



I rest my Case...

by Pastor F.M. Riley

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Introduction

I am sometimes labeled as “negative” and “judgmental” in my teaching and preaching, for I don’t hesitate to point out the apostasy taking place in the ranks of so-called “Christianity” today. Due to the stand that I take, occasionally some “Christian” websites refuse to post my studies, especially those studies in which I point out the Scriptural corruptions and errors, false teaching, and outright “sins” of those who call themselves “Christians” today.

Well, I am just as stubborn [*this is neither a boast nor a complaint*] as some of those who are so eager to condemn me for being “negative” and “judgmental.” I refuse to cease exposing the Scriptural corruptions and errors, false teaching, and sins occurring in the ranks of so-called “Christianity” today. I believe if we “talk the talk, then we ought to walk the walk.” Amen? If we claim to believe God’s Word, then we ought to seriously study it and seek to live by it. If we claim to “live by it,” then we ought to learn how to ***“rightly divide the Word of truth,”*** [2 Timothy 2:15] and stop corrupting the Scriptures by being ***“carried about”*** [Ephesians 4:14-15] by every theory, fantasy, opinion, idea, “interpretation,” feeling, dream, and vision that is presented as “truth” by some hare-brained “religionist.”

But am I right in taking such a stand? Or am I wrong? Just who is right and who is wrong in this controversy? Are those who condemn me (*and others like me*) as being too “negative” and “judgmental” right in their claims? Be careful how you answer... God not only listens, but it is He who looks on the heart, ***1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:9-10.***

The Barna Group Report

The George Barna Group is a polling group which conducts polls among churches and religious groups to find out important trends, beliefs, percentages, statistics, etc. in the ranks of “Christianity” at any given time. Following is the results of a poll just released by the Barna Group. This poll speaks for itself.....

1. Approximately one-half [50 %] of Americans who call themselves "Christians" do not believe in the existence of Satan, even though the Bible plainly and repeatedly speaks of him as a real being.
2. A full one-third (33%) of Americans who claim to be "Christians" believe that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself committed sin; that is, that Christ was a "sinner." [Underlining for emphasis is mine...fmr].
3. Forty percent [40%] of American "Christians" do not believe that they have any responsibility whatsoever to share their "Christian faith" with anyone else, even though that is explicitly what the Lord Himself commanded His disciples to do, **Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21-23.**
4. Twenty-five percent [25%] of American "Christians" do not believe that the Bible is correct in all of the [moral and spiritual] principles that it teaches.

The following statement is not my opinion, but is the statement made by George Barna in reviewing the results of his poll.....

"Americans are increasingly comfortable picking and choosing what they deem to be helpful and accurate theological views, and have become comfortable discarding the rest of the teachings in the Bible." [Underlining for emphasis is mine...fmr].

"Growing numbers of people now serve as their own theologian-in-residence."

"One consequence is that Americans are embracing an unpredictable and contradictory body of beliefs."

Comments by Jim Bramlett

In view of this Barna Group poll, the following statements were made by Jim Bramlett, a true believer and brother in the Lord. [The underlining for emphasis is mine...fmr].

"This means that large numbers of so-called "Christians" reject the authority of the Scriptures and the deity and holiness of Christ, and the atoning sacrifice of His holy blood. It really means that they are not Christians at all in a Biblical sense."

"It means that they are in spiritual limbo, and as Paul described, "foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world," Ephesians 2:12."

"It means that they are eternally lost, unless they change."

"It is not a good idea to call God a liar."

"The narrow door Jesus referred to [Matthew 7:14; Luke 13:24-25] does not compromise with modern-day concepts of inclusiveness, tolerance, and political correctness. It is just as narrow today as it was 2,000 years ago."

"Truth does not change. People must!"

Has "Christianity" Changed?

A few days ago I made the following comments in a Bible study entitled, *"Toiling or Trusting?"* In this Bible study I made statements which were blunt, negative, right to the point, controversial, and truthful, so much so that some "Christian" websites refused to post it. I am going to reprint those comments exactly as I wrote them, and let our readers decide for themselves whether the truth was stated or not...

QUOTE:

Folks, I have actually heard preachers on TV telling people that "Christianity must change" if it is to continue as "a faith" in the world. Sic! The truth is, Christianity HAS changed! I have personally watched "Christianity" change over the past 54 years, under the leadership of "**hireling**" preachers [*John 10:12-13*]. The change has been sickening!

I have seen the old hymns that exalted Christ and His precious blood tossed out of most of the churches, replaced by so-called "contemporary gospel music" [*Sic!*] and "Christian Rock" [*Sic! Sic!*]. I have an article in my files in which a well known "minister" [?] explicitly states that "the modern church" must become "a Christian nightclub" entertaining the people, if we hope to keep people attending the services and "the church" is to survive. Sic! Try harmonizing such an idiotic idea with **Luke 9:23, Romans 13:13-14, and 1 Peter 4:1-5.**

I have seen the great old doctrines of "the fall of man" and "total depravity" replaced by preaching about "the goodness in mankind," and how "God loves everybody." Try harmonizing this "new" teaching with **Psalm 5:5, 11:5, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:10-12, and 3:23.**

I have seen the doctrine of "separation" replaced by compromise with the world and the ecumenical movement. I have heard [*hireling*] preachers proclaiming that all men are children of God, and all religions are just different paths to the same God. Sic! Try harmonizing such claims with **Deuteronomy 32:31-33, Isaiah 45:5, 45:14, 45:18, 45:21, 45:22, John 3:3-7, 14:6, and Acts 4:12.**

I have seen the doctrines of "holiness" and "morality" replaced by "anything goes" permissiveness, supposedly justified by the claim that "*we are all children of God and God loves us all, and we must not be judgmental.*" Sic! Such claims are nothing but lies, the proof of which is seen today in "shack ups" [*even among believers...?*], ever rising divorce rates, the cold blooded, premeditated murder of the innocent unborn

[politely called "abortion"], "throw away children," "Christian" homosexuality and lesbianism [*Sic! Barf! Barf!*], and the churches being filled with all kinds of worldliness and other abominations. Try harmonizing these claims with **Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Ephesians 4:17-20, 5:3-7, Colossians 3:5-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7**, and many other similar Scriptures.

I have seen the great doctrine of "eternal salvation" replaced with a "hope so, maybe so" claim of salvation in Christ. Try harmonizing that claim with **Ecclesiastes 3:14, John 3:16, 3:36, 5:24, 6:47, 10:26-28, Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, Philippians 1:6, 2 Timothy 1:12, 1 John 5:13, Jude 24**, and many, many other similar Scriptures.

But one of the saddest things I see happening today among those who claim to be true believers [*who should know better*], is the turning away from the great doctrines of God's GRACE in Christ and the believer's "freedom in Christ," and going back to "**the weak and beggarly elements**" of "**the law**," **Galatians 4:9**. Try harmonizing such a turning away from GRACE with such Scriptures as **Acts 15:1-2, 15:24, Romans 3:20, 8:14-15, Galatians 2:1-5, 3:1-3, 4:4-6, 5:1, 5:18, 1 Timothy 1:5-7, Hebrews 10:35-39**, and many other passages in the inspired Word.

Yes, I have seen "Christianity" change! And it has been [*and is*] a rotten, stinking, change from believing God's Word to questioning God's Word, from faith to doubt, from absolutes to confusion, from truth to apostasy, from fervency in serving the Lord to lukewarm Laodiceanism. Sic!

Why are such things being taught in the churches and among God's people today? For one simple reason! Most "Christian" [?] people today are Scripturally illiterate. They will read every so-called "Christian" book that comes out, listen to every "Christian" tape, tune in on the broadcast of every Tom, Dick, Harry, or Jane who call themselves "ministers," sit enthralled by every vision, dream, opinion, and idiotic theory that someone comes up with, and yet almost totally neglect any regular, systematic, personal, in-depth, study of God's Word. Folks, such neglect of the Word produces Scripturally illiterate, and often, very confused "Christians." The Lord explicitly told ancient Israel, "**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...**" **Hosea 4:6**. The context clearly indicates the Lord was talking about the knowledge of His Word. Compare **2 Timothy 4:2-4**. Today most "professing Christians" are repeating exactly the same mistakes that brought ancient Israel to ignorance of God's Word and to ruin. Am I speaking the truth? You know I am! God is witness!

In view of this, is it any wonder that the Lord asked the question, "**Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find [the] faith on the earth?**" **Luke 18:8**. Again, is it any wonder that the Lord said of the Laodicean church [*that's "Christianity" today*], "**So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew [vomit] thee out of My mouth,**" **Revelation 3:16**. Folks, we are

living in a time when many of God's own people are Scripturally illiterate. No wonder the churches today are in the Laodicean apostate mess that they are in. God have mercy!

UNQUOTE:

Total Vindication

The above passages from my study entitled, "*Toiling or Trusting?*" were apparently so straightforward, right to the point, and truthful, that some just didn't want to hear my statements and made the decision that others shouldn't hear them either. Just as our text says, "***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.....they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,***" *2 Timothy 4:3-4*.

Well guess what? This Barna Group poll totally vindicates everything I said in my recent study. Most people who claim to be "Christians" today are Scripturally illiterate. They don't devote any of their time to serious study of God's Word. They have no real idea of what the Scriptures have to say about any given subject. They "pick and choose" what Scriptures they want to believe, and often misquote and misapply even those Scriptures in order to force them to support their particular opinion or theory or idea or "feeling." When someone shows them the real truth from God's Word, they "***willingly***" choose to ignore it, because it just isn't what they want to believe. See *2 Peter 3:3-7*.

Folks, these people are not "Christians." They are blind "religionists" who refuse to see and refuse to hear, exactly as the Lord described similar unbelievers 2,000 years ago. Read *Matthew 13:13-15* and *15:8-9*. Or... they are people who are terribly deceived about God's Word, man's fallen condition, the wages of sin, the way of salvation, and their own eternal destiny. Just because they have "professed" to believe in God does not make them saved or a "Christian." Read about some other beings who "believe in God" in *James 2:19*. Are these beings saved? Just because people have made a "profession," "joined the church" and have been sprinkled, poured, or dipped, doesn't mean that they are "Christians" in the Biblical sense of the word. After preaching the gospel of Christ for 54 years I am persuaded that the Devil or some of his angels are present in nearly every church service conducted in nearly every church in the world today. Does that mean that the Devil and his angels are also "Christians?" I think not!

Folks, the God of the Bible is going to prevail. His Word is truth, *John 17:17*. All of it! The Lord Jesus Christ explicitly said, "***...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,***" *Matthew 4:4*. Men can't "pick and choose" what they want to believe from the Bible and discard the rest. The Word of God stands together as one inspired unit. The lost soul must believe and embrace it all in order to be saved, or the Lord God, who knows the hearts of all men, knows that they don't really believe any of it and are still lost in sin. Almighty God gave

the whole Bible to mankind, and as Jim Bramlett so aptly put it, *"It is not a good idea to call God a liar!"* God does not require the repentant sinner [*or even His own true believers*] to understand all of His Word, but He does require believing it all. If we will believe it, then He will give us understanding at such time as He chooses to do so. Amen?

"Love" or Cowardice?

A very explicit commandment set forth for New Testament believers is found in ***Jude 3***, ***"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*** Although this command to true believers was recorded some 2,000 years ago, the "time element" that Jude specifically had in mind for "contending for the faith" was ***"the last time," Jude 17-18***. In other words, the very days in which we are living today. Please notice that this command to ***"contend for the faith"*** was not optional. Neither was it based on whether such would be "non-controversial, politically correct, and pleasing to the ears of men." The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has always been "controversial" and "offensive" to those who don't want to hear it nor believe it.

I want to share with our readers the meaning of the word that is translated as ***"contend"*** in ***Jude 3***. This word is translated from the Greek word, *"epagonizomai."* This word literally means, *"to contend; fight; argue; defend; stand for; to make guilty; to bring upon; to bring in."* See Strong's No. 1864. It is obvious from the meaning of this word that this command given to God's people [*true believers*] was not meant to appeal to a bunch of "religious" pacifists, nor to the timid, the weak, the compromising, or the cowardly. If we truly have a "love" for lost souls, even as Christ loved us when we were lost in sin, then we will confront people with the gospel of Christ and ***"contend for the faith"*** whether some like it or not.

Shall we true believers today then sit silently and refuse to expose and rebuke error, false teaching, and outright "sin" in the ranks of so-called "Christianity," because it may cause "controversy" or be "offensive" to some who claim to be "Christians?" God have mercy! Shall we true believers today refuse to speak up and speak out for fear of appearing "unloving" and "judgmental?" Some of our readers may call such silence an act of "love," but I think our Lord would probably call it "cowardice." Shall we true believers today surrender the voice of Bible believing Christianity in America to the ***"hirelings,"*** the fakes, the phonies, the frauds, and every kind of "religionist" who comes up with some idiotic theory, fantasy, opinion, idea, "interpretation," or feeling, for fear of "offending" someone or causing "controversy?" Well....??

A Personal Testimony

Folks, right here I am going to give you a personal testimony gleaned from my own 54 years in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ... Over these past 54 years God graciously placed His blessings upon my preaching and teaching of His Word. I have had the blessing of seeing hundreds of precious souls come to a saving knowledge of Christ under my preaching and teaching of the Lord's wonderful Word. All glory to God! He did it all! I give Him all the glory and praise and honor! So what is my point in sharing this testimony with my readers? Folks, as I look back across the years at these many precious souls that came to a saving knowledge of Christ, I think I will be safe in saying... **THAT 75 PERCENT OF THEM WERE LOST CHURCH MEMBERS!**

Now you tell me... should I have just left them "lost" church members? Would they have come to Christ if I had been afraid to confront them with the whole truth of God's Word? Would they have come to Christ if I had chosen to preach only those things which were "non-offensive"? Would they have come to Christ if I had chosen to "avoid controversy"? In truth, would I have really been showing "the love of Christ" towards those lost souls if I had refused to confront them with their lost, fallen, sinful, condition, even if it made them mad at me for having done so?

Folks, don't those who claim to be God's people care enough about lost men and women, boys and girls, to point out to them their lost condition, confronting them with the gospel of Christ even if it causes controversy? Are their eternal souls worth contending and even suffering for? Who, in reality, is showing "the love of Christ" towards lost mankind? Is it the true believer who confronts the sinner, condemns the sin, and who is willing to risk being hurt, misunderstood, despised and even hated, in order to win that soul to Christ? Or is it the "Christian" [*Sic!*] who is just too "polite" and "loving" to ever point out and rebuke sin and error in someone's life? Well...??

Another Testimony

Folks, let me tell you about "Mother's Day" [1958 ?]. I was pastoring my first church. I preached that Sunday morning on "*Sisera's mother*." Yes I know! Some of you dear readers are probably asking yourself right now why I would preach about the mother of Sisera, one of Israel's bitterest enemies, as a Mother's Day sermon? Well I'll tell you why! I preached about Sisera to emphasize the difference in women who call themselves "mothers." Sisera's mother was just like many women today who call themselves "mothers." If you will read the account closely [*Judges 5:28-30*] Sisera's mother supported her son in all of his wickedness and sin, and even joked about his defiling the captive women. I pointed out that day so long ago that Sisera's mother and all other women like her are a disgrace to womankind. They are not fit to be called "mothers." Just because a woman brings a child into the world does not make her a "mother." Read ***Isaiah 49:15***.

In our services that morning was a young couple visiting for the first time. I knew absolutely nothing about them, for the first time I had ever laid eyes on them was when they walked through our church door that morning. I preached my message that morning with my whole heart in the power of God's Holy Spirit, and didn't spare as I compared Sisera's "ungodly mother" with God fearing women who are "godly mothers." I closed the service by giving an invitation, and several "godly mothers" came forward to rededicate their lives to the Lord and give praise to Him. I felt the Lord had blessed our services that morning. But I didn't yet know the whole story...

Two weeks later that same young couple who had visited on that previous Mother's Day came back to our services again. I was already in the pulpit preaching my Sunday morning message when they came in, so they quietly took a seat. When I gave the invitation that morning that young woman immediately came forward and told me she had been saved and wanted to give her testimony. With tears of rejoicing streaming down her face she stood before our congregation that morning and told us how that two weeks before, in describing Sisera's mother, I had perfectly described her life of wickedness and sin, and how she had never been a good mother to the three children she had already brought into the world. She told our church how that anger, even rage, had welled up in her as she listened to me preach and describe her life of sin. She told our church that as she left the services that Mother's Day morning she was filled with such hate for me and such rage against me, that she would have liked to have taken a knife and cut out my heart and spit on it. But folks, she couldn't escape God's Word preached in truth and power. She told us that she came under such deep conviction of God's Holy Spirit during the week that followed that she finally fell on her knees before God and cried out for His mercy upon her sin cursed soul. And the Lord saved her!

After giving her testimony of salvation to our congregation she then threw her arms around my neck and cried tears of joy and rejoicing and over and over again said to me, "Thank you preacher! Thank you for preaching the truth. Thank you for telling it like it is! Thank you for not watering down your message! Preacher, I needed that message! Thank you for being faithful to the Word."

Dear readers, *I would rather have heard that testimony of true salvation coming from the mouth of that young woman that morning than to have had someone hand me a million dollars check.* Only the Lord knows the "worth" of a soul. This memory is laid up among my ***"treasures in heaven"*** to this very day. Praise the Lord!

I might add that that young woman has been one of the most faithful, devoted, and sweet Christian ladies all through these many years since her salvation that I have ever known. Great shall be her reward in Heaven. To God be the glory!

Conclusion

Folks, would this have happened if I had "watered down" the message, making it totally "non-offensive" and "non-controversial"? Well...?? What in the world has happened, and

is happening, even to true believers today? Have we really fallen for Satan's grand deception? Do we who are true believers today really think that we can "tickle the ears" of lost sinners, and never confront them with the reality of sin and ungodliness and their lost condition, and truly win them to Christ? Do we really think that false teaching and error and corruption of God's Word should not be exposed to the light of the truth in order to avoid controversy? God have mercy! Well look around you today...

What has happened to "Christianity" over these past fifty+ years? The churches have been filled with many lost people, who are indeed "religious," and on the basis of their own "religious experience" [*whatever that is*] claim to be "Christians." These "religionists" know absolutely nothing about the real saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, even though they may have learned how to "talk the talk." These people know absolutely nothing about being "**born again**" of the Spirit of God, even though the Lord Himself said that they "**must**" experience the "new birth" if they ever hope to enter Heaven. Is this just my opinion? Am I just making wild claims that cannot be substantiated? No, I am not! Almighty God always vindicates the truth proclaimed by His true servants. Period!

This Barna Group poll has totally vindicated the truth that I have been pointing out to readers in my Bible studies. And nothing will change as long as the truth is suppressed, censured, avoided, and hidden. Until true believers are willing to engage in confrontation, controversy, and debate, and speak out openly and plainly even on "controversial" subjects, in order to uphold God's Word and defend the faith, nothing is ever going to change. So-called "Christianity" will just go deeper and deeper into apostasy.

Shades of Laodicea! We have arrived! God have mercy!

The Barna Group Report says it all, loud and clear.

I REST MY CASE...



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All comments, questions, or correspondence should be addressed to:

[Last Call Gospel Ministry](#)
[3900 Clark Lane, Lot C-10](#)
[Columbia, MO 65202](#)

or via email to:

fmrglbd5@aol.com

- or -

fmrglbd5@yahoo.com



NOTE FROM PEGGY: If you wish to donate to Pastor Riley to help him spread the Word of the Most High, please mail your contributions to him [at the above address](#). I know Pastor well enough to know that he is way too humble to ask for help, but trust me, he could use it! Pastor is in his 70's, and not only pastors a church near his home, but also works an extra job to make ends meet AND writes all these marvelous articles for the glory of the Lord and for our pleasure. Thanks goes to Yahweh El Shaddai, and to KC of 5 Doves for giving me the idea to put this note here in the first place. And please drop me a note at peggym@his-forever.com and let me know you're helping?