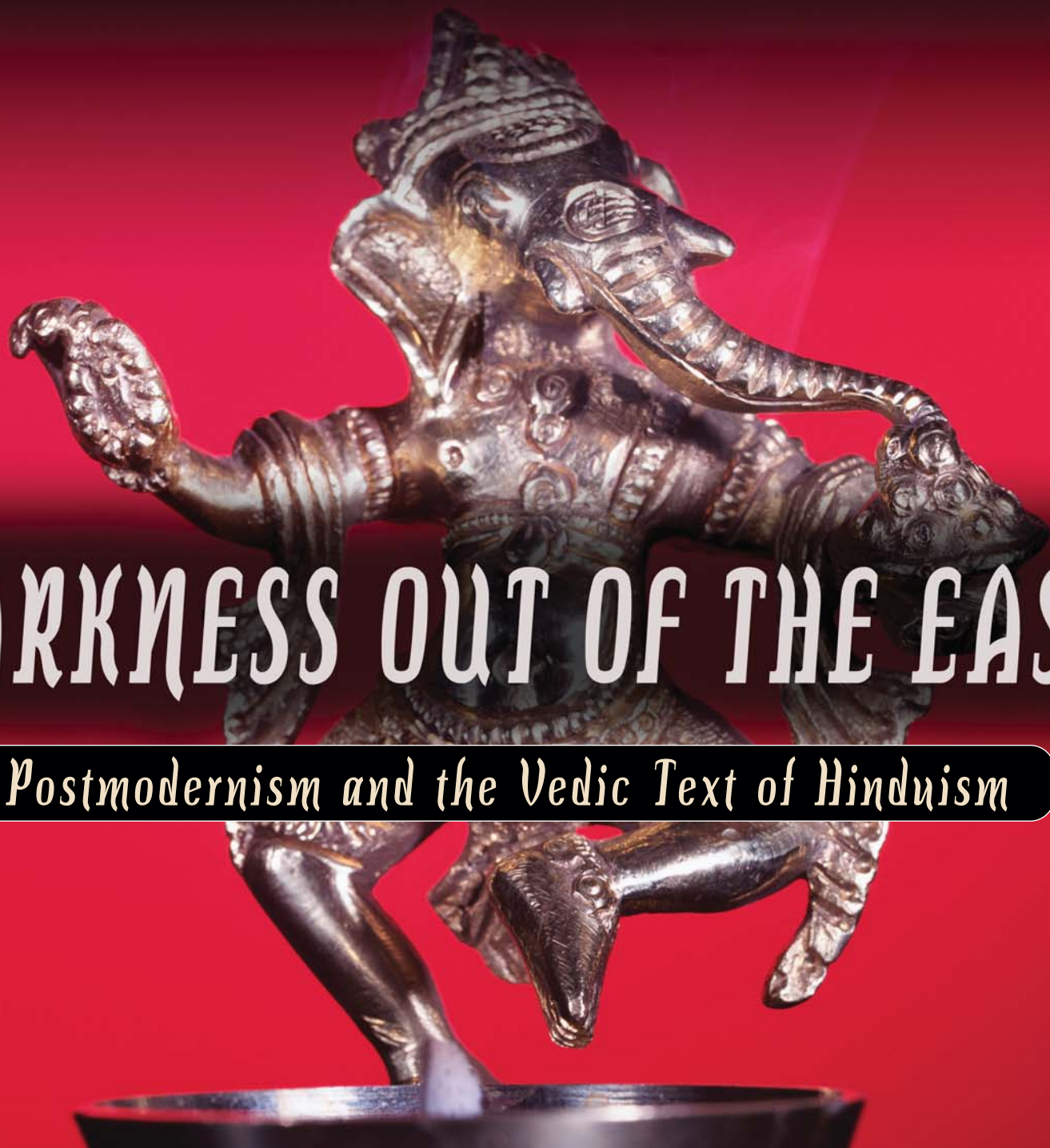


S P R I N G 2 0 0 4 I S S U E

# SOLA SCRIPTURA

AFFIRMING THE AUTHENTICITY, ACCURACY, AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE



## DARKNESS OUT OF THE EAST

*Postmodernism and the Vedic Text of Hinduism*

ALSO

God Loves New Stuff  
Interview with Michael Card  
The Speculum

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BY DAN HAYDEN

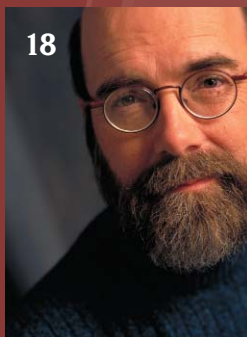
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## SOLA SCRIPTURA

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"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness..." (2 Timothy 3:16)

"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following." (1 Timothy 4:6)

"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3)

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## Today Is a Gift

Scott Pierre, Executive Director



Is there anything that you do that makes people laugh? Perhaps it's intentional: you're a clever trickster, or you can make all kinds of contortions with your face, or maybe you just have great timing with the latest joke. On the other unfortunate hand, you may be more like me. My comic accomplishments are definitely *unintentional*. You see, I have the uncanny ability to take a very common figure-of-speech or metaphor and just slightly misspeak it... usually in public. I'm famous for it. I find myself saying things like, "It was the straw that broke the monkey's back" or, "What a stab in the face!" And to be honest, I normally don't even realize I've said anything wrong until I notice that oh-too-familiar silly grin on my companion's face. I always argue that, despite the flaws, I'm still communicating my point, which is the whole beauty of this type of speech. A tried-and-true adage is a wonderful tool, which can illustrate a thought, make a point, or encourage a rule, and our modern culture has thousands of them. Many are centuries old and still effective even though their literal meaning has been forgotten. "Mind your P's and Q's," for example, is what 18th-century wives reminded their husbands who were on their way to the tavern. "P's and Q's" stood for Pints and Quarts, and those wives didn't want their husbands to drink too much. Many are being made up today, like the maxim I noticed hanging on the wall of a boutique store recently. It read:

*Yesterday is history*

*Tomorrow is a mystery*

*And Today is a gift*

These three simple truths served to remind me of the perspective every blood-bought Believer must have. To describe something as *history* means it's finished, over, a "done deal." There is nothing one can do to change it. This could be positive or negative. For many, personal history is remembered with an icy twinge. It's kind of like when you say something you never should

have said. You may have even realized the mistake immediately, and wish you had the ability to suck the air back in as it was leaving the roof of your mouth, but you can't. It is history and all you can do is apologize or try to make it right some other way. But as Christians, we rest in the knowledge that history is not really our story, but His-story... agreed upon before the foundations of the earth. Realizing this relieves the doubts, fears, and anxieties about our own individual past and causes us to focus on the mercy, forgiveness, and love we've received because of the past work of Jesus Christ on the cross. And there's nothing Satan can do to change that. It's

**Today you have  
the distinct  
opportunity to  
walk in the new-  
ness of life and to  
make a difference.**

finished. So as we live history, we acquire wisdom. "Live and Learn." Right?

A *mystery* is quite different. It is the unknown factor that makes something a mystery. To most of us, it is a mystery why something as heavy as a Boeing 767 jet airplane can lift off the ground carrying hundreds of people and tons of cargo on board. Yet it does. In fact, we believe in this mystery so strongly that we exercise our faith by getting on the very same plane to travel. The Bible describes a different type of mystery when Peter says, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:8-9). Unlike the jet plane, which one can still observe despite not understanding, the believer's faith is exercised in Jesus without witnessing Him physically. You see, the mystery of tomorrow requires our utter faith in God and His sovereign hand in every situation. You may be facing major business decisions or family issues that loom ahead. Remember the One who is in control, who causes all things to happen for our good and His ultimate glory, will bring His will to pass.

Since yesterday and tomorrow are currently out of our control, we are only left with a say in today. Today is a *gift*. As a young person, I was always taught that, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." Today is the precious present. The Bible exhorts us to do all that we do to the glory of our great God. Today you have the distinct opportunity to walk in the newness of life and to make a difference. Don't leave this gift in its box. Remember that yesterday is history and we can only learn from it, tomorrow is a mystery and we must exemplify trust in our Savior and His care for its provisions, but today is a gift. Let us accept this gift and take the opportunity to be obedient unto the One who is worthy of our service. May God continually arrest us with His truth, that each day you may enjoy the gift of His presence.

In this issue of *Sola Scriptura* magazine Dan Hayden offers a penetrating look into the culture of Hinduism and its effects on our society. James MacDonald explains how we can break the bonds of sin in his article "One of God's Favorite Words." In this month's interview, Michael Card, musician and author, explains how important the study of Scripture is to his music and life.

Determine to live this day as unto the Lord. As the old saying goes: *Don't put off to tomorrow what should have been done yesterday...* or something like that... ■



## Piercing the Fog

■ I must tell you that Sola Scriptura is such a wonderful refuge from man's whims, traditions, and interpretations when it comes to God's Holy Word. Your ministry is a lighthouse on the coast of man's dark sea of interpretation. There is a dark cloud of swirling experiences, pop-psychology, and entertainment that has settled over the church these days. It has drifted down as a subtle but pervasive fog to the extent that many are not even aware. How blessedly joyful it is then to see a beacon of truth shine forth from organizations such as yours.

—DAVID W. FRY  
Wichita, Kansas

### We are pilgrims

■ I'm glad you brought up the subject of global governance ("This Wolf is Real!" Winter 2003). I think the average Christian is sadly uninformed about what is happening behind the scenes these days, and also conditioned to label any exposure to realities of this nature as "conspiracy" thinking and therefore ignored. I hope you will bring the subject back from time to time as a reminder that we are indeed strangers and pilgrims in this world with a hope that is centered in our transcendent Lord Jesus Christ.

—GWEN RIPLEY  
Carol Stream, Illinois

### A sinner saved by grace

■ I was saddened by the comments expressed by Ms. Thornburgh (Feedback, Summer 2003) who said, "Lutherans make Luther a god." Even though my membership is presently in a non-Lutheran church, my theology is confessional Lutheran. That is why I can unashamedly say that Lutherans do not worship Luther or make him a god. We know all too well that Luther was a sinner, but a sinner saved by grace. All Christians who claim to be evangelical owe a debt of gratitude to Luther, Calvin, and the other Reformers. Unfortunately, many in the church

today—clergy and laity—seem to have lost an appreciation of the groundwork of these heroes of the faith. Luther a god? Certainly not. Luther a servant of God? Yes, by the grace of God!

—DICK BARANZINI  
Lake Forest Park, Washington

### Young earth/old earth

■ I am distressed to see *Sola Scriptura* jump into the "young earth/old earth" debate ("A Tale of Two Castles" Summer 2003) as a litmus test for the authority of God's Word. The inerrancy of Scripture is in all that it teaches. Genesis teaches that God created the universe. Whether you choose to believe it was accomplished in six literal 24-hour days, or whether you choose to believe that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8), there remains only a conflict of interpretation about the Creation and not one of fact. The Divine inspiration of Scripture remains well-above such a fray.

—R. STEPHEN BLOCH  
Carmel Valley, California

■ The thing I find most disturbing about the young earth/cosmos scenario is that when one gets to the really hard questions, they

basically have to fall back to an "appearance of age" explanation for what scientists actually observe in nature and the cosmos. What they are basically saying then is that God obscures, hides, or sends a false message of the actual age of nature and the cosmos.

—WAYNE SWINDEL  
via the Internet

*Genesis 1 repeatedly uses the phrase "there was evening and there was morning, [a] day." Without exercising any interpretation to produce meaning, the text plainly states/teaches "there was evening and there was morning, [a] day." Regarding the possibility of God sending a false message through the "appearance of age," we know that He "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). So if God did create nature or the cosmos with an appearance of age (as it seems He did with Adam), then there could be no deception in His actions.*

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# DARKNESS on *The Vedic* Te

*Our culture has taken us where we don't want to be.* The philosophical landscape is all rather confusing. Truth is relative, reality is illusive, and ultimate destiny is anybody's guess. Postmodernism is the philosophy of the moment, and we are told to believe that truth is whatever you want it to be. Respect for diversity is the final reality, and tolerance is the password for acceptance. We are now in limbo—floating on wispy clouds of imagination in search of personal fulfillment. As in *Alice in Wonderland*, it's all a surreptitious game, where the obvious is denied and the ridiculous is affirmed. So, how did we get here? Where did we go wrong?

**by DR. DAN HAYDEN**

**Hinduism and Islam each draw upon  
sacred writings to authenticate its**

**own religion. In our Spring 2003**

**issue, Dan explored the history of**

**Islam's holy text—The Koran—and how**

**it compares with the Bible. In this**

**article he does the same with the**

**Hindu scriptures—The Vedas.**

Perhaps we should look to the east, and remember the gurus of Hinduism that influenced a generation of hippies. These were the values they taught, and a society drowning in self-absorption was all too ready to receive them. It is Hinduism and other eastern religions spawned in its womb (Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hare Krishna, etc.) that laid the foundations of our postmodern culture. Truth is relative, reality is an illusion, and ultimate destiny is blending into the cosmic consciousness—these are the basic tenets of Hinduism (which sound curiously similar to the fundamental ideas of postmodernism). As a culture, we became enamored with the gurus from the east, and their influence gradually became pervasive. Now we are essentially a Hindu society, only we don't call it that. We call it postmodernism, and we like to think of it as progress.

So, where did Hinduism come from, and what are its sacred texts? How do their scriptures compare with the scriptures of the Judeo-Christian tradition? What are the foundations of Hindu thinking, and what are the results of its influence?

To answer these questions, let's look at "The Vedas," the holy writings of Hinduism. Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world (behind Christianity and Islam), and all of its teaching can be found in the sacred tradition of the Vedas. Let's compare the Vedic texts to the Bible and discover what appear to be the roots of our postmodern culture.

## **THE VEDAS – The Holy Writings of Hinduism**

It is estimated that 13 percent of the world's population is Hindu, with more than one million Hindus living in North America. India is the epicenter of Hinduism and boasts 700 million adherents, or 82% of its population. Other countries have large populations of Hindus as well, but Nepal is the only country where Hinduism is the state religion. It is not surprising, then, that Hinduism ranks as the third largest religion in the world, ahead of Buddhism.

There is a vast and varied literature tradition in Hinduism, but the texts of the ancient Vedic tradition are considered their most sacred scriptures. The oldest writings of the Vedic tradition are called the **shruti texts** (shruti means "hearing") probably because they were passed on orally before they were committed to writing.





# at of the EAST ext of Hinduism



# Darkness Out of the East

## The Vedic Text of Hinduism

Over time additional religious literature evolved and was added to the Vedic collection. These writings were called **smriti texts** and include “religious, moral, and educational writings based on remembered tradition.”<sup>1</sup> Although the shruti texts have supreme authority in Hinduism, some smriti texts are still considered to be the Word of God (i.e., the popular Bhagavad-Gita—supposedly produced by Krishna, who was thought to be an incarnation of the god, Vishnu).<sup>2</sup>

The most ancient shruti texts of the Vedic period are thought to date from the beginning of the second millennium BC, while other texts were added over the next fifteen hundred years (2000-500 BC).

Eventually, the Vedas were divided into four separate compositions, with each division having four parts:

### The Four Vedic Compositions

- **The Rig-Veda:** the oldest and most sacred text (10 books)
- **The Yajur-Veda:** a handbook for priests performing the Vedic sacrifices
- **The Sama-Veda:** consisting of chants and melodies of hymns to be sung at special sacrifices
- **The Atharva-Veda:** various traditions dealing with spells, charms, and magical formulae

### The Four Parts of Each Veda

1. The **Samhitas**—hymns praising God (this is the main body of each Veda and the most ancient part). The Rig-Veda has 1028 hymns praising ancient deities
2. The **Brahmanas**—prose manuals of ritual and prayer for the guidance of priests
3. The **Aranyakas**—resulting from discussions in the forest about worship, meditation and ritual (only included in the first two Vedas)
4. The **Upanishads**—compositions containing mystical concepts of Hindu philosophy (there are 108 texts, but only 15 are considered important)<sup>3</sup>

These are the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, but they are not the only scriptures. Many other writings by popular Hindu teachers down through the ages are also given the status of sacred scripture. In fact, as Kanitkar and Cole point out, “The story of Hindu sacred literature has no end, only the occasional update.”<sup>4</sup>

### Development of the Vedas—A Brief History

The word *Hindu* “is a Persian term that means ‘the people and culture of the Indus River region.’”<sup>5</sup> It is believed that the Indus Valley culture of western India, Pakistan, and Central Asia, was one of the oldest cultures of the ancient world (contemporary with the pyramids of Egypt).<sup>6</sup> Dating between 2700-1900 BC, this culture

became the major influence on much of the Asian subcontinent.

The earliest inhabitants of the Indus Valley were the Dravidians, but about 2000 BC the warlike Aryans crossed the Caucasus Mountains and conquered the Valley. Both the Aryans and the Dravidians were polytheistic (the worship of many gods), so the Aryans simply adopted the Dravidian gods and gave them new names. Eventually the Indus River dried up (about 1900 BC) and the Aryans migrated into what we now know as India. With them came their polytheistic religion, which they began to express in “hymns, prayers, mythic stories and chants...”<sup>7</sup> These were originally passed down orally and were later collected in sacred texts known as the Vedas (Veda means “wisdom or science”).<sup>8</sup>

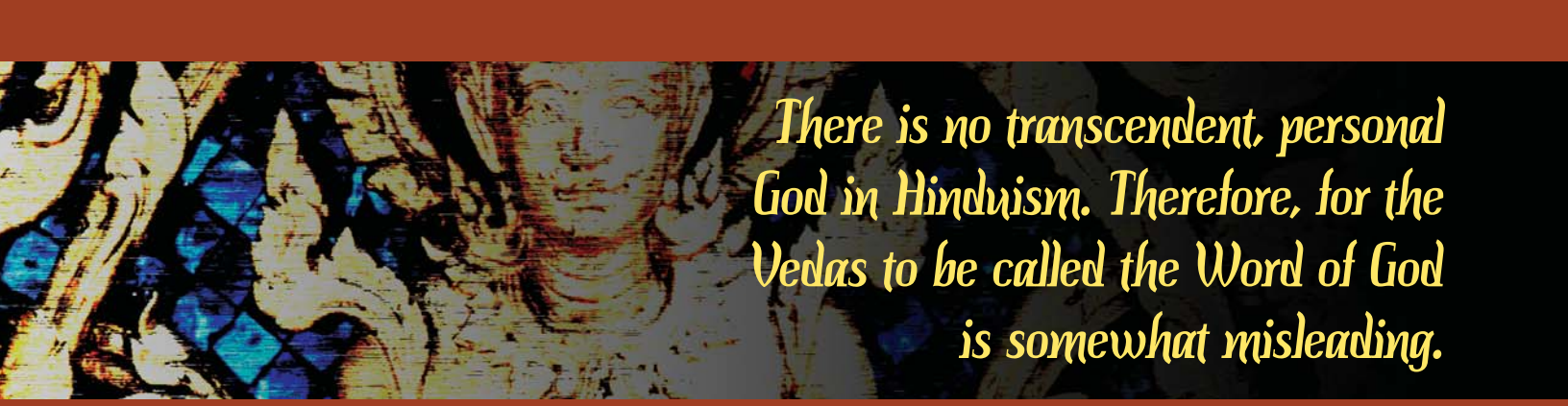
This period of time in which the Vedas were composed, orally transmitted, and eventually committed to writing is known as the Vedic Age. Vedic religion was the religion of the Aryans, and the sacred literature of this period became the basis of both Hinduism and its subsequent offshoot, Buddhism (Gautama Buddha 560-486 BC). Ridenour makes this comment: “These writings are considered by Hindus to be supernaturally inspired and are as sacred to them as the Bible is to Christians.”<sup>9</sup>

### Comparison with the Bible—A Brief Analysis

The comparison of the Bible with the Vedas is an extensive subject. Therefore, the following observations are not meant to be exhaustive. Hopefully, however, they will be helpful with regard to our present subject of discerning which writings are the true Word of God. Here are three comparisons:

1. When someone claims to have a word from God, one of the first things the listener needs to discover is what is meant by “God.” For instance, in order for that “God” to engage in verbal communication about well-formulated ideas, He would have to be a personal God, capable of thinking and communicating. This, of course, is the kind of God presented in the Bible; and it is also what is claimed for Allah, the God





# There is no transcendent, personal God in Hinduism. Therefore, for the Vedas to be called the Word of God is somewhat misleading.

of Islam. Hinduism is different, however. There is no transcendent, personal God in Hinduism. Therefore, for the Vedas to be called the Word of God is somewhat misleading.

Hindus worship a different type of God than found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Initially the early Vedic Age was polytheistic, but as Hinduism began to evolve, individual identifiable gods gave way to an impersonal force, where everything was god. It is estimated that there are “330 million gods, goddesses or demigods in the Hindu pantheon.”<sup>10</sup> Yet the idea of pantheism (the belief that everything is god) began to dominate Hindu religious philosophy in the later Vedic literature. Many Hindus still identify with a particular god, but the highest goal of Hinduism is “union with Brahma, the impersonal absolute.”<sup>11</sup>

The Vedas ultimately teach that the human and the divine are one in essence. In his book, *The Wisdom of the Vedas*, J.C. Chatterji observes,

The conclusion of Vedic inquiry is that there exists within us an immortal and eternal being which is the same as the immortal and eternal being that pervades the entire universe... Our Atman or inner Self is one with the Brahman or supreme and infinite principle behind all the objects in the world.<sup>12</sup>

Understanding this aspect of Hindu theology leads to the realization that what Hindus believe to be the Word of God is more correctly, the word of man who has become god. Since there is no personal, transcendent God (only a divine principle pervading the universe), the Vedas are essentially philosophical speculations of men who believed they were in tune with something they called the divine.

Therefore, when comparing the Bible with the Vedas of Hinduism, we at least

need to realize that we are not comparing apples with apples. The Vedas are a wholly different concept than what is claimed for the Bible—that a personal, transcendent God has communicated in verbal terms with mankind.

2. Another concept of Hindu philosophy taught in the Upanishads as part of the Vedic literature is that there is no absolute truth—no physical reality, only illusion. This is difficult for westerners to understand, but it is the foundation of Hindu religious thought. Ridenour expressed it this way:

...Eastern religions emphasize that *everything* in the world is temporary, changing, ephemeral and unreal and that our perceptions of the world are most often misleading and illusory. The physical universe is not seen as a rational, ordered universe revealing God’s glory... but as a *hindrance* to experiencing “ultimate Reality.”<sup>13</sup>

The “wisdom” of the Vedas is that we cannot rely upon our senses to give us an understanding of objective reality. In other words, what you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel is not real—it is all a grand illusion. The senses are, in fact, a barrier to truth and the only way to experience what is essentially real is to “dive down deep into what constitutes the subjective nature”<sup>14</sup> and commune with Brahman, the divine principle. The result of this thinking is that there is no absolute truth, only what is true for the individual person. That is why pluralism, the thought that even contradicting ideas can both be right, is an acceptable idea in Hinduism.

The point here is that the Vedas are not the Word of God in the sense that they communicate an absolute truth articulated by a personal God. The Vedas are, in fact, only a guide to individual truth, which each

person must discover for himself or herself. Chatterji explains it this way:

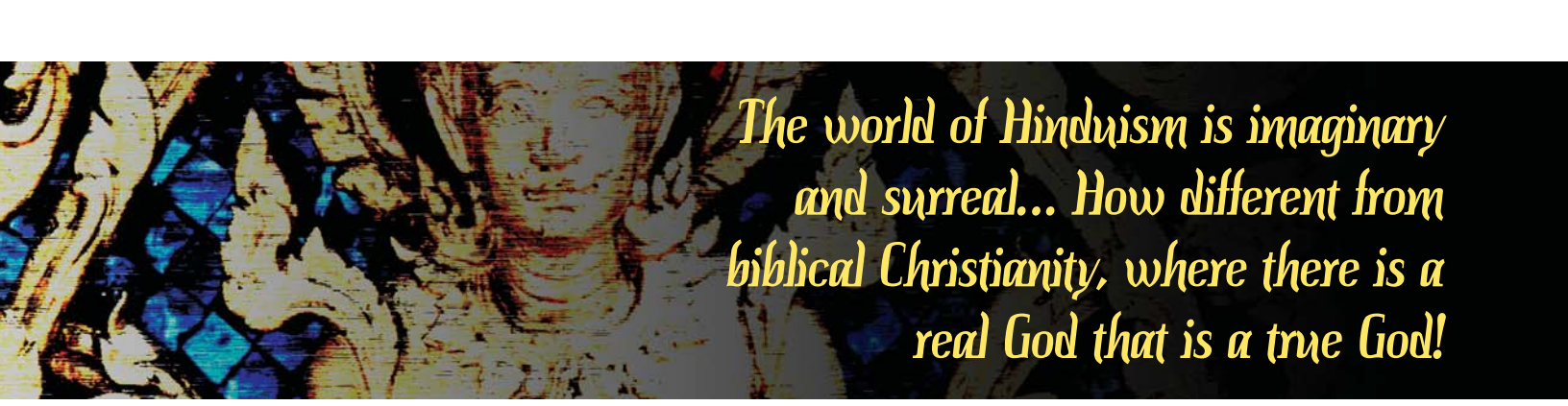
Hence the Vedas do not set forth any dogma, nor insist that we believe in anything in particular. They are not focused on a particular teacher or prophet, a specific revelation, or historical event. Rather they make the individual, we ourselves, important, as truth, according to the Vedic perspective, is something that we must discover for ourselves.<sup>15</sup>

When the Vedas are compared to the Bible, therefore, the concept of truth in each is discovered to be radically different. The question then, is which concept of truth is most legitimate? Do we accept our objective world as real—the product of a personal God who communicates absolute truth (as in the Bible), or do we accept the idea that everything is an illusion governed by a divine principle which insists that nothing in and of itself is real, as in the Vedas? The distinction between the two is fundamental and the choice becomes drastic in its implications.

3. There are many other comparisons between the Bible and the Vedas that could be made, but let’s consider just one more as we ask the question, “What has been the effect of each on the human condition?”

Wherever the Bible has gone, it has had a positive influence on society. The Bible emphasizes human dignity by revealing a personal God who is interested in the welfare of each individual person. The realization of this has strengthened and empowered the human spirit to develop a society that respects individual achievement and values human life. The advanced cultures of Europe and North America are, to a large extent, the result of that biblical influence.

India, on the other hand, has been the product of a different tradition. The Aryans



# The world of Hinduism is imaginary and surreal... How different from biblical Christianity, where there is a real God that is a true God!

introduced a caste system into the early Vedic traditions that was later developed into a well-established social hierarchy. The priests of Brahman (the divine principle) became known as the Brahmins, who established themselves as the highest caste in Indian society, in accordance with Vedic teaching. Next came the warriors and rulers, and after them, the merchants. The fourth group was made up of the laborers and servants—the lower class of Indian society. Finally, there were “the untouchables”<sup>16</sup> who were the social outcasts and until the twentieth century were regarded as subhuman. This system was further divided into “numerous subcastes that are even more self-contained.”<sup>17</sup> The result is a caste system which severely limits both social status and economic opportunity to the elite. All of this is taught in the Vedas.

Now there are wonderful people in India and, in many ways, the country is technologically advanced. After all, India is a nuclear power nation. Yet the vast majority of the inhabitants of India are the lower classes where the caste system enslaves them in subservient conditions with no hope of achieving anything better in this life. Their conditions are often deplorable, living in perpetual filth, oppressive pollution and disease, and widespread economic poverty. Their caste is their lot in life, which must simply be accepted and endured. All of this is the product of their religion which, in turn, is a reflection of Vedic teaching.

Furthermore, the situation is complicated by the concept of reincarnation, which is one of the foundational teachings of the Vedas. The only hope for a Hindu to have a better life is to achieve a higher caste; this can only be done, however, through a seemingly endless cycle of reincarnations, called “samsara.”<sup>18</sup> There is a real possibility, though, that the next reincarnation for an individual may be downward—a return to this earth in the form of an animal. This is

why animals, including vermin (like rats) are allowed to run free in Indian society. They are actually thought to be people from former lives. The bottom line in all this is that it is only through a cycle of hundreds (maybe thousands) of reincarnations that anyone could even begin to think of achieving “moksha,” or release from the cycle of suffering and union with Brahma. Even in modern life the caste system and the concept of reincarnation continues in India with its social strangulation on the majority of people.

So in our comparison of the Bible with the Vedas, there is again a great contrast in what each has produced in its effect on human life. The effect of the Bible has been to liberate and expand the human potential. The effect of the Vedas has been to curtail and limit the human potential. The difference is, indeed, striking.

Both the Bible and the Vedas have experienced a long history with an ancient tradition, and both sacred writings claim to be the Word of God. Yet they are diametrically opposed to each other in what they teach about the nature of God, the essence of reality, and the salvation of mankind.

## THE NEW DARK AGES

The world of Hinduism is imaginary and surreal. When it comes to reason and logic, there is “lift-off” from any foundation of substance and reality. Hindus may be wonderful people, but they soar in the ethereal space of their own minds and put their hope in things that don’t exist. They have millions of gods that are no gods, and a kind of truth that is no truth.

How different from biblical Christianity, where there is a *real* God that is a *true* God! The personal God of the Bible created a real world where there is substance and evidence to affirm a true sense of reality. There is a real Savior who died on a real cross to pay the real penalty of real sins committed by real people. The Bible of Christianity is a

book of verifiable history that tells the real story of the human race and of the providence of a sovereign God who oversees the affairs of His real universe.

When considering the Vedas, therefore, there is no comparison. Only the Bible presents things as they really are, and only the Bible offers a solution to the human dilemma. The Vedas simply create an imaginary world for flights of spiritual fantasy. The eastern world has been blinded for centuries, but unfortunately the western world is beginning to embrace the illusion. Postmodernism is a major leap in that direction.

So, where did we go wrong? Well, we should never have listened to the gurus. Postmodernism is a denial of reality and, hence, a reversal of the enlightenment. It is the beginning of a new Dark Age. The gurus opened the door and we walked in. ■

## ENDNOTES

1. V.P. (Hemant) Kanitkar & W. Owen Cole, *Hinduism* (Lincolnwood, IL: NTC/Contemporary Publishing, 1995), p. 105.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
5. J. Isamu Yamamoto, *TM & Hare Krishna* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), p. 7.
6. J. C. Chatterji, *The Wisdom of the Vedas* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1992), pp. 2-3.
7. Fritz Ridenour, *So, What's the Difference?* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), p. 89.
8. J. C. Chatterji, *The Wisdom of the Vedas*, p. xv.
9. Fritz Ridenour, *So, What's the Difference?*, p. 90.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
12. J. C. Chatterji, *The Wisdom of the Vedas*, p. 4-5.
13. Fritz Ridenour, *So, What's the Difference?*, p. 89.
14. J. C. Chatterji, *The Wisdom of the Vedas*, p. 13-14.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
16. Fritz Ridenour, *So, What's the Difference?*, p. 90.
17. J. Isamu Yamamoto, *Hinduism, TM & Hare Krishna*, p. 10.
18. Fritz Ridenour, *So, What's the Difference?*, p. 92.



## The Gate in Scripture

Dan Warner

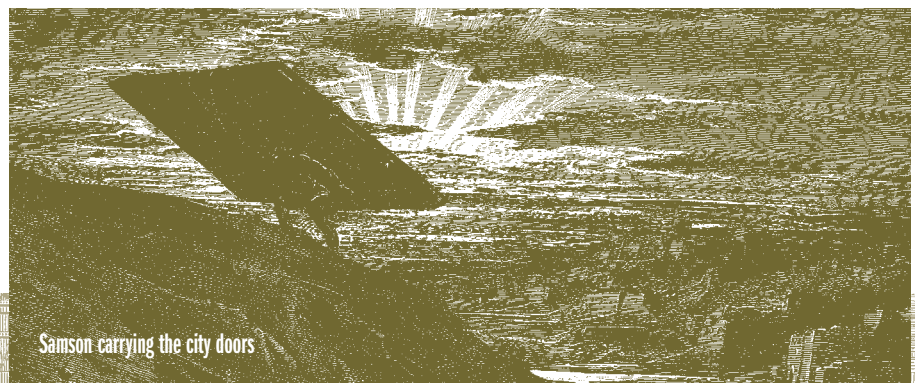
**T**he Hebrew word **gate** (sha`ar) with its several forms occurs 435 times in the Bible. The gate of a large city or fortress was very significant in the ancient world for it had contrasting functions, both military and domestic. First, it was the most vulnerable point in the defense fortifications of the city, hence great care was taken in its design. Gates needed to be wide enough to accommodate chariots yet narrow enough to hold off a major assault. Some gates contained as many as six chambers (three on each side), each with doors made of wood with metal plating to protect it against being set on fire. Doors pivoted in sockets (most made of stone) and a heavy horizontal beam was laid across its center to bar it from being opened. Most gates included a tower complete with guard posts, making the gate into a virtual fortress. This makes the story in Judges 16:3 all the more amazing when we read that Samson was able to lift the doors off the city gate of Gaza and carry them 35 miles from sea level up to the top of a mountain!

The gates of the city were also the natural points of contact for trade merchants as well as other commercial and legal transactions. At several cities, benches are found lining the inside chambers of the gate. This helps us understand the Psalmist's complaint that he is the subject of gossip by "those who sit in the gate" (Psalm 69:12). At Dan, a large public square with a flagstone pavement was found in front of the gate bringing to mind Hezekiah's charge to his commanders in 2 Chronicles 32:6, "He appointed military officers over the people and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate..." Also found at Dan, was a flat limestone pedestal with round pillars set on a stone base at each of its corners. The excavator suggested this was used as a

covered installation for the king's throne mentioned in 2 Samuel, 19:8, "So the king arose and sat in the gate. When they told all the people, saying, 'Behold, the king is sitting in the gate,' then all the people came before the king." Gates were a critical and significant part of the construction and function of a city during Biblical times. As archeologists unearth and study their design, their discoveries enhance the richness, authority, and accuracy of God's Word. ■

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Dan Warner is President of The Virtual Bible, Director of Development and Marketing at the Archaeological Institute, New Orleans Seminary, Assistant Area Supervisor with the Megiddo Expedition, and has excavated at Ashkelon, Gerar, and Tel El Farah South.



# The Speculum

Dr. Herbert Samworth

**H**ave you ever been in a house of mirrors? It is often amusing to see the odd reflections created by the ill-shaped and deformed mirrors that show a person as much taller, shorter, thinner or thicker than they truly are. One could never gauge their true reflection by what they see in such a mirror. When it is important to have our true reflection, we use a mirror that is well designed for such a purpose.

One of the prized possessions of the Van Kampen Collection is the *Speculum*. *Speculum* is a Latin word that can be translated as “mirror” or “looking glass.” The full title of this beautiful book is *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* or the “Looking Glass for the Salvation of Humanity.” Its purpose was to reveal a person’s spiritual condition and thus aid them in their search for salvation.

In the introduction to the *Speculum*, the editor states that while the educated, or literate, can learn by reading, the uneducated must be instructed by illustrations. For this reason the *Speculum* contains many stunning illustrations of Biblical scenes (called *illuminations*). Books of this nature were popular in the Middle Ages because they functioned as a bridge between the Medieval period’s typological method of Bible interpretation and the historical-grammatical method utilized during the Reformation.

The *Speculum* utilized typology to teach the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, showing that the Old Testament historical narrative and stories prefigured the events and persons of the New Testament. This work contains illustrations that depict the Person and work of Christ, redemption from sin and the role of the Virgin Mary. Historical material from the works of the historian Josephus and Peter Comestor’s *Historica*

*Scholastica* also supplement the biblical narratives.

The *Speculum* was printed in 1473 by Gunther Zainer of Augsburg (located in modern Germany). Zainer, a former scribe, attempted to establish a printing press in Augsburg but faced opposition from the powerful woodcutters’ guild. With the aid of the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey, Zainer set up a press in the monastery to escape the restrictions imposed by the guild.

Zainer printed the text of the book in Latin beneath painted woodcuts of Old Testament scenes. Pictured here is an illumination that depicts a scene from Jacob’s life while fleeing Canaan on his way to his uncle’s home. Jacob has a dream and sees the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder set up between heaven and earth. The meaning of this vision is that God’s promise to bless Jacob will be fulfilled because he is the special object of God’s favor. The person reading the book or seeing the illustration can make the same application to his own life. This is just one of the many superb illuminations in this important book.

But Zainer took an additional step in his work. He also provided a German translation of the Latin text for those who were unable to read Latin. Thus, the teachings of the *Speculum* were available for three different audiences: via the illuminations for the many who could not read, in Latin for the educated, and in German, the vernacular of the common people.



As far as can be determined, the Van Kampen Collection copy is the first printed edition of this most important work. There were at least sixteen editions printed before the end of the 15th century in Latin, Dutch, French and German, but the Van Kampen Collection copy occupies the pride of first place in the printing of this masterful work. ■

The *Speculum* is part of **The Van Kampen Collection**, one of the largest private collections of Bibles, artifacts, and biblical manuscripts in the world. The Collection is the centerpiece of Sola Scriptura’s ministry, and is housed at **The Scriptorium**, an interactive museum at **The Holy Land Experience** in Orlando, Florida. This book is presently on display in the Special Exhibit Room at The Scriptorium. The exhibit is called **Light in the Dark Ages** and is an illustration of the power of God’s Word to dispel the spiritual darkness that had enveloped much of Europe before the Reformation.



OPENING SPRING 2004

# LIGHT in the DARK AGES

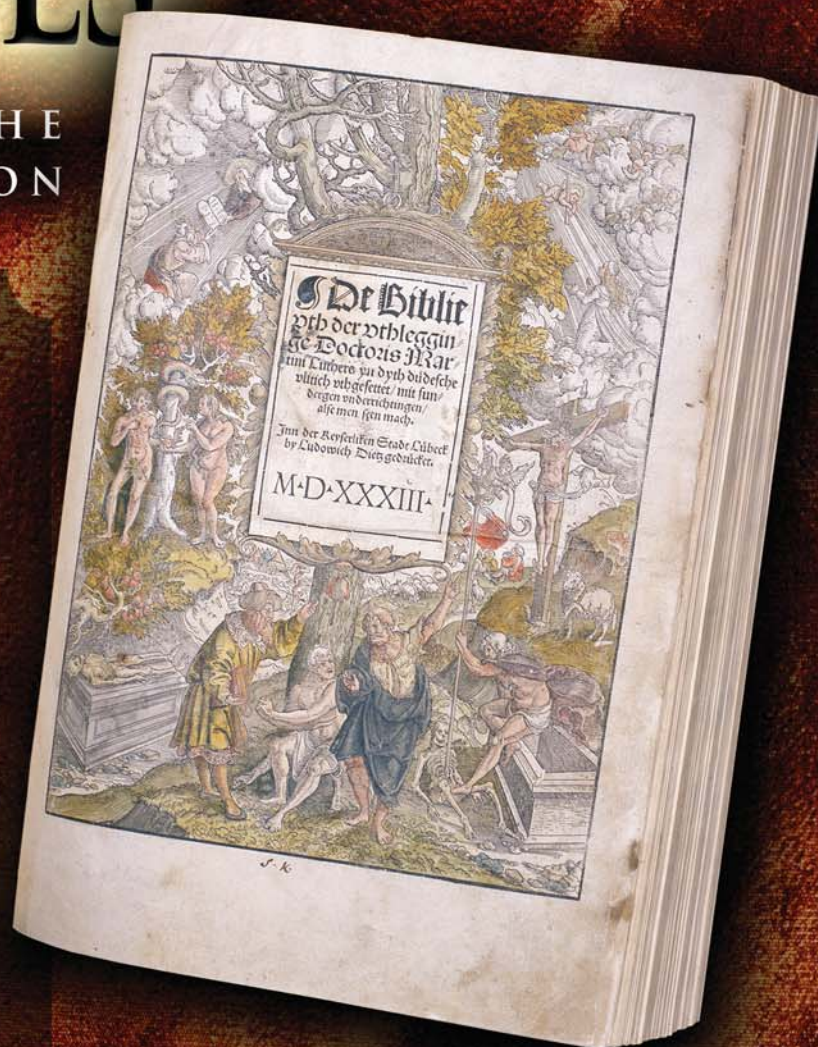
GERMAN BIBLES OF THE  
VAN KAMPEN COLLECTION

LIGHT IN THE DARK AGES gives you a firsthand glimpse into the process that brought God's Word from the Latin translations of the church to the common language of the German people. Through the lives of Johannes Gutenberg and Martin Luther, you will experience a monumental period of change in history.

LIGHT IN THE DARK AGES opens Spring 2004 at The Scriptorium at The Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida. Call toll free 866-872-4659 or visit [www.holylandexperience.com](http://www.holylandexperience.com) for more information.

## Experience

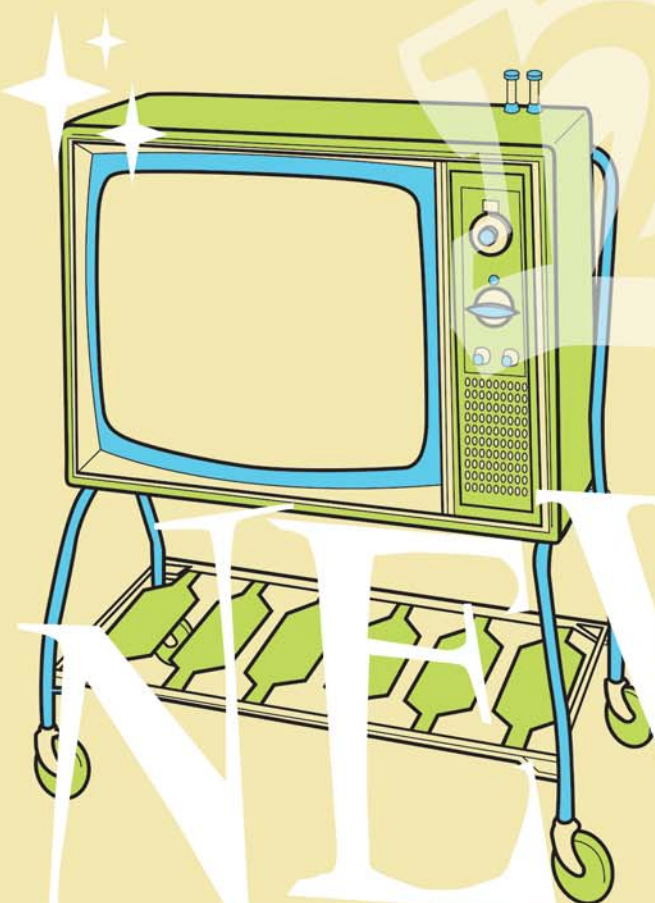
- The German Bible translated by Martin Luther
- The very first copy of the Bible in German
- A page from a Gutenberg Bible
- Erasmus' Greek New Testament







new!



NEW!



# One of God's Favorite Words

BY JAMES MACDONALD

**D**o you like new things? I love stuff when it's new. I like new cars and new seasons and new restaurants and new kids (not in that order). To me new is a really good feeling. I like new jobs (even though I'm in somewhat of a rut at this point—and fifteen years happily so). I like getting new clothes. I like having new friends, but here's a wonderful truth: God loves new things. Do you know that about your heavenly Father? He loves stuff that's new too!

Did you know that God loves new things? All the way through the Bible, He is talking about new things. And these new things He has given to us. Here is a list we should not ignore:

- God gives us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26).
- God gives us a new spirit (Ezekiel 18:31).
- God puts a new song in the hearts of His children (Psalm 40:3).
- He has given us a new name (Revelation 2:17).
- He has given us a new self (Ephesians 4:24).
- He makes us wholly new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 pulls it all together and says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."

God loves new stuff. In fact, among the final words that God will speak in human history, recorded in Revelation 21:5, are: "Behold, I make all things new."

The Christian life is about being new, different, and changed. If your faith in Christ has made no difference in you, then ask yourself if it has made any difference to God. If you are not changing, being transformed little by little, day by day feeling His victory, then what is up with your faith? The people who are in Christ are being changed. The Christian life is all about change. The words "newness of life" from Romans 6:4 translate a Greek word which does not mean new in time, but new in character, new in quality. A different person.

Now don't miss this: God wants to make you new. That is His thing. He is trying to change you. And that is why it says in the text that if then we have been identified, through baptism, with the

death of Christ, we should also be identified with the resurrection of Christ and "walk in newness of life" (verse 4).

When you get right down to it, church history is nothing more than a list of the lives God has made new. Let me tell you about one, John Newton. (Newton is an appropriate name... right?) Early in his life he ran away from his home in England because he was very rebellious and hated his parents. He joined a slave ship crew, but when he fell out of favor with the captain, he was given as a slave to the African wife of a white slave trader. For many years he lived the life of a slave in Africa and eked out an existence on table scraps and wild yams that he dug up at night. Finally he was able to escape from his master and worked his way back into the shipping/slave-trading business. Over several more years he actually became a captain, transporting captured people back and forth from Africa to the States. Wicked, evil, filthy, rotten, and profligate things were done on Newton's ship, and those were the darkest days of his life.

One night in 1748, John Newton was transporting slaves across the northern Atlantic Ocean when a violent storm arose to nearly sink his ship. In that hour of desperation, although he was a very wicked man, John Newton cried out to God for forgiveness and was converted to Christ. He returned to London and became a tireless, powerful minister of the Gospel. Though he was not perfect, he was dead to sin—dead to the old way. He was changed.

After spending the final days of his life preaching the Gospel, he wrote his own epitaph, which stands to this day as a testimony to the marvelous transforming power of God. He wrote:

Here lies John Newton.  
Once an infidel libertine,  
A servant of slaves in Africa  
Was, by the rich mercy of our  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,  
Preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed  
To preach the faith  
He labored so long to destroy.



**SOMETHING HAPPENED WHEN I CAME TO  
CHRIST. THAT INNER TRANSFORMATION,  
OF BECOMING a "new CREATION,"  
TOOK PLACE.**

**new!**

**IF YOU ARE IN CHRIST, YOU ARE NOT a SLAVE  
TO SIN. IN CHRIST YOU ABSOLUTELY HAVE  
THE POWER TO BE THE PERSON GOD WANTS  
YOU TO BE.**



John Newton is best known for writing the hymn, “Amazing Grace.” In its well-known first verse, he testified that grace “saved a wretch like me.” A lesser-known verse of the hymn details Newton’s awareness that conversion was just the beginning of transformation, not the end:

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,  
And grace 'twill lead me home.

John Newton was a man in process. Are you a man or woman in process? The truth that we can learn from Romans 6:3–5 is that the power of sin is broken in us. We are free to choose what we do; in Christ we are dead to sin! Why? Because God’s grace demands it, and Christ’s victory assures it.

Think back to the time before you committed your life to Christ. Do you remember certain sins that you were a slave to? No matter how you tried, prior to coming to Christ, you fell back into those same patterns again. The good news is that when we confess Christ as Savior, God connects us with the very resurrection power of Jesus Christ and the power of sin in our life is broken. Sin may call us or tempt us or try to get our attention but it cannot boss us around anymore.

That is the picture Paul is trying to communicate in Romans 6:1–7. He wanted you and me to know that we do not have to be under the demands of sin anymore. That need not be our experience, and by the power of God, it is not the experience of those who live in His resurrection power. Tragically, most Christians are still living like they are under the power of sin. Are you? I challenge you in this moment to embrace the truth that can set you free. You don’t have to sin! You can choose! Before Christ you had no choice. Now you have a choice.

We can believe we are dead to sin’s power because of our own experience. Most Christians can recall the dramatic change within when they initially trusted Christ.

When I look at my own life, I recognize that something happened when I came to Christ. That inner transformation, of becoming “a new creation,” took place. That is why Paul said in Romans 6:6, “Knowing this...” Paul was appealing to accepted understanding. Paul said in effect, “If nothing else, certainly you have learned this; that our old man was crucified with him.” That phrase old man doesn’t mean old chronologically, it just means worn out, useless, fit for the scrap heap. That old way of living and thinking. That selfish, getting-my-needs-met mentality. The power of sin was broken when it was crucified with Him. Why? “That the body of sin might be done away with.” By “body of sin,” Paul meant the sum total (as in “body of truth”) of our being, of our specific sinful patterns. The words “done away with” (from the Greek *katargeo*) mean “rendered inoperative” or “nullified.”

Keep that in mind, because you know by experience that there is still a part of you that wants to sin; the old inclination to sin is still present in you and me. It is not gone. It is there, but sort of unplugged. It’s like toast; you can’t make toast if the toaster is unplugged and you can’t sin if the old man is unplugged, but you can go plug him in again.

When Paul added that you have “been freed from sin,” he was letting you and me know that the power of sin is broken in us. All who receive Christ personally have had their inclination to sin cut

off or rendered inoperative. It’s not in charge anymore; you don’t have to do what it says.

If you’re still struggling with a certain sin, it is because you choose to remain in that sin. If you are trapped in a pattern of sin-confess, sin-confess, it’s because you have not known or not acted on this truth.

## A TRAGIC STORY

It’s a tragic story, having the means to escape but not acting upon it. In his historical book *The Three Edwards*, Thomas Costaine described such a tragedy. During the fourteenth century a duke named Ranald lived in the region which is now Belgium. Ranald was grossly overweight. Eventually Ranald became the king, but his brother, Edward, was very jealous. After a violent quarrel, Edward rallied a group of people together and led a revolt, taking over the castle and the kingdom.

Now you would think the younger Edward would kill his older brother, as was often done, but somehow he had compassion on the hefty guy and built a dungeon for him—a very specific kind of dungeon. Edward removed Ranald from the throne and built a large, circular room, which had a doorway but no door. Inside the room was a bed and table and all the essentials Ranald would need. The doorway to the room was a regular-sized doorway but Ranald was too big to get through it. Edward placed Ranald in the room and said, “When you can fit through the doorway, you can leave.”

Every day Edward would have his servants bring to the room a smorgasbord of pies and pastries, along with massive platters of meat and other delicacies and lay it out in front of his brother. People used to accuse Edward of being a cruel king, but Edward had a ready answer. “My brother is not a prisoner. He can leave when he chooses to.”

Ranald remained in that same room, a prisoner of his own appetite, for more than ten years. He wasn’t released until after Edward died in battle. By then his own health was so far gone that he died within a year, not because he had no choice, but because he would not use his power to choose what was best for his life.

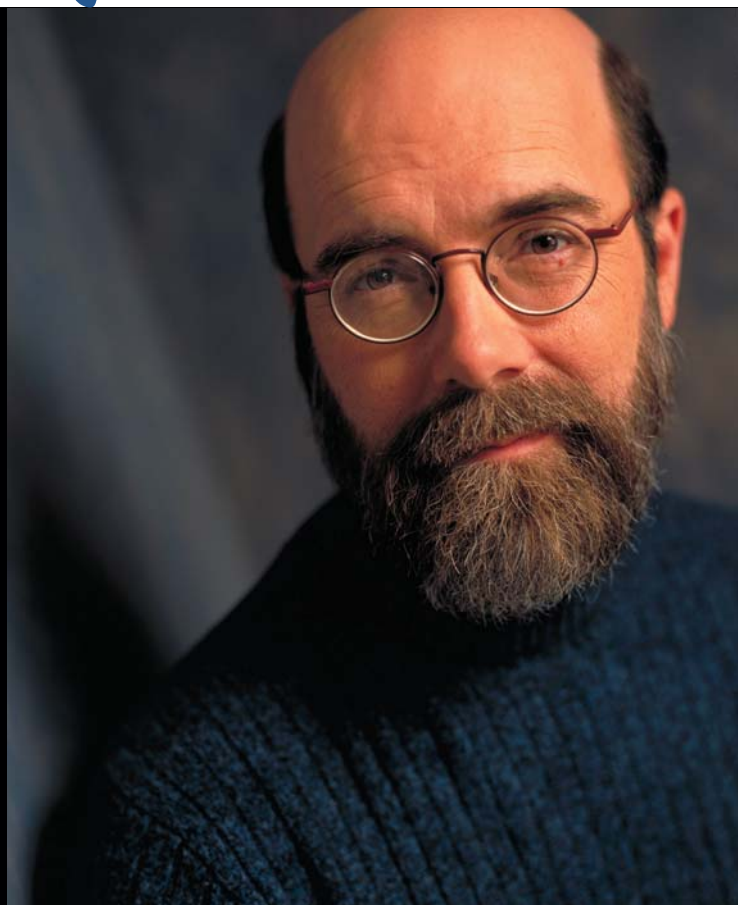
Now if you are in Christ, you are not a slave to any sin. In Christ you absolutely have the power to be the person that God wants you to be. There is no pattern of thinking that holds you. There is no pattern of behavior that necessarily enslaves you. You are not a slave to any sin. That power has been broken through your identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that took place when you turned from your sin and accepted Christ by faith. The chains of sin are broken in you; you are free to do what is right. ■



*Dr. James MacDonald is the founding pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel in Rolling Meadows, IL and radio Bible teacher on Walk in the Word ([walkintheword.com](http://walkintheword.com)) which emphasizes the precise exposition of God’s Word and its practical life application. James and his wife Kathy have three children—Luke, Landon, and Abigail—and reside in the northwest suburbs of Chicago.*

**For more on how you can experience this truth, get Dr. James MacDonald’s popular teaching on Romans 6–8 in the brand new DVD series *I Really Want to Change, So Help Me, God*. Contact Walk in the Word at 888-581-WORD.**

# WORDS & MUSIC



## An Interview with MICHAEL CARD

**B**orn in Nashville, Michael Card attended Western Kentucky University where he received a Masters in “Religious Studies.” He grew up in a musical family. His mother was a classical violinist and his father a jazz trombonist. Michael mastered guitar and piano, and while attending college developed a close friendship with Bible scholar William Lane, who not only developed Michael's love of learning, but enlisted him to write songs for weekly sermons.

An accomplished musician and songwriter with 19 Number 1 songs, numerous Dove Awards, and the prestigious RIAA “Top 365 Songs of the Century” honor for “El Shaddai,” Michael Card is perhaps best known and appreciated for the tedious research and Biblical scholarship which support the themes running through his songs.

Of Card, friend, pastor and his co-author of “Unveiled Hope,” Scotty Smith writes, “No one in Christian music is more committed to creatively and faithfully presenting the truths of Scripture. Only a small percentage of those who have listened to Mike’s music through the years realize, however, that he would rather lead a small Bible study group than sing to a full auditorium. In his eyes, his talents as a musician are the equivalent of the apostle Paul’s ‘tent making.’ By using them he is able to be about his greatest passion: teaching the Bible.”

How long have you been performing professionally?

**I have been performing for about 22 years.**

How has your audience changed over the years?

**The audience has not really changed. They have always consisted of basically people who are interested in the life of Jesus in particular and the Bible in general. I don’t really identify a “target audience.”**

What is your view of the trends in contemporary music?

**I am worried about the trends in most of Contemporary Christian Music. The market drivenness of it all, the shallowness. But I also believe that God always leaves a remnant and so there are the new artists like Sara Groves and others who are doing it for the right reasons.**



**"The Word of God for me is the only constant in this process. Styles come and go. Even church styles, but the Bible is always there, feeding me."**

What impact has the move toward a more experiential worship service had in your writing and performances?

**The move toward more experiential worship has not affected my writing. I sometimes still struggle to keep introducing depth to worship, which has followed the lead of the industry in its shallowness.**

Do you see your performances as more evangelistic, teaching or discipling?

**My concerts are a mixture of all three, but probably more teaching and encouraging than anything else.**

With your performance schedule, how do you receive your spiritual feeding?

**I struggle, like everyone else, with a consistent spiritual life. The Word of God for me is the only constant in this process. Styles come and go. Even church styles, but the Bible is always there, feeding me.**

You have an obvious respect and admiration for the Word of God. How did this develop?

**I was disciplined by a wonderful biblical scholar, William Lane. He instilled a love for the Bible in my life.**

Your concern for doctrine is evident in the words of your music. Do your lyrics come more from life experiences or from reading the Word?

**My lyrics come from all those places. Primarily they are rooted in a biblical passage but they are informed by life experience.**

Do you have a means of accountability to keep you grounded in your Christian walk?

**Yes, I am a part of a small fellowship of pastors committed to racial reconciliation called "Empty Hands Fellowship." We meet and pray weekly together.**

How do you balance your family life with your professional career?

**I don't see it as a matter of balance. That implied taking a bit from one side and placing it on the other side to**

**achieve a balance. I prefer to talk about "flow." Here my relationship with Jesus is the primary "pool" of reservoir that overflows into my life with my wife and children, next is my ability (or not!) to minister to people. This model has been a lot more workable for me.**

When you are not writing music or performing, what do you enjoy doing?

**I enjoy reading and astronomy. I spend a lot of time with my children, they are my hobby.**

When you are not listening to your own music, what music do you enjoy?

**I don't particularly like listening to my own music. Familiarity breeds contempt. I do enjoy Irish, some Jazz and people like Michael Macdonald and James Taylor.**

We've seen you play the guitar and the harp — what other instruments do you play?

**Piano is my other main instrument, plus penny whistle and banjo.**

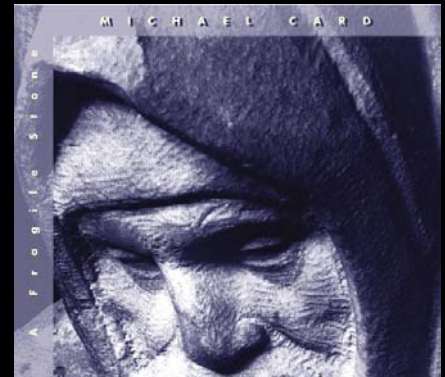
If you were marooned on an island, what is one thing you would like to have with you?

**Only the Bible. Imagine having all the time in the world to simply read the Bible!**

Michael Card's latest project, the book *A Fragile Stone*, explores the dynamic, contradictory life of the apostle Peter. The fruit of years of careful study, *A Fragile Stone* revisits well-known passages and discovers unexpected insights, painting a portrait of Peter that is both familiar and jarring. With a scope spanning the entire New Testament, Michael reveals how the impetuous fisherman of the Gospels was transformed into the pivotal leader of the early church. The album of the same name contains music reminiscent of past Card favorites as well as a potpourri of musical styles that include world-renowned banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck and some of the most distinguished bluegrass players in the world, as well as Card himself on banjo and members of his local community group.

Both the book and CD of *A Fragile Stone* are available at your local Christian Bookstore and at Michael's website, where more information about his work and concert schedule can be found.

[www.michaelcard.com](http://www.michaelcard.com)



## The Phone Call

Stu Kinniburgh

**M**y wife answered a phone call yesterday for my thirteen year-old daughter. This, in itself, is not an uncommon occurrence. In fact, most of the time, when our phone rings these days, it is a call for my daughter. But this call was different. Here is how it went, (though I've changed the name of the caller):

Ring...

My wife: "Hello"

Caller: "Hello... Mrs. Kinniburgh (pronounced correctly!) Good evening. My name is Todd. May I please speak with Rachel?"

My wife: "I'm sorry. She isn't here right now, but she'll be back in a few hours. Should I have her call you?"

Caller: "Oh, no ma'am. It isn't appropriate for a young girl to call a boy. I'll try again later, if it doesn't get too late. Thank you for your time."

My wife: "Just a minute—please leave your phone number so that I can arrange for you and her to get together, get married and have my grandchildren..."

Okay, she didn't say that last part, but that is how she felt! Most of the boys who call say something like: "Uhh... Is... uhh... Rachel... uhh... there? No? Uhh... okay uhh... bye." As she told me about the phone call, we were both impressed with the character of this young man, and formed a unique picture in our heads about this impressive potential marriage partner for our daughter.

When our daughter got home, my wife told

her about the call. Here is how that conversation went:

My wife: "You got a call from Todd while you were gone..."

My daughter: "Who?"

My wife: "Todd"

My daughter: "Todd??"

My wife: "Yes... Todd. He seemed like a very nice boy."

My daughter: "Todd???"

My wife: "Yes... why? Is something wrong?"

My daughter: "You have never seen Todd..."

My wife: "No... but he was very polite and respectful on the phone—I was very impressed..."

My daughter: "Mom... He wears more earrings than I do. He has piercing all over his face. He has a couple of tattoos. He hangs with a very strange group of kids at school. He gets into LOTS of trouble."

My wife: "(insert stunned silence here...)"

What happened? Our expectations were completely turned upside down. It may be that Todd is a very nice boy, in spite of the way he looks, his other friends, or his actions. Do you remember the television show *Leave It To Beaver*? One of the central characters in the show was Wally's friend, Eddie Haskell. Eddie's two trademarks were his unctuous politeness to adults and his weasly, sharp-tongued meanness to everybody else. He was a model white-collar delinquent, a creep who goaded people into trouble rather than perpetrating the crime himself. We couldn't help making the connection... could it be that Todd has mastered the ability to act one way at school and with his friends, and another way with adults?

If that is the case, there are certainly precedents for that behavior from within the Christian community. Actually, many of us are experts at it. Have you ever been shocked to





# Adam's Rib—What happened to it?

discover that a “pillar” of Christian virtue and character is guilty of some sin that possibly destroys their impact for Christ? Have you been disappointed by someone who acted in a way that you thought was completely alien to your expectations?

Look at the way that Jesus conducted His public ministry as described in Scripture. Even a casual reading of the Gospels reveals Jesus consistently shocking the religious leaders with His behavior. Consorting with prostitutes, eating with tax collectors, pulling corn on the Sabbath, healing on the Sabbath, driving people out of the Temple with a whip, and reinterpreting the Law of Moses, to name just a few.

From God's point of view, it was not *Jesus'* conduct that was called into question, but that of the *religious leaders*. In Jesus' most scathing criticisms of the religious leaders recorded in Matthew 23:27-28, he states,

Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you look righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (New English Translation)

Matthew's account paints a compelling picture—Eddie Haskell is not just a modern day creation of Hollywood!

Notice that the New English Translation has replaced the traditional translation “scribes” with the phrase “experts in the law.” This more clearly reflects Matthew's intended meaning here. These men were not mere professional copyists, but interpreters of the Law of Moses and other regulations. The fact that they are coupled with the Pharisees suggests that the scribes were “conservative” in their understanding of the Law of Moses. They often erred on the side of the letter of the Law instead of the spirit of the Law.

Interestingly, Jesus, in this case, does not assail their interpretation of the Law, but their application of it. By calling them *hypocrites*,

Jesus indicates His complaint against the religious leaders. Hypocrite is a descriptive term that means *play-actor*, that is, someone who pretends to be something that he is not. Jesus complains that the religious leaders are long on telling people what to do, but short on doing it themselves. The religious leaders pretend to be righteous, but they are not.

To illustrate his point, the Lord selects an unusual idiom. He says, “You [religious leaders] are like whitewashed tombs that look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean.” Tombs were important in ancient times. Because of their laws pertaining to things clean and unclean and the consequences for both, Jews were very careful to remain “clean.” Touching a dead body or a tomb rendered one instantly unclean. To prevent a person from touching a tomb unintentionally, those tombs nearest to heavy traffic areas were often painted white. The Lord notices this fact and utilizes the powerful contrast between the external and the internal. The level of contrast between the outside of a grave and what is in it is extreme. This, the Lord indicates, aptly applies to the religious leaders. They appear righteous on the outside, but inwardly they are full of “hypocrisy and lawlessness.” The religious leaders are hypocrites in that they pretend to be what they are not and they are lawless because they do not control themselves.

All too often there is a disconnect in our minds between truth and the implications of that truth. In this case, those who are pretending to be faithful to Jesus Christ on the outside, while faithless on the inside, are guilty. Try as we might, we can hide nothing from a sovereign, omniscient God. Therefore, to self-righteously parade the external while dismissing the internal is foolish. God knows the difference. A better solution is to live as godly as possible and in humility submit the rest to God's grace, praying for mercy to overcome. To play off a popular quote from the '60s, you can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you are fooling yourself if you think you can ever fool God. ■

Question: Ken, you've heard the 'urban myth' that men have one less rib than women because God took a rib from Adam's side to make Eve. That story is still circulating, isn't it?

Ken Ham's Answer:

Yes, unfortunately. We need to understand that men and women have exactly the same number of ribs. Actually it's an important question, and not as silly as it might sound. Let me explain.

Just because God took a rib from Adam to make Eve would not mean that all of Adam's male descendants would have one less rib. Remember, it's our genes that determine how many ribs a person will have. For example, if I lost a finger in an accident, and then had more children, they would not have one less finger!

This is because the blueprint for our bodies is in the genes, the DNA in our cells. So if you lose something like a rib or a finger, this in no way affects the genes we pass on to our children. Second, remember from your biology classes that ribs ‘regenerate’ if the outer covering is left intact. In other words, Adam would've had his missing rib back quite quickly.

A fascinating question, with an answer from Genesis!

Q&A from the ministry of Answers in Genesis, **Ken Ham**, President and Co-Founder. Here's another fascinating question about Adam—is he the father of all the different races around the world today? Ken Ham's answer is found in his thought provoking booklet on the origin of races. You can read it on his website:

[www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)



## Strength Against the Current

Dr. Dan Hayden

**T**ruth matters! We are being told today that it doesn't—but it does. In most endeavors of life, this is a given. Truth does matter in medical science, for instance, because life and death are often at stake. A diagnosis is either right or it's wrong—and even when it's bad news, a patient wants the doctor to tell him the truth. Lab results, MRI's and Cat scans are diagnostic tools whereby physicians probe the truth. Pluralism doesn't work in hospitals. In that environment, pluralism is absurd.

That is the way it is in most areas of life. Rules govern the game and facts determine the outcome. End of argument! Yet, when it comes to religion and ideas about God, the room clouds with smoke and the mind turns to mush. Here, truth is like a Rorschach test—everyone sees whatever they want to see and nobody is wrong. Tolerance is the password and absurdity is the new reality. Supposedly, this is the pathway to societal and global peace.

Now, the problem for Christians in all of this is not that they can't see through the hype. Bible believing Christians know that pluralism does not work in spiritual matters any more than it does in the physical domain. Yet, even though some in the broad stream of Christendom are getting sucked into the vortex of this mystical thinking, the challenge for most believers is simply having the courage to speak up for the truth. As in the old story, they know that saying "The emperor has no clothes" can be dangerous for their health.

Well, the Apostle Paul understood the pressures that a Christian experiences when living in a culture that is

hostile to the exclusive message of the biblical Gospel. So, when he sought to motivate Timothy, who was discouraged as a result of being persecuted for his faith, Paul said to him, "You therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1).

Now, that's what Timothy needed. It was important for him to be strong as a communicator of the Gospel of God's grace in Christ, and it was essential that he be strengthened by that grace in his own life. The word "be strong" is the Greek verb *endunamoo* which basically refers to inner strength: *en* (in) + *dunamoo* (to strengthen). The idea is to be empowered inwardly. You see, Paul was not asking Timothy to show him his muscle. He was appealing to his inward character—his courage and his resolve.

The biblical concept of salvation in Christ alone is an exclusive message that doesn't set well in a pluralistic environment. Yet, because it is the truth, Timothy needed to be strength-

ened in his resolve to communicate it even in the face of opposition. Also, because criticism and persecution can take its toll on human emotions, Timothy was being encouraged to remember that God's grace in Jesus Christ is sufficient for every circumstance of life. In other words, his heart would be strengthened by simply relying on God's grace.

So, that's God's message to us as well. We also need to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The Gospel we communicate is politically incorrect, but we are to be strong in our resolve to make it known nevertheless. People's reaction to the Gospel of grace won't always be positive, but we can be strengthened by God's grace to be courageous and enthusiastic about salvation in Christ in spite of their resistance.

Truth does matter—and what we believe about Christ and the Gospel of grace is of ultimate importance. Eternal life is at stake. So, be strong—for Christ's sake, be strong. ■





# FINAL THOUGHTS

## Sit at the Foot

There was a church in the city that was known for being quite grand, with an excellent music program, manicured grounds and a beautiful church building. All of the attendees on Sunday arrived and sat in their customary pew seats wearing fine clothing appropriate for morning worship. One Sunday, a young man arrived just before the service began. His hair was long and tangled, held in place by a tattered bandanna. His tattooed upper torso was only partly covered by a sleeveless leather vest covered with hand-written sayings and motorcycle patches. His jeans were dirty at the knees and thread-bare in the seat. He wore black boots that were heavily scuffed and well-used. As he entered the sanctuary, the quiet talk in the pews began to hush as he walked slowly down the main aisle, and seeing no seats, he continued to the front of the church and sat cross-legged on the floor at the foot of the steps leading to the altar platform. A few moments passed, and then the head deacon began walking slowly down the aisle toward the man. The deacon was a pillar of the church, always measured, yet resolute in his view of appropriate behavior in the church. His suit was tailored, his shoes were shined, and the congregation buzzed with the thought of what was going to happen next. Anticipation filled the hall as he approached the young man. All were wondering how he would handle the awkwardness of the situation. As he reached the young man, he extended a hand to the man's shoulder, and then quietly sat down on the floor next to him for the duration of the service.

How do you share the love of God? Sometimes it may be sharing from our resources with a brother or sister who is having difficult times. Sometimes, it will involve loving someone who is initially seen as different. Often, it requires us to put people before property, but Christ was always more concerned with people. Take the time to invest in a person's life today. Don't be afraid to join them as you sit at the foot of the altar and focus on the Author of our faith in authentic humility. ■





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