

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

Features

- 11 Global Warming: Secular Apocalypse?** *A Christ-centered perspective.*
- 19 I Am What's Wrong With the Church** *Can you be your own worst enemy?*
- 23 The Assignment** *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine..."*
- 25 Good Mom—Selfish Mom** *Gracefully negotiating modern motherhood.*
- 28 No Curfew—Are You Crazy?** *Will God still love me tomorrow?*



Departments

- 3 Letters**
- 13 Parodies of Piety** *Jim Fowler*
- 15 He Asked Me to Remind You** *Steve Brown*
- 17 Commentary** *Greg Albrecht*
- 22 Tender Mercies** *Ruth A. Tucker*
- 31 Growing Places** *Susan Reedy*



Cover Story

6

Global warming is a

complex problem that will not be quickly or easily solved. What is all the hot air about anyway? Is there a gracious, Christ-centered way of dealing with this complex issue?

COVER IMAGE BY COLDIMAGES.

About This Issue

We believe you are in for a treat—this issue combines text and graphics in a captivating way (if we do say so ourselves!), so get ready to enjoy some grace-based reading/viewing! While we try to stay away from topics that may wind up in some rock-throwing-fest better suited to radio talk shows than the gospel, at the same time, we absolutely believe that controversial subjects with Christ-centered significance need to be aired-out. Thus, our cover story, “Global Warming—Or Hot Air?” Please take note (pg. 12) that we want to know *your* opinion about how Christians should view this hot-button topic! We are, of course, looking for grace-based insight, not political rhetoric.

We often say that *Plain Truth* is challenging and Christ-centered. This issue is a great illustration of our claim—with articles like: 1) “Good Mom—Selfish Mom.” Are all moms who go to work abandoning their children? 2) “No Curfew—Are You Crazy?” Since God bases our relationship with him in his grace and trust, how can we in turn reflect God’s love in our lives? 3) “I Am What’s Wrong with the Church.” It’s easy to throw rocks and accuse others within the body of Christ regarding their shortcomings—but what about taking a closer look in the mirror? 4) “The Assignment.” God shows up in unexpected places.

If you like what you’re reading in *Plain Truth*, please let us know. If you appreciate the many outreach efforts of Plain Truth Ministries (PTM), please let us know that as well. We love receiving letters—and we deeply appreciate donations to the ongoing work of Plain Truth Ministries. We need your help with increasing costs of media ministry. If you’re already a Partner in this work—thank you! If you’re not, and you have been spiritually nourished by what we do, please know that others need the same spiritual feast. Please prayerfully consider what you can do to help.

—Greg Albrecht, Editor-in-chief

MISSION STATEMENT

Plain Truth Ministries proclaims authentic Christianity without the religion. Our work is Christ-centered, based on God's amazing grace, giving hope to those burned out by legalistic religion.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

For an introductory one-year subscription in the U.S.A. or Canada, call toll free 1-800-309-4466, or visit www.ptm.org. Single copies or back issues: U.S.\$4. Following initial one-year introductory subscriptions, *Plain Truth* is an automatic benefit for PTM contributors.

Subscriptions outside of U.S.A. and Canada are U.S.\$29.95 a year; credit card orders only.

TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

Be sure to notify us immediately of any change in your address by calling us at 1-800-309-4466, visiting our website at www.ptm.org/change (please have your old mailing label available for reference) or writing us at *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129 (please include your old mailing label and your new address). U.S. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129.

TO SEND A LETTER OR E-MAIL

Write us at Letters to the Editor, *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129, email us at managing.editor@ptm.org or fax us at Letters to the Editor at 626-358-4846.

The editors reserve the right to print or not print comments so addressed, in whole or in part, as deemed in the public interest, and to print your name and edit the letter for clarity and space. We will protect the confidentiality of correspondence that we deem to be of a personal nature. Correspondence published by Plain Truth Ministries does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Plain Truth Ministries.

ADVERTISING

Please direct inquiries about advertising rates to Skip Dunn; Phone: 626-298-8013; Fax: 626-358-4846. Advertising in *Plain Truth* does not imply editorial endorsement or agreement with the beliefs and teachings of Plain Truth Ministries.

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Greg R. Albrecht

MANAGING EDITOR: Monte Wolverton

ART DIRECTION AND PRODUCTION: Marv Wegner

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Laura Urista

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR: Skip Dunn

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT: Jim Fowler



The Gathering Storm of Fundamentalism

PTM has been such a Godsend to me and several of my friends. I grew up in a fundamentalist church which was so legalistic and narrow-minded that they wouldn't allow some other members of their own denomination to take communion with them. They even supported getting prayer out of the schools, because they didn't want *their* kids praying with kids from *other* denominations.

Thank God for PTM! I now know that it is totally and completely by God's grace through Christ's redeeming work that I am saved and that I can do nothing to "earn" or "prove myself worthy" to receive it. May God continue to work through PTM to help people like me learn the truth and break away from bad news religious organizations.

New York

I was glad to see you examine fundamentalism. I believe in the ministry of PTM, and I appreciate that you proclaim the message of grace with humor. Boy, do we Christians need to learn to lighten up!

Tennessee

I am a fundamentalist, believing the list of fundamental doctrines listed in your July/August *Plain Truth*. I thought ya'll were fundamentalists too, the problem being legalism (which your recent issue equates to "fundamentalism"). I think I see your point, but it is a mistake for you to attack fundamentalism. Some of my secular friends attack me for fundamentalism, and I don't need fellow Christians supporting them. I am afraid you have created a mess for your ministry. I was really finding your articles and website helpful in my walk with the Lord, but this has changed things. Unless you get back to legalism as the problem, I will cancel my subscription.

Texas

Please cancel my subscription. I was offended by your articles regarding fundamentalism. Your theology is in error. Time will reveal this to you.

New York

• We've received a number of cancellations because of our July/August article, "The Gathering Storm of Fundamentalism." While we regret these cancellations, Plain Truth will continue to alert readers to the dangerous pitfalls of legalism—wherever we may find them.



Trapped in the Watchtower

Thank you for your July/August article, "Trapped in the Watchtower." My husband and I were Jehovah's Witnesses for more than 12 years. We left about three years ago, but we are continuing to struggle with issues of faith due to our long-term involvement in a cult. I am doing a little better than my husband, because I was a Christian prior to joining the Witnesses, and I have been able to renew my relationship with Christ.

Please pray for our children, that someday they may come to accept Christ in their lives. I pray every day that God continues to support your wonderful ministry. God is surely using you in a wonderful way to help release his dear children from captivity to religious systems that abuse and mistreat them. God bless you all.

Massachusetts



The Power of Praise

In your July/August issue I read an article entitled "The Power of Praise," by Bobby Winters. One of the lines in that article jumped out at me so much that I cut it out and pasted it inside my Bible. Bobby Winters writes, "I believe we are all made in the image of God and when we take time to get to know someone else, we are seeing what God looks like from another angle."

I have had that same thought myself for years but never knew how to express it! In my mind, all of creation was meant

to paint a complete picture of God, but because of sin and the fall, whole pieces of the picture are missing. Then we will see God completely, but now we see “through a glass, darkly.”

North Carolina



When Beliefs Collapse

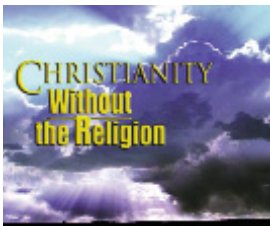
My adult son became a Mormon last year and is very committed to that “bad news religion.” Your May/June *Plain Truth* article on Mormonism (and your website) has given me much direction in this area. As a matter of fact, the Mormon missionaries have given up on converting me because I had such a wealth of information on this topic from PTM. Thank you for all you do. God bless!

New Hampshire

The Key Is in the Tears

I just finished Steve Brown’s article, “The Key Is in the Tears” in the May/June issue. It blew me away! How convicting anything is when you can see the person’s emotion tied to it. If someone corrected me with tears in their eyes, I think I’d really take it seriously! I also enjoyed Susan Reedy’s article “Hitting Rock Bottom” in the same issue. Her column reminded me of a story that compared a person arriving late to an AA meeting and arriving late to church services. In the first, the person is greeted warmly with affirmation that others were simply glad they were there. In the latter, disapproving glances are shot at the person. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out which meeting the person will continue to go to.

Texas



Christianity Without the Religion

I was a member of a church for 25 years, but I quit going because of a health issue. I would continue going if not for this most unusual disease called “cervical dystonia.” It is a rare disorder—only a few hundred thousand have it. It causes

my head to rotate to the right and lock there. It is very painful and embarrassing.

I feel guilty about not attending church and would like to continue going, but this physical problem makes it painful to look at the pulpit for any length of time. Plus, I have to continually answer questions from well-meaning people. I feel like such a sinner for not going to church services, but I know it is because of many years of legalistic training.

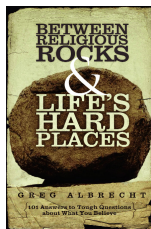
Surely God understands my pain and doesn’t hold it against me if I don’t attend church, right? I guess I just need to hear that I am still okay with God—even though I am not okay with attending services anymore.

Texas

• *You should not feel “like such a sinner” for not attending services in a building—and yes, that reaction of guilt is from years of legalistic training and the virus of religious legalism that infects us all. God not only understands your pain, but in Jesus he knows it—he has borne it. He knows it in ways that we won’t fully appreciate on this side of eternity.*

Your salvation does not depend on church attendance or any other external actions you may perform. Your salvation is given to you by God’s grace, and it is based on the intimate relationship God offers each of us.

We invite you to join us for online worship services—Christianity Without the Religion—anytime, 24/7, at our website, www.ptm.org.



Between Religious Rocks and Life’s Hard Places

I was so enthused after receiving my copy of *Religious Rocks* that I took it with me to a small group meeting. I read several questions and answers from the book to the group, and they could not believe the warm and loving way in which these questions are answered. One said that your answers were a “breath of fresh air” compared to the dogmatic answers they have received in the past. Thanks for this great book!

Indiana

• *For information on how to order Between Religious Rocks and Life’s Hard Places, call us at 800-309-4466 or visit our website, www.ptm.org.*

COPYRIGHT & POSTAL INFORMATION

The Plain Truth is published bimonthly by Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129. Copyright © 2007 Plain Truth Ministries. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved. Standard flats postage paid at Pasadena, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Volume 72, Number 5: September/October 2007. Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. *The Plain Truth* is a U.S. trademark.

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

Worship with us, 24/7, at our church without walls, a church without the religion. A relevant, timely, Christ-centered worship service is available right now at www.ptm.org. *Christianity Without the Religion* is a pending U.S. trademark.

OUR WEBSITE

Visit our website at www.ptm.org to browse *Plain Truth* archives for past articles, to find out more about Plain Truth Ministries and our other resources, to subscribe and to update your address.

SUBMISSIONS

The Plain Truth rarely publishes unsolicited manuscripts. Please review our writers guidelines at our website (www.ptm.org) before submitting queries. Include SASE with query. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited artwork, photographs or manuscripts.

PLAIN TRUTH MINISTRIES

The Plain Truth is published by Plain Truth Ministries (PTM). If you are interested in learning more about PTM, please request a copy of *Plain Truth Ministries... Helping Change Lives Around the World* by calling us at 1-800-309-4466, visiting our website at www.ptm.org or writing us at Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Plain Truth Ministries gratefully accepts tax deductible contributions to further the ongoing work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. We accept contributions in U.S. funds by check or credit card. Call us at 1-800-309-4466, or write us at Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129.

MEMBER  EVANGELICAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

MEMBER 

