Men With Bibles

September 2, 2011

God works in miraculous ways to get His Word to believers who need it. I thought I might share a story I read years ago in a book entitled *Unsolved Miracles*. John VanDiest of Multnomah Publishers compiled a number of stories, and the following one I think would be of great encouragement to you.

“In a village in the mountains of Iran, a number of new believers heard that they could find out more about Jesus if they could get the book the Christians called the Bible. One night, a man had a dream that if he went down to the highway, some men would come by who would be able to give him a Bible.

“The next day, he gathered a little offering of money from among the believers in the village, and made his way down the mountainside to the highway that ran through the area. He sat on a rock and began to wait.

“Some time later, two men in a car just ‘happened’ to pick up a shipment of Bibles across the border. They were driving along the same highway when the steering on their car suddenly locked. They couldn’t move it more than an inch.

“They finally nudged the steering wheel just enough to get the car over to the side of the road. They got out and put up the hood to figure out what was wrong. A man sitting on a nearby rock called out to them, ‘Are you the men with the Bibles?’

“Stunned that this man should know, they admitted, ‘Well, yes we do have Bibles.’ The old man gave them all the money he had collected, bought as many Bibles as he could, and made his way back to the village.

“The men with the Bibles then went back to determine what was wrong with their car, but could find nothing. They shrugged

their shoulders, got in, and drove away."

Isn't that a wonderful story? I believe it is just a glimpse of the wonderful ways God is getting His Word to His people even in remote parts of the earth. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Under God

Oct. 25, 2013

Every year there are lawsuits attempting to remove the phrase "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance or to remove "One Nation Under God" from our coins. But where did the phrase originate? Anyone who was supposed to memorize Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address could probably answer that question.

When Lincoln traveled to that Pennsylvania town in November 1863 to dedicate a national cemetery, he used the opportunity to define (we might even say, to redefine) the nature and purpose of this "great Civil War." He concluded his speech by saying "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

There is some indication that Lincoln added the words "under God" while sitting on the stage since they are not found in the copy of the speech he carried to the ceremony. All who heard the speech agree that he used the words "under God" and it is found in subsequent copies of the speech that he wrote out in longhand.

It is possible that Lincoln adopted those words from George Washington (either indirectly or directly). One of Lincoln's

favorite books as a child was Parson Ween's biography The Life of George Washington. The phrase is used in a description of Washington's death.

It is also possible that Lincoln also knew of George Washington's orders to the Continental Army. Washington's written orders said "The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army." On July 9, 1776 he directed that Declaration of Independence be read aloud to the troops so that they would know "that now the peace and safety of the Country depends, under God, solely on the success of our arms."

Today we often use the phrase "under God" and it worth knowing about its rich history. Let us pray that the anti-God forces never remove it from our country. I'm Kerby Anderson and that's my point of view.

Science or Religion?

October 3, 2013

The latest debate about science textbooks has surfaced a typical complaint about the scientific basis of intelligent design. Critics of intelligent design say that it is not science because it cannot be falsified. But nearly every critic then goes on to argue that intelligent design has been falsified. Obviously it can't be both falsifiable and non-falsifiable at the same time. Such is the level of argumentation against intelligent design.

But there is another argument I find even more fascinating. It is that intelligent design cannot be considered science because it has religious implications. As I point out in my

book, *A Biblical Point of View on Intelligent Design*, just because an idea has religious (or philosophical implications) shouldn't necessarily disqualify it from scientific consideration. There are significant religious and philosophical implications for Darwinian evolution. Consider just a few of these.

Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins believes that Darwinian evolution provides the foundation for his atheism and claims that "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

Daniel Dennett says: "In the beginning, there were no reasons; there were only causes. Nothing had a purpose, nothing has so much as a function; there was no teleology in the world at all."

Princeton bioethicist Peter Singer argues that we must "face the fact that we are evolved animals and that we bear the evidence of our inheritance, not only in our anatomy and our DNA, but in our behavior too."

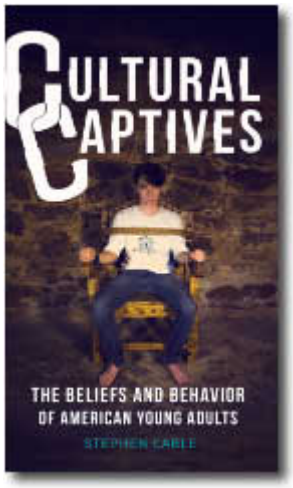
Each of these men draws religious or philosophical inferences from the theory of evolution. Does that disqualify evolutionary theory? Is evolution unscientific because there are religious and philosophical implications? No. Likewise, intelligent design's possible implications should not render it unscientific.

Cultural Captives

June 14, 2013

Despite what you have heard, Christian young people are not doing fine. That is the conclusion of Stephen Cable in his new

book, *Cultural Captives: The Beliefs and Behavior of American Young Adults*. Stephen Cable serves as Senior Vice-President of Probe Ministries.



As I have mentioned in previous commentaries, the percentage of people generally who check "none of the above" for religious preference is increasing. That is especially true of young people. In fact, the percentage of emerging adults who do not claim any affiliation with Christianity rose from 20% in 1990 to over 37% of the population today.

Stephen Cable found that only 14 percent of born-again, emerging adults combine a biblical worldview with biblical practices, such as reading the Bible or attending church. He also found that less than 2 percent of born-again, emerging adults apply a biblical worldview to life choices. In other words, only this small percentage has biblical beliefs on topics ranging from abortion to sex outside marriage to science and faith.

This is a major reason why Probe Ministries has developed an integrated strategy aimed at reversing these trends. The learning experience involves an entire church congregation over a seven-week period and includes sermons, videos, original music, and additional material for individuals and small groups.

Stephen Cable's book is a wake up call to the church. We need to reverse these ominous trends and do it quickly before the trends become even worse.

We Are Special

January 17, 2013

A recent study has found what many of us have observed for some time. College students think they are special. One newspaper put it this way: “If you asked a college freshman today who the Greatest Generation is, they might respond by pointing in a mirror.” The study documented young people’s unprecedented level of self-infatuation.

Psychologist Jean Twenge found that over the last four decades of research on college freshman, there has been a dramatic rise in self-confidence. For example, they describe themselves as “above average” in academic ability and in their personal lives. The problem is that there is a stark disconnect between their opinions of themselves and their actual ability.

I have quoted Jean Twenge before in other studies that she has done. For example, she has found that students suffer from what she calls “ambition inflation.” As their ambition increases, it reaches levels of unrealistic expectations. She has also found in another study that there has been a 30 percent increase toward narcissism in students since 1979.

The changing culture is part of the reason for this dramatic change. She explains: “Our culture used to encourage modesty and humility and not bragging about yourself.” If someone did that in the past, we called that person “stuck-up” or conceited. Today the culture often rewards such attitudes and behavior.

I would also argue that social media encourages and accentuates this trend. Students posting pictures of themselves on Facebook and Instagram, uploading videos on YouTube, and leaving numerous comments on Twitter receive positive feedback for such behavior. These technologies provide additional vehicles to feed their narcissism.

These studies remind us that this generation needs guidance from pastors and parents so they can apply biblical perspectives on success, humility, and self-image. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Private Sin Impacts Society

June 11, 2012

The June issue of the *AFA Journal* focuses due attention on how five areas of private sin impacts all of society. This is such an important issue since a very large portion of our society has bought into the idea that "what I do in private has no impact on the public." This current issue reminds us that it is not true!

The first area the article addresses is pornography. Dr. Jill Manning documents that about 170 million Americans use the Internet and that nearly one-third go online "for sexual purposes." Her research has also revealed that online sexual activity is "a hidden public health hazard" that is exploding.

Substance abuse is another example of how private sin impacts society. The U.S. Department of Justice has found that more than one-third of convicted felons had been drinking alcohol when they committed their offense. Another study found that more than one-quarter of state and federal drug offenders committed crimes in order to get money to support their drug habits.

A third area is crime in general. The statistics are staggering. The National Center for Victims of Crime estimates that just three areas (robberies, arson, and Internet fraud) cost us more than $1.6 trillion.

Abortion is a fourth area. Pro-choice advocates say that it shouldn't matter to society what a women does with her body. Apart from the obvious moral objections to abortion are the social and economic costs. As one expert from the National Right to Life observed, "You can't lose fifty-three million lives and not expect it to have a serious economic impact."

A final area documented in the article is fatherlessness. U. S. Ambassador Gregory Slayton has been on my radio program a number of times and documents the social and economic impact of fatherless homes. The estimated price tag for fatherhood failure is more than a trillion dollars over the last decade alone.

These few examples show the error in believing that private sin has no impact on society. We are paying a huge cost for people's sin. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Young Christians Leaving Church

Oct. 5, 2011

Why are young Christians leaving church? There are lots of reasons, and the latest Barna Report lists six reasons that can be found in the book by David Kinnaman titled, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church and Rethinking Church*.

The first reason young people are leaving is due to the feeling that churches are overprotective. This generation has unprecedented access to ideas and worldviews. But they feel that pastors, church leaders, and members of the congregation

fear the world and are often ignoring problems in the real world.

Young Christians also feel that Christianity is shallow. A significant percentage say that church is boring and many others say “faith is not relevant to my career or interests.”

A third reason for the exodus is that churches often come across as antagonistic to science. Three out of ten young adults with a Christian background feel that “churches are out of step with the scientific world we live in.” Many who majored in science say they are struggling to find ways to stay faithful to their Christian beliefs.

A different view of sex is a fourth reason Christian young people want to leave the church. Sadly most young Christians are as sexually active as their non-Christian peers, even though they have more orthodox views about sexuality.

The exclusive nature of Christianity is fifth reason Christian young people leave the church. They have grown up with the tolerance gospel and have trouble reconciling the claims of Christ and the exclusivity of Christian belief.

Finally, Christian young people also feel that the church is not a friendly place for those who doubt. In fact, they say that most churches do not allow them to express their doubts openly.

The church in the 21st century faces a significant challenge from Christian young people who are trying to reconcile the Bible and Christian teaching with their social experiences. We cannot ignore their concerns, but neither should we affirm their unbiblical views about sexuality or the exclusivity of the gospel. I’m Kerby Anderson, and that’s my point of view.

Muslim Conversion

Sept. 1 , 2011

There are so many encouraging stories of Muslims who have committed their lives to Christ. I thought I might share this one from a friend who works with the Jesus film project and is now using a video entitled Magdalena to reach Muslims.

A young Muslim girl was very strong in her belief, choosing to wear a veil even though that is not something that is very common in her region. Nevertheless, she was preaching a strong message of Islam and admonishing every woman in her village to wear a veil and conform to the strict form of Islam.

One day she went to the market to buy a veil for her cousin as a birthday gift. She told the shop keeper that she knew her cousin would not wear the veil. But she felt as a Muslim it was her obligation to convince her cousin that Islamic law requires it.

The shop owner took the opportunity and gave her a Magdalena video telling her, “I am doing the same thing as a Christian. I am not forcing you to view the movie, but my Lord ordered me to share His message of salvation with you. Please watch this movie.” She took the movie in order to not offend the shop owner and left with the veil and the movie.

The next day at 9:00 o’clock she returned to the shop with tears in her eyes saying, “I want to tell you one thing: I have worn a veil for almost five years and I wanted my cousin to be veiled. After watching this movie I understood that the best veil I will have with me forever and for every one is the Spirit and the message of Jesus Christ in me. Jesus gave me power, assurance, new life, dignity and peace.” She removed her veil and proclaimed with tears and a smile, “I am a Christian now.”

This is but one of millions of stories of Muslims coming to Christ due to personal witness, proclamation through broadcasting, and videos. And it illustrates what can happen when we are willing to pass on a tract, a book, or a video to the Muslims we meet. Most of all, we should all be encouraged by what is happening in our world today. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Air Force Suspends Ethics Class

August 17, 2011

The Air Force suspended an ethics course that has been taught by its chaplains for more than twenty years because the material included passages from the Bible. The course in question carries the title "Christian Just War Theory." It was taught by chaplains at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. Both Old Testament and New Testament verses were used.

The challenge to the class was brought by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation that argued that the course violated the constitutional separation of church and state. A spokesman for the Air Force said the purpose of the course was to help missile launch officers understand that "what they are embarking on is very difficult and you have to have a certain amount of ethics about what you are doing to do that job." He went on to say that the class was suspended the same day the complaint was filed.

The class is currently under review by Air Force officials in order to determine whether to revise the material or end the

class. Given the speed at which they suspended the class, I suspect that this will be the last we hear of a class on "Christian Just War Theory."

Considering the current climate, I guess it is surprising that such a class lasted as long as it did. Various groups calling for freedom from religion have been challenging any teaching or event that could possibly be considered an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

David French, senior counsel at the American Center for Law and Justice, says there is not violation of the Constitution. He has served in the military and reminds us that "Just War theory has been a vital part of American military history for the last several hundred years." He believes it is "another attempt to cleanse American history of its religious realities."

Yes, it does seem to be just another case of removing the Bible and biblical principles from public life. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Already Gone

August 29, 2011

Most parents believe that their children's Christian faith really won't come under attack until they leave home for college. They have seen other kid's faith falter in college and naturally assume that the university environment is toxic to a Christian's faith. While the last part of that assumption may be true, the rest of these assumptions are false.

First, Christian young people begin to have doubts about their Christian faith long before they head off to college. That is

the researched conclusion from the book *Already Gone* by Ken Ham and Britt Beemer. On my radio program they explained the results of their research. American Research Group made 20,000 phone calls and conducted detailed surveys of 1,000 twenty-somethings who used to attend evangelical churches on a regular basis. When asked when they first had doubts, 40 percent said in Middle School and 44 percent said in High School.

The study found that we are losing our Christian kids in middle school and high school rather than college. The title of the book says it all. They are "already gone" even though they are sitting in the pews and going to church. Ham and Beemer concluded that the youth in our churches are not being taught apologetics and therefore do not know how to answer the skeptical questions of our age.

A second issue is whether the university is toxic to Christian faith. Of course it is, but the latest studies by sociologist Christian Smith shows that youth that do not go to college show the same (even slightly greater) drop off in religious commitment. In other words, the culture is just as toxic to Christian faith as the university.

Parents (as well as pastors, teachers, and youth leaders) need to understand the crucial need to prepare our youth for a culture that is hostile to their faith. They may be in our churches and youth groups, but there is growing evidence that many of them are "already gone." I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.