

THE HAVEN NEWSLETTER

The Christian the World Loves?



To be loved by the world - now that is a dangerous thing. It might be good - as in Let your light shine before men - that the Lord might be glorified. But much more likely is the real possibility is that you will only be liked if you approve of what the world is currently doing. The world is either full of sin (evil, rebellion against God, or a host of other synonyms) or it is not. If it isn't, then love the world and go for all it promises. But if it is, only a fool would love what is evil, and revel in rebellion. And only a bigger fool would want to be praised by those who love to do evil.

This past month one of the best-known Christians in the world went to be with the Lord. Rev. Jerry Falwell, as polarizing a figure as one could find in American culture, passed away in his office. One sad but interesting thing to watch was the absolute vitriol that was seen all over the media, academia and the Internet – as the political and religious left celebrated his death. I guess the old “speak not ill of the dead” proverb doesn’t hold any more does it? The irony is that the left considers itself the bastion of tolerance and acceptance – but as anyone who talks to them from the other side as it were, discovers very quickly that the new tolerance is “you must agree with me” or you are a fascist, Nazi, racist, bigot, etc.

Falwell was noted as the founder of the Moral Majority – a political movement that was designed to bring the fundamentalist Christians out of their enclaves and back into the public square. I must say that there were some times when I thought Jerry was outrageously wrong, and yet every time I ever saw him on TV he shared the Gospel with the audience. No matter what the topic or venue, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ were going to be brought in by Jerry. For that I admired his courage and faithfulness.

Let me compare Rev. Falwell to a different well-known Christian – Bono the lead singer for the popular and famous band U2. The exact same media that despised Falwell adores Bono. He is loved by the masses around the world. Perhaps he is the most visible Christian in the world. Yet he claims to believe in

the same Jesus that Falwell believes in. Why the difference? Why is one loved and one so hated by the media and others?

One possibility is that it could be the respective personalities. Interesting enough Bono has the typical “rock star” attitude and reputation in many quarters – in other words his ego arrives weeks before he does! His flair for preaching at the lack of giving by others while himself owning numerous homes and moving to a lower tax bracket county might seem a bit hypocritical and arrogant to others. He is also genuinely persuaded that his approach will help the horrendous problems in Africa and thus comes across “preachy” to some as well. By contrast many who hated his political and religious views personally liked Jerry Falwell. Even Larry Flynt talked about being a friend with Jerry, despite the court battles. He was gracious even while being attacked publicly in forums.

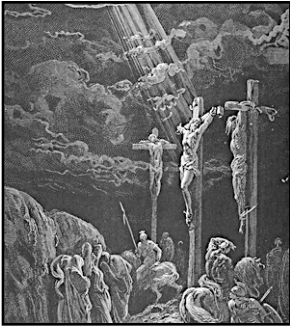
So perhaps there must be something else going on. Let me throw out an idea. Both Jerry and Bono say that they believe that Jesus is their personal savior. Both say that their faith in Christ informs their life. Yet they end up in such a different worldview with very obvious distinctions. And here is the key – in our wonderfully confused postmodern swamp we are told that we live in, the problem is not being religious in any way fashion or form. It is being righteous! Let me illustrate – You can believe that there are pink elephants dancing on the dark side of the moon and people will somehow tolerate you. The lack of evidence for your view is somehow a subjective “proof” of your faith. It is your choice and in this new Pomo swamp all must tolerate it. It makes no claims upon anyone else’s life but your own. So it is safe and secure from “non-believers” from all sides. No one can tell you that you are wrong and no one outside of your little subjective world has to even take more than a moment to consider the silliness of your ideas. Welcome to 21st century “discourse”! But righteousness by definition affects someone else. In fact it is known or not known in direct relation to its conduct towards someone else. One is honest, not to oneself in any meaningful way, but rather in ones dealings with others. One is dishonest in the same respect. One either loves or hates in relationship to another. The Bible measures our right-standing before the Lord in that the summary of our relations are two fold- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. The whole focus of righteousness is related to others. Therefore it is dangerous. It makes demands. It requires me to come out of my little solipsistic (its somehow all about me!) world and engage properly with others. Falwell spoke out against abortion, against immorality, against homosexuality and other things that cut against our current cultural grain. Bono seems to have no problem with any of these things and one could make the case that he is quite supportive of abortion and homosexuality. But there is an even more important issue that I have raised before in this newsletter. As mentioned above Falwell took the Gospel of Jesus Christ seriously and therefore every opportunity he had he shared that with his audience. Bigot! Divisive! Unloving! How dare he? EXCLUSIVIST! (The real swear word). Notice that unlike the believer in pink elephants on the dark side of the moon (or PEDSMism for short!) these are claims that are immediately recognized as objective ones – in that they are claims about the real world and therefore threatening to the non-believers. Therefore the reaction is predictable.

By contrast, even though Bono many times in print and in his songs refers to Jesus as his savior, his attitude is quite different. He is outspoken in print and interview that Jesus is merely his savior and that all the other religions in the world are equally valid to their adherents. He wears a bandana and has part of his stage show which show the different symbols of the world religions and proclaims their unity in diversity. The fact that they are all contradictory and mutually exclusive is for someone else to worry about. We must be inclusive at all cost – logic and facts are not part of the equation. For this wonderful pluralism the media oohs and coohs and purrs and rolls over to get its belly rubbed. ‘Thank you for being one of the Christians that we can stand, that doesn’t challenge us in any way, and lets do what ever we want to do’.

Of course some cynical naysayer might be so crude as to point out that the same text which tells us that sin separates from the Lord, that Jesus is the only way, that all forms of sexual sin are destructive to our relationships with each other and with the Lord, IS also the text which tells us we should take care of the poor. Much like the emerging crowd we talked about last time, selective reading and selective obedience are not a cure, but rather the problem itself.

So Falwell is despised and Bono beloved. But the real Judge, the only one whose judgment matters, has already weighed in. The world hated Jesus and Jesus said they will hate his disciples. The choice seems clear: Whose acceptance would you rather have?

This was not the end... but the beginning of hope and faith and love in a whole new life.



Prayer Requests

- 1) Please continue to pray for our family, especially Joey and Scott and Jonathan. We know that the Father loves them and our prayer is that they come back to Him.
- 2) Obviously, we would also covet your prayers while the four Filipinos and I take our trip. Please pray that the trip would be safe, that the teaching in the college would be a blessing to the students, and that our kids will bless the kids in the orphanage. Pray as well for the rest of the family while we are gone.
- 3) Pray for our extended families salvation and well-being. My step-mom's cousin, Robert McConnell, has a daughter who was kidnapped by her mother and taken to Indonesia. The little girl is now four and the state department holds out little hope for her return. Pray as well for my brother Marc who needs to find a quality job soon.
- 4) Please pray for many of our friends and others who are seriously struggling with cancer and many other debilitating conditions. Pray for Lorrie in the Philippines, Liz H, Sherry C, Rebecca G, Paul D, Joann V, Joan C, Sheila H, Josh H, Josh G, and for some dear friends whose very young children/grandchildren are having a tough time with their health, Reese and JinJae and CJ. Please continue to pray for my lovely wife's ongoing health issues as well.
- 5) Pray for Gary and Carrie Oliver, who used to minister at the Christian Resource Center where I worked, and for their family. Their son recently tragically died.
- 6) Pray for many whose marriages have been marked by sin and cultic deception. Pray for Bruce, Diane, Cheryl, Mike, Brad, Jeannette, Michael, Pam and many others.
- 7) Please continue to pray for Lee and Meg. Sadly after we went to press with our last newsletter, the news came out that they are returning to the Ashram (Hindu commune) in India. So I misunderstood. Please pray for their safe return and that they would renounce the false guru and come to the Lord.
- 8) Pray for many that we have witnessed to: Elder Lane and Elder Robuck – two Mormons who recently spent several hours at my house. Numerous other JW's like Bruce and Bianca and other Mormons that I have talked to over the years. As well as New Agers like Tim, Zach, Denver, Ian, Fausto, Jason, Anuttama (the head of PR for the Hare Krishna's that I talked to last summer), and so many others. Muslims in different parts of the country like Waheed and witches and on and on. Your prayers are so needed here. It really is a spiritual battle.
- 9) Pray for our missionaries and interns at Haven. Several have been through some real discouragement events and would covet your prayers. On the good news side, we have a new intern Craig Fletcher on our team. I am thankful for our staff and board and ask yall to pray for all of them.
- 10) Thanks to our Father for the faithful support from so many of you. We are now in the summer slump mode that so many missions go through. Please continue to pray and support this ministry and others that do the Lord's work. We are still short about \$800. per month in regular support and covet your prayers in this area.

Philippines Update – We thank the Lord for your generosity towards us. As of mid-May we have about 85% percent of what is needed for the trip. We are so excited to see all this coming together. The kids are excited about going and serving, and I am thrilled to be given an opportunity to help Pastors learn about apologetics and witnessing. Please keep us in your prayers. Lord willing, we will be gone from June 26th until July 17th.

NON-PROPHET UPDATE

Sometimes I get real flak over this part of the newsletter. Like this last time with Marked Men for Christ. We are told that it is not very Christian to be critical of other ministries. We are accused by being unloving and divisive. But are these really the case? Did not the Apostle Paul praise people for checking him out (Acts 7:11) Doesn't the Apostle John command us to "test the spirits" in First John 4:1? In fact there are dozens of verses where God's people are commanded to be discerning and examine the claims of people who claim to speak for God. Those injunctions of course are just as applicable to me and the staff at Haven as well as anyone else. If someone thinks we are misstating the case, or flat out lying – then we encourage you to talk to us and let us know where we have been wrong. We get no brownie points with the Lord for misrepresentation, either in the newsletters, the website or in our public or private meetings. In fact it is counterproductive as real misrepresentations are conversation killers, and it is our goal to talk to people. If you can show us from God's word that we are wrong or that we have not spoken the truth about this group or that teacher, we will be very appreciative. If you just don't like our case about some things, we appreciate that as well and invite your rejoinder.

MAIL UPDATE:

Please notice our new address and even more importantly, please let us know if you have moved. It is expensive to hunt you and track you down - but we have the dogs and the extra men if we need it!

Just kidding - sort of...?

Also if you want to switch from old fashioned mail to email versions of the newsletters - let us know that as well.

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Haven Ministries - Love at the End of the Rainbow!