

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

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Three thought-provoking articles about Christians and environmental responsibility:

1) It's Not Easy Being Green & Christian, 2) For God So Loved the World and 3) Creation Care—Saving the Earth Without Worshipping It.

About This Issue

A new year—time to put that new calendar on the wall, make a resolution or two and prepare for fun with the IRS! As we think of that word “new,” it reminds us that Christianity is a way of life that is all about being new. As believers who are in Christ we look forward with hope, for as Paul says “the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The reality of being new spiritual creations of God challenges Christians as stewards of the physical creation God has entrusted to us. Unfortunately, for several decades some Christians have believed environmentalism to be the sole province of hippies, pagans, new age gurus and weirdos in general. It's time for another look at what some Christians are now calling “creation care.” Our cover story this issue is designed to give you some environmental food for thought and to motivate you to consider how you might increase your commitment to take care of the creation God has given us.

Of course, the *PT* stands on the other side of Christ-less religion of all kinds, whether it's worship of the earth, or worship of traditions, rituals or performance-based behaviors. As this theme is central to our mission we welcome Bill Dahl to our pages with his article “Stop the Christian Hate Parade.” Dahl brings some fresh insight to the platforms and agendas that can masquerade as Christian. With his article, “Getting Over a Bad Church Experience,” Lawrence A. Pile, as director of the Wellness Center in Ohio, confronts an experience that many have had, and unfortunately, countless others continue to have.

On another note, we welcome old friend Arn Shein back to our pages. Arn has a great story to tell (“25,000 Blessings and Counting”)—filled with inspiration and hope. And there's much, much more in this issue—let us help you get this year off to a good start! Happy New Year to you and yours.

—Greg Albrecht, Editor-in-Chief

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- Give hope to those burned out by religion
- Warn about and describe religious devices and detours, potholes and pitfalls that can lead us away from God
- Combat the deadly virus of legalism
- Base our ministry upon the essential, main and plain core teachings of historic Christianity

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Hope in the Heart of Darkness

Thanks for the article, "Hope in the Heart of Darkness" [Nov/Dec 2005], about Dr. Sonderegger's work with the children of Uganda. He must have a unique and effective approach to be able to reach these traumatized children. I think we in the Western world have no idea what it truly means to forgive, and the Church doesn't fully address this issue. Thanks for sharing this story with *Plain Truth* readers.

**Starlene
Washington**



Jesus and the Stone Throwers

I read the article by Martin Davis, "Jesus and the Stone Throwers" [Nov/Dec 2005]. He asked, "What would we do if a practicing homosexual came to our church?" He then stated that a church is a hospital for sinners. I agree. My question to Mr. Davis is, at what point would he tell this person to "go and sin no more"? Hospitals isolate people with infectious diseases, and those who minister to their needs do so very carefully. Paul reminds us that a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Corinthians 5:6) and then in verses 9-11 not to keep company with blatant sinners. Is Martin saying that the loving thing to do is to accept them into our fellowship without reservation?

**Nelson
Oregon**

• *Martin Davis was not addressing the discipleship part of welcoming a sinner to church—just the welcoming part. The old cliché says it well—God wants us to come to him as we are, but he loves us too much to allow us to remain that way. Martin, as we understand it, was saying that the atmosphere and environment of many churches is such that those who are enslaved*

to some of the more socially unacceptable sins of the flesh would never come through the front door. He was urging that churches become places that welcome everyone, but of course the goal of the body of Christ is not to be overcome by the world, but to proclaim the victory that we can all have in Christ, over any and all sins. So yes, our goal as Christians is to do all we can to help one and all to overcome the way they were, yielding to the risen Lord so that he can make us all he wants us to be.



Sugar-Coated Theology

I recently read the article, "Sugar-coated Theology" by Bobby Neal Winters [Nov/Dec 2005]. The writer seems caught up in disappointment in religion today and it is disappointing, because there is much false teaching and certainly the "end-times" has become a fad of sorts.

This does not mean however, that our vision should be clouded by a few, even though the few seem overwhelming. God has his own way of reaching people and most often it is not even close to anything we would imagine. If a coffee mug with Jesus' image on it brings someone to him, then it does. Such images may seem crass, overbearing, unholy or even blasphemous to many. To others these images bring a kind of comfort, a visual aid of sorts.

**Rita Marie
Email**



How Do I Find a Good Church?

I read the article "How Do I Find a Good Church?" by Hank Hanegraaff [Nov/Dec 2005]. I've found the first thing any newcomer should know is how the church is governed. The first thing I ask is to see a copy of the church's constitution. Knowing the church's constitution will help a newcomer determine if this is the place you want to hang your hat.

I know from first-hand experience that if I would have had a copy of the church's constitution where I had attended several years and then became a member, I would have never joined. Recently, I asked for a copy of a church's constitution that I had been attending. I was amazed to see it indicated that you had to be a member of their church to participate in communion! Now where does it say this in Scripture? Bottom line: Know what the church stands for by reviewing their constitution, know how they resolve conflicts and if the church is truly biblically based.

**Anonymous
Michigan**

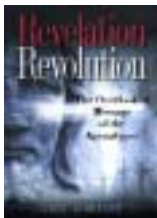


Where Did the Devil Go?

I really liked "Hey! Where Did the Devil Go?" [Sept/Oct 2005]. It's an article that will probably ruffle a lot of feathers. I'm truly encouraged to see Plain Truth Ministries taking a stand against the counterfeit revival and the wacky and unbiblical behavior that passes for spiritual warfare.

True spiritual warfare includes having the deepest respect for the Holy Bible and goes hand in hand with growing in spiritual maturity. May God help us all to really get into the Bible and grow in spiritual discernment.

**Gary
Virginia**



Revelation Revolution

I just finished reading *Revelation Revolution*. Thanks so much! I just think it is great. It cleans up the filthy lens so many teachers try to get us to view the book of Revelation through, allowing the grace of God to shine out. It has given me yet another assurance of the freedom, rest and refreshing simplicity that is in Christ as I, too, continue the journey out of "bad news religion." Thank you, and thank God!

**Adela
Oregon**

I can't thank you enough for my copy of *Revelation Revolution*! I have just returned from our Ladies' Care Group,

having used it as the Bible study portion, and it had a most positive effect. We always try out a couple of sessions with a new book to see if everyone is interested, but this time, the unanimous decision was to go ahead and study with it straight away. Already, they can see how balanced and informative it is, and how it will unteach us (is that a word?!). Thank you again, and may God go on healing us through your writing!

**Merri
South Africa**

You have completely blown my mind with the notion that there will be no Rapture. I have always been taught the Rapture concept, and so I have always believed it. Do you think you can give us the order of things that are to happen in the end times? Because now that there's no Rapture, I'm completely thrown off.

**Rebecca
Email**

• *Many have been taught the Rapture idea all their lives, and like you they have always believed it. I did too, at least a variant of the general idea, for most of my life. And I believed there was an order of events that would happen "in the end times." I also thought that I had a good idea of the end times—and guess what—the times I thought to be the "end times" are long gone!*

Now, according to some, the end is here again! The endless cycle of prediction addiction started my analysis of end-times preaching based on a method of understanding the Bible, called "dispensationalism."

Why have people been predicting the end times for almost 200 years—without any success I might add? And, equally important, why were Christians not preoccupied with end times preaching and teaching until the early 1800's?

As I studied end-times preachers and their writings, I came to see that they all predicted the end to come within their own lifetimes—I never came across the writings of an "end-timer" who said that Jesus would return, the Rapture would happen, the tribulation would begin, etc. hundreds of years after their own death. I wondered if their teaching, even if sincerely believed by themselves, acted as manipulative and even partially fabricated hype that motivated those who listened to them to follow them, donate to them, etc.

While the Bible has many passages that can be viewed as prophecies of events that have not yet happened, the book of Revelation is always the central issue in such claims and predictions. That's why I have written Revelation Revolution—the Overlooked Message of the Apocalypse. See the back cover of this issue for details on how to order your copy.

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