady named Bennie.
  8. I am now working on my dissertation proposal. Lots of reading and thinking. Please keep in prayer for this project as it is a struggle to keep on top of it.
  9. We have many speaking opportunities lined up for this fall. My schedule seems to have just gotten busier and busier.
  10. Our Bible study is going quite well. Pray that we can better minister in that venue.
  11. Pray for our soldiers at risk across the world. Especially for Chris C., Matt C. and others. Matt R. is home!
  12. Praise the Lord for Daniel, a Satanist whom we led to Christ a few years ago who is growing rapidly and is excited about the possibility of being called into ministry himself! Pray that this will continue to be a serious interest and calling.
- We thank you again for your help and care in so many ways. Pray that Terri and I will mature as Christians, as husband and wife, and as parents. (We will always keep this request going!

Non-Profit Update

There have always been weird, strange and destructive cults and groups. The more I learn and see, the more I see the same old ideas constantly being recycled with new faces to sell them. The Jehovah's Witnesses merely recycle some of the Arian (4th century) claims. The Mormons dragged some old Gnostic (1st thru 4th century) ideas and put in some popular 19th century myths about Native Americans and so on. There have always been Millennial maniacs like Monte Kim Miller (the "Concerned Christians"). The lesson for all of us here is that this phenomena will not go away, and that as the Lord warns us in Matthew 7:15-16 and Matthew 24: 4-5, the church must always watch out for false teachers and false prophets. Love is not allowing the wolves to eat the sheep (in the name of tolerance, open-mindedness and unity of course!) Real love is protecting the sheep from the wolves, feeding them from the Word of God and preparing them to defend themselves and the next generation of sheep.

Speaking Schedule



There are numerous other speaking engagements and ministry opportunities in the works. Please be in prayer for all of these.

- July 4 - Hastings Evangelical Free Church. Hastings, NE
- July 7 - Stockham Community Church. Stockham, NE
- July 11 - Pleasant View Bible Church. Aurora, NE (M)
- July 11 - Aurora Evangelical Free Church. Aurora, NE (E)
- July 14 - Columbus Evangelical Free Church. Columbus, NE.
- July 18 - Green River Bible Church. Green River, UT
- July 25 - Trinity Baptist Church. Santa Barbara, CA
- August 1, 8, Plum Creek Church. Plum Creek, CO
- August 2,3, Keystone Baptist Church. Hastings, NE
- August 21,22 Mingo Bible Church. Mingo, KS
- September 2,9,16,23,30 Littleton Bible Chapel, Littleton, CO
- September 6-9 - YWAM on World Religions. Arvada, CO
- September 12 - Tiffany Assembly of God. Kansas City, MO

Website Update

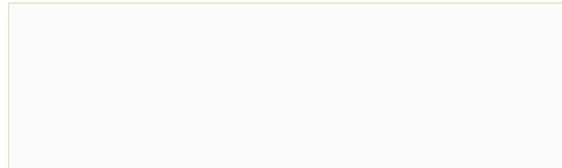


We have included some more new papers and talks on the website in the past few months. We have also included a active prayer list, so that people can pray intelligently for our ministry activities. One of our goals this year is to fill out the index with the files which now clog up my garage, and make them accessible for any who visit the site. Check it all out!



# Haven Newsletter

Bill and Terri Honsberger  
 5796 South Lisbon Way,  
 Centennial, CO 80015  
 (303) 766-3527, Honz1@msn.com  
 www.havenministry.com



Haven Newsletter

**A**gain we ask that you prayerfully consider supporting this ministry this coming year. We won't give you tiny vials of alleged "holy" water, not little bits of cloth or packages of dirt allegedly blessed by the "prophets" you so often see on TV. We won't even promise you that you will get 100% returns on your "seed" gift! Ugh. But we do promise that we will do our best to faithfully fulfill our part of the Great Commission and seek out those with whom we can share the Lord's life changing Gospel. Thanks for your consideration in this.

#### Address Note:

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

*We are still being blessed by all of you. This year shows much promise for ministry and for our family. Continue to pray that we as a couple, as parents and as ministers of the Gospel grow in obedience and love. We thank our Lord for you and we pray that His blessing and love is abundantly clear in your lives.*

*Bill and Terri and the kids..*

+