

# The FCM Informer

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## ALL CHRISTIANS HAVE A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW, RIGHT?

- by Dr. Woodrow Kroll

You would think that all Christians have a biblical view of the world around them. After all, we go to church, we're a part of a small group, we've read *The Purpose-Driven Life*. Are you ready for a reality check? The research says just the opposite. Most Christians do not have a biblical worldview.

Author and researcher George Barna made waves by citing statistics that show just 9 percent of all adults in America who claim to be "born again" have a biblical worldview. You didn't read that incorrectly—it was 9 percent. Protestants as a whole could only manage 7 percent with a biblical worldview (The Barna Research Group, January 12, 2004).

But that can't be possible, can it? How could only 9 percent of born again adults view the world with a biblical focus? Let me make a few observations.

### **Bible illiteracy is rampant in the church.**

Like it or not, it's time we faced up to the fact that we Christians are blatantly biblically illiterate. We don't know the Bible nearly as well as we think we do.

To say that Bible illiteracy is rampant in America is a black eye for a nation that thinks of itself as Christian. Sixty-five percent of Americans agree that the Bible "answers all or most of the basic questions of life." Amazingly, 28% of Americans who believe the Bible "answers all or most of the basic questions of life" say they rarely or never read the Bible (The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000). Therein lies the problem.

But that's the American public. What about the American church? Surely we aren't as biblically illiterate as our unchurched neighbor? Don't count on it.

Among those individuals who are associated with the Christian faith, only half (50%) rate themselves as being "absolutely committed" to the Christian faith (Barna Research Group, March 19, 2004). This lack of commitment to the faith often stems from a lack of commitment to the

Word of God, the foundation for our faith.

In 2004, 16% of all adults agreed somewhat that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings compared with 19% in 2002 and 25% in 1991. Still, 12 percent of born again Christians disagree that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings (Barna Research Group, "The Bible," 2004).

This innate mistrust of the Bible has resulted in millions of people owning Bibles but very few reading or believing them. The percentage of frequent readers, those who read the Bible at least once a week, has decreased from 40% in 1990 to 37% today. Only one American in seven reports an involvement with the Bible that goes beyond reading it (The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000). The "born again" segment of the population fares only slightly better.

But with more programs, more 40-day adventures, more training in leadership skills, surely today's pastors are better equipped than ever before to help their people out of the quagmire of Bible illiteracy. You'd think.

### **Pastors often do not themselves hold biblical worldviews.**

Isaiah 56:11 makes reference to "shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way . . ." We have to be careful not to generalize here because there are many

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fine men of God who are concerned about their people's understanding of the Word. Still, an increasing number "look to their own way," or if not their own way, the way of the latest hot book on church growth.

Based on interviews with 601 Senior Pastors nationwide, representing a random cross-section of Protestant churches, Barna reports that only half of the country's Protestant pastors – 51% - have a biblical worldview (Barna Research Group, January 12, 2004).

George Barna argued, "The low percentage of Christians who have a biblical worldview is a direct reflection of the fact that half of our primary religious teachers and leaders (senior pastors) do not have one."

**In some denominations, the vast majority of clergy do not have a biblical worldview, and it shows up clearly in the data related to the theological views and moral choices of people who attend those churches" (Barna Research Group, January 12, 2004).**

The result of Bible illiteracy is theological heterodoxy.

Heterodoxy is just a big word for whacky theology. Because people in the pews don't know their Bibles very well, and because the pastor feels constrained to preach so as not to offend the mixed multitude attending church on Sunday morning, born-again adults are beginning to formulate some beliefs and practices that are anything but biblical.

George Barna says that Americans willingly "embrace beliefs that are logically contradictory and their preference for blending different faith views together create unorthodox religious viewpoints."

Consider these findings:

- Among born again Christians, 10% believe that people are reincarnated after death.
- Among born again Christians, 29% claim it is possible to communicate with the dead.
- Fifty percent of born again Christians contend that a person can earn salvation based upon good works (Barna Research Group, October 21, 2003).

Don't miss this. We are not talking about the beliefs of Americans here. We aren't even talking about the beliefs of churched Americans. We are talking about "born-again, churched Americans." These are things believed by the people who sat in the pew next to you last Sunday.

**Biblical illiteracy that leads to theological heterodoxy always leads to moral frailty.**

Those who have a biblical worldview also hold to biblical concepts and standards for living. Here's the proof.

- Less than one-half of one percent of those with a biblical worldview said voluntary exposure to pornography was morally acceptable (compared to 39% of other adults).

- Those people with a biblical worldview were eight times less likely to buy lottery tickets and 17 times less likely to place bets than those who did not have a biblical worldview.
- While one out of every eight adults who lack a biblical worldview had sexual relations with someone other than their spouse during the prior month, less than one out of every 100 individuals who have such a worldview had done so (Barna Research Group, December 1, 2003).

Obviously knowing the Bible well impacts living with a biblical worldview and vice versa.

Follow the progression. We read our Bibles less and therefore understand less biblical truth. We attend a church where biblical truth was once the hallmark of the pulpit, but today the pulpit has been removed and we are fed a steady diet of spiritual gummy bears, more taste—less filling.

As a dumbed-down church we look for a belief system that matches others who have come into the church or those we read or watch on Christian television or hear on Christian radio.

We are so biblically ignorant we don't even know that we've adopted beliefs that are much closer to Eastern mysticism than Christian orthodoxy. As a result, even though we are proudly part of the "born again" segment of Christianity, we hold a worldview that is no more biblical than our non-churched neighbor.

Does that hurt? It should. The truth often hurts. But we cannot correct the flaws in our worldview until we admit those flaws exist. And do they ever exist!

*Distributed by [www.ChristianWorldviewNetwork.com](http://www.ChristianWorldviewNetwork.com)*

## Important Notes...

• Special attention should be given to the book ad on page 4. While this volume is written by one who is outside our Anabaptist circles, it does represent a wake-up call to us. We would like to circulate it as broadly as possible and would offer a free copy to anyone sending a donation to FCM of \$25 or more during the month of October.

• Please note the new FCM email address: [felconmenno@verizon.net](mailto:felconmenno@verizon.net). A website is being prepared and will be online soon. The website address is [www.fcminformer.org](http://www.fcminformer.org).

• Please remember FCM in your giving. We are totally dependant on the Lord through the gifts of God's people. Regular monthly support is needed.

# Hey, This Isn't Easy!

Parenting in a World of Competing "Voices"

- by *Walt Mueller*

I started hearing voices in 1989. That was when I began listening full-time to the rapidly changing youth culture. I wasn't listening to be entertained. I was listening because I wanted to know what our kids were hearing, how they were responding and how all this was impacting their beliefs and behaviors. I'm still listening to the voices and it should come as no surprise that they are getting louder.

As I listen to the voices of today's youth culture, I'm reminded of the heartfelt question of one concerned father I met a few years ago. He had attended one of our seminars on youth culture. Frustrated by trying to raise his son in a confusing youth culture, he asked me, "How can I expect my son to be able to hear the still small voice of God when all those other voices are screaming in his ears, 'Come and follow, come and follow, come and follow?'" The man's words have stuck with me. And in the time that's passed, I've found myself often asking the same question as I've interacted with scores of concerned parents, and as I've gained my own experience in the parenting school of "hard knocks" - a school that sits smack dab in the middle of a very real world.

A recent study from Public Agenda reveals more about the struggles, concerns and frustrations so many of us feel as we try to instill godly values in kids who grow up in a world where doing what's right in your own eyes is increasingly viewed as a virtue. Overall, the study found that parents of children ages 5 to 17 don't think they're doing a very good job. Consider this small sampling of parents' perceived failures:

- While 83 percent of parents say it's vital to teach kids self-control, only 34 percent say they've been successful.
- While 82 percent think it's necessary to teach their kids to do their best in school, only 50 percent feel they've succeeded.
- When it comes to teaching good money habits, 70 percent say they are essential while only 28 percent feel they've taught their kids those lessons.
- Ninety-one percent say honesty is non-negotiable, yet only 28 percent feel they've taught their kids honesty.

Granted, there might be many variables contributing to these gaps between our parental desires and perceived reality.

But judging from what I've seen happening in our culture, one factor is certain - the "other voices" keep getting louder. And if we as parents allow the increased volume to get to us, it will lead us to feelings of frustration and failure that can be paralyzing. In the worst case, we might throw up our hands in despairing surrender. With that in mind, there are three lessons I've learned - and am still learning - that I remind myself of every time I fall into the temptation of allowing healthy parental self-examination ("Lord, am I doing this right?") to quickly deteriorate into unhealthy and paralyzing parental self-flagellation ("Can I do anything right?").

First, I'm not perfect and my kids aren't perfect either. One of my most vivid boyhood baseball memories occurred in 1964. That was the day my hero, Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Jim Bunning, pitched a perfect game - allowing no runs, hits, walks or errors. That day wouldn't be so special if perfect games were commonplace. But they're rare. There are times when years pass before another major league pitcher throws a perfect game. Only a handful of pitchers have had the experience of pitching nine perfect innings. There are hundreds of others who have never accomplished the feat, but that doesn't make them bad pitchers. And for those pitchers who have tasted "perfection," not one of them ever threw nine innings of nothing but strikes. The fact of the matter is, Jim Bunning wasn't a perfect pitcher, he just happened to have a pretty good day. Why is it that so many of us parents feel like failures when we or our children make a mistake? My guess is that we are disappointed because we expect ourselves and our children to be perfect, which is a very unrealistic expectation.

Have you ever thought about the fact that there has only ever been one perfect parent, and even his first "perfect" children decided to rebel? And since that moment when sin entered the world, all parents and children - we included - have entered the world marred and polluted by sin. We aren't, can't, and never in this life will be perfect! But since the beginning of time, God has used imperfect people to carry out His plan, and He will use them as they raise their children in spite of their imperfections! Granted, we should strive to bring glory to God in all we do and say. But, when (not if) we make mistakes, then we should rely on the grace of God to take us through the process of repentance, forgiveness and change. And when (not if) our kids fail, then we do well

to follow the rule Christian psychologist Dr. John White followed in his relationship with his son who had “gone terribly wrong.” White says it this way: “As Christ is to me, so must I be to my children.”

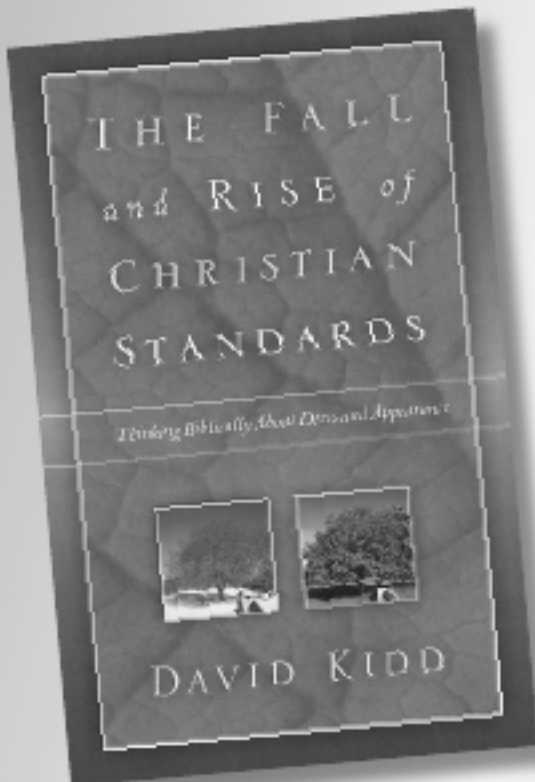
Second, kids don’t grow up overnight. Adolescence is a unique period of life. During that time, kids experience more earth-shaking change in every area of their lives - intellectual, physical, emotional, relational, spiritual - than they ever have or ever will experience again. Those changes take place over the course of several years. At the same time, they are looking for answers to the basic questions about life that will shape who they are, what they think and how they live as adults. Adolescent development is a long and confusing process, not an instantaneous magical moment of metamorphosis. Still, we parent as if once we say it, they should get it, they should agree with it and they should live it. Perhaps a more realistic approach would be to understand the principle that “sound travels slowly” - sometimes what you say to them when they are 15, they might not hear until they are 25 years old! We should keep the parenting volume up, even though it might not seem like they hear us. Consistency is necessary. It takes time. We must be patient.

And third, feeling inadequate might not be such a bad thing after all! I know from my own personal experience that I sometimes (more accurately “usually”) fail to live in total dependence on God. I try to parent with my own effort and willpower and then find myself tired, burned out and

defeated. What I (and all parents) need to do is exercise total dependence on God. This requires that I realize I can’t do it on my own. I must acknowledge that I am painfully inadequate. Instead, I need to approach my role as parent with the same resolve the apostle Paul had about ministry: “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me” (Col. 1:28-29). Parenting is hard work and involves many struggles. But through constant, active dependence on God who never changes, we can live through and enjoy the teen years. With God’s help, we can and must keep plugging away! It’s been a joy to see that while I’ve been working to parent my kids, God has been parenting me. Hopefully, I’m growing up, too.

I’ve enjoyed being a dad. Has it been easy? No way! While I’ve loved the overall task, I haven’t enjoyed every single day of it. There have been some pretty hard ones. I’m sure there are many challenges I’ve yet to face. But somehow, someway - even in a culture that often throws stuff at our kids that is less than Godly - God is using you and me. Yes, they’re hearing voices. But let’s keep praying that the teens we live with will hear and answer His invitation - especially as issued through us to “come and follow Me.”

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## The Fall and Rise of Christian Standards

*Thinking Biblically About Dress and Appearance*

*by David Kidd*

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# Pastoral Implications of Open Theism

- by Thomas K. Ascol

*Part 3 of 4. Continued from the July/August 2005 issue of the FCM Informer.*

## **Undermines Prayer**

Proponents of Open theism regard the “status of petitionary prayer within this model to be one of its most attractive features.”<sup>1</sup> Prayer is seen as a means of influencing God to the degree of moving Him to reverse His own plans. Conversely, God is so dependent on prayer that at times, because of the failure of people to pray, He abandons plans that He would prefer to carry out.<sup>2</sup>

One’s understanding of providence necessarily impacts his view of prayer. What God can do or has chosen to do in His relationship to the world governs the ways that we invoke His help for specific needs. The Openness view of reality eliminates the specific control that God exercises over creatures. Because the future is not “real” and therefore cannot be known by God, and because people have libertarian freedom, God is dependent on people to help Him create the future. When God is viewed as having this kind of contingency in relation to His creation, petitionary prayer is ultimately undermined in the life of the believer.

This may not be immediately apparent. In fact, Open theism may initially appear to have the exact opposite effect. Boyd argues that his view is a great motivation for prayer because in it God can be significantly affected and influenced by us. Many biblical examples are cited by Open theists as proof that prayer does indeed bring about a change in God’s mind. Abraham (Gen. 18:22-33), Jacob (Gen. 32), Moses (Exod. 32:14, 33:1-2, 14; Deut. 9:13-29), Hezekiah (2 Kgs. 20:1-6), and Amos (Amos 7:1-6) are all regarded as having altered God’s intentions through their petitions.<sup>3</sup> Prayer is seen as the creature’s way of exercising “spiritual say-so,” which God decided to share by making personal beings.<sup>4</sup> Because prayer can change God’s plans, people should be excited about getting in on the effort to do just that in order to create a future that conforms to their own desires.

God’s stated repentance and His response to prayers that plead for something different from that which has been previously announced are hermeneutical conundrums that challenge biblical interpreters of every persuasion. Open theists profess to solve the problems (and to stake out the exegetical high ground in doing so) by taking such passages

“literally.”<sup>5</sup> Traditionalists, we are led to believe, simply skirt around these passages, thereby robbing people of real incentive to pray passionately.

Reformed commentators and others throughout history have addressed these challenges without giving up the classical view of God.<sup>6</sup> There can be no doubt that the prayer lives of the biblical characters cited were characterized by passion, fervency, and effectiveness. It does not follow, however, that these qualities were born of an Open view of God. Furthermore, when these examples are considered in their broader context, they set forth a view of reality (and therefore, God) that is radically different from that of Open theism. The vision of God and His world that emerges can and should invigorate heartfelt prayer in ways that the Openness view cannot.

Consider the case of Hezekiah. Isaiah is sent by God to tell the sick king, “Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live” (2 Kgs. 20:1). After Hezekiah prays with bitter tears, God, in response to the prayer, promises him an additional fifteen years of life. Boyd sees this account, which was determinative in his own theological pilgrimage, as demanding an Openness view of God.

Now, if we accept the classical view of foreknowledge and suppose that the Lord was certain that he would *not* let Hezekiah die, wasn’t he being duplicitous when he initially told Hezekiah that he would not recover? And if we suppose that the Lord was certain all along that Hezekiah would, in fact, live fifteen years after this episode, wasn’t it misleading for God to tell him that he was *adding* fifteen years to his life?<sup>7</sup>

Boyd cannot escape his own criticism because the Openness view must also deal with the fact that God said something was going to happen which did not happen. The Open theist concludes that God spoke out of ignorance because He did not know Hezekiah would pray with such passion and fervency as to change the divine plan. Since God did not know, there is no moral dilemma in His reversal of His announced plans. The classical theist concludes that God’s threat carried an implicit exception and that He did know that Hezekiah would repent and pray. Thus, God

intended all along to extend the king's life fifteen years and to do it in response to prayer.<sup>8</sup>

The classical view is supported by the broader context of this story. When Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh, who was twelve years old, became king in his place (2 Kgs. 20:21, 21:1). What this means is that Manasseh was born during the fifteen-year extension of Hezekiah's life. Sanders says that if Hezekiah had not prayed to God, "biblical history would have been different."<sup>9</sup> But that is a woefully inadequate understatement. Had Hezekiah died when Isaiah first spoke to him, he would have left no heir to the throne and the promise that God made to David three hundred years earlier would have been broken. The Lord had promised David, "You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kgs. 2:4), which "simply affirms that the posterity of David was not to be cut off, so as to leave no offshoot which could take possession of the throne."<sup>10</sup>

If, as Boyd and his colleagues contend, God was truly ignorant of the timing of Hezekiah's death when He sent Isaiah to him, then we are left with insurmountable doubts about the Lord's faithfulness. Had Hezekiah died before his son Manasseh was born, God's Word would have failed. And if God cannot be trusted to do what He says, why ask

Him to do anything at all? This blasphemous thought, which emerges (no doubt unintentionally) from Open theism's view of God will quench any desire to pray with passion and fervency.

This problem is compounded if God is viewed as having created a world in which people have the power to do things He never intended to happen. Any specific intervention by God to interfere directly with a person's chosen course would be a violation both of the individual's personhood and of the "rules of the game God sovereignly established" in creating people with libertarian freedom.<sup>11</sup> How could someone pray passionately for God to restrain evil people or protect His own people if He genuinely believes that the rules by which God is bound prohibit Him from ever removing the potential to choose evil from a person? Would not such prayer be asking God to do what He has committed Himself not to do?

The examples of fervent prayers that we have in the Bible are not the least bit inhibited in these ways because they are not at all based on an Open view of God. When Daniel prayed for the restoration of Judah, he was motivated by his recent discovery of God's promises to do just that (Dan. 9:1-19). When Zerah led a million Ethiopian soldiers against Judah, Asa prayed, "O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!" (2 Chr. 14:11). There is not the slightest hint of concern about any violation of Zerah's free will. A similar lack of concern is found in one of Hezekiah's earlier prayers against the Assyrian commander, Rabshakeh: "Now therefore, O LORD, our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone" (2 Kgs. 19:19).

Such examples could be multiplied many times over. The Bible is filled with prayers that exude great confidence in God to do all that He has promised He will do and bold petitions for God to specifically and directly intervene by causing people to change their intended course of action. Confidence in God's unmitigated sovereignty coupled with a clear-headed awareness of our own personal responsibility provides a much stronger foundation for passionate prayer than the one offered by Open theism.

1 David Bassinger, "Practical Implications," in *The Openness of God*, by Clark Pinnock et al. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press)

2 Boyd, *Possible*, 97; Sanders, *Risks*, 273-74.

3 Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 82-85; Sanders, *Risks*, 53-54; 63-66.

4 Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 96-97.

5 *Ibid.*, 84

6

7 Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 82.

8 See Piper, *Answering Greg Boyd's Openness of God Texts*.

9 Sanders, *Risks*, 271.

10 C.F. Keil and C. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, volume 3; translated by James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 28

11 Sanders, *Risks*, 222; cf. 194-95.

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## **Tapes are available from the FMC 2005 Conference:**

**"When Man is Big and God  
is Small"**

*by Clyde Byler*

**"Who is in Control: God or  
Man?"**

*by Paul Emerson*

**"Why do Good People  
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*by Terrill Yoder*

**"What Does God Know, and  
When Does He Know It?"**

*by Todd Neuschwander*

Available from the FCM office \$18 per set postpaid

# Whose Day?

- by J. Mark Horst

“Which day is meant for rest and worship, Sabbath or Sunday?” Periodically, we receive this question in letters from people in other countries, and occasionally, from someone in North America.

While there are legitimate issues surrounding this question, the purpose of this column is not to discuss them. The Creation principle is one day of rest for six days of labor. So, whether we observe that day on Saturday (the Sabbath) or Sunday (the Lord’s Day), we must ask, “What does the practical application of a biblical ‘day of rest’ look like?”

Jesus was with God in the original creation. As part of the Godhead, He knew the Father’s intentions for the day of rest. The record of His earthly ministry gives us understanding from His vantage point.

On more than one occasion Jesus healed someone or performed a good work on the Sabbath. The Pharisees then accused Him of breaking the law. He pointed out how their “narrow” interpretation and application of the law showed more concern for animals than for their fellow human beings. As much as God cares for sparrows, we know He cares even more for man, who is made in His image. Jesus reminded them that “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” That’s a foundational principle we must keep in mind.

Today, much of modern Christianity has reduced the concept of the Lord’s Day to a couple of hours spent in a formal service on Sunday morning. Many grudgingly give God “His” two hours and then head off to spend the rest of the day as they please. In their minds, they’ve fulfilled their obligation for the Lord’s Day. This is their understanding of Jesus’ words, “The Sabbath was made for man.”

But what did God really intend to be the focus of our day of rest? Or doesn’t He care about how we honor Him on this day? Isaiah 58:13 outlines some clear principles we can use to evaluate our observance of the Lord’s Day.

Several things are to be avoided:

1. Unnecessary work
2. Activities primarily for pleasure
3. Pursuit of temporal knowledge

Likewise, several things are to be intentionally pursued:

1. See the day as “delightful”
2. Observe the day as holy
3. Honor the Lord

It can be pointed out, and rightly so, that as followers of Christ we observe every day as holy and honoring to the Lord. That is certainly true. However, the creation principle of one day of rest for every six of work indicated that the Lord’s Day calls for special observance. Not in a slavish,

legalistic way, but in a genuine expression of gratefulness for God’s knowledge of our needs and His provision for them.

There are certain guidelines we’ve established for our family observance of the Lord’s Day. I have no desire to force those upon you. They are the applications we feel God wants us to have for our family.

What I do want is for you and your family to consider the principles I’ve laid out in this article. It is quite possible that your applications will differ from ours, because we all find

ourselves at different places in our walk of faith. However, I will give you some areas to consider to provoke your thinking, without telling you my answers.

What about going shopping or out to a restaurant?

Is it OK to mow the lawn or weed the garden?

What about eating the largest meal of the week and then spending the afternoon snoozing?

What about spending several hours surfing the ‘net’?

Can I fire up the four-wheeler for an afternoon on the mountain?

Obviously, there are many more questions that could be asked. The ones I’ve listed I cannot answer for you. Some of them you may not have considered before. My goal is not to find fault or nit-pick, but to help us begin to think and act biblically instead of taking so many of our cues from the world.

If we acknowledge the Christian principle and say this one day belongs especially to the Lord, do our words and activities validate our claim? As others observe your choices, whose day would they think it is?

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# DNA and the Church

## Biblical Church Multiplication

By Norm Nicklas

The biblical account of creation in Genesis chapter one establishes the principle that all living plants and animals should multiply after their own kind. The fruit trees yield fruit from the “seed [that] is in itself” (Genesis 1:11, 12). To the living creatures God said: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:22). Following the creation of Adam and Eve, God said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply: fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28). The DNA in the cells of all living things created by God carries genetic information and hereditary characteristics that make living things capable of self-reproduction.

In the spiritual realm, the same principle is evident when Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Acts chapter two records the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, entered into, and filled the disciples with His power as Jesus promised in Acts 1:8. The church, the body of Christ, was born, and it became a living, growing organism. Many believed and were baptized and added to the church. The book of Acts records that “the number of the disciples multiplied greatly” and that “churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria... were multiplied” (Acts 6:7; 9:31).

Church multiplication is biblical; it is part of the spiritual DNA of the church. That means that the church of Jesus Christ in North America must be growing and spontaneously reproducing new churches everywhere. It means our churches must not only support missions and missionaries around the world, but they also must be on mission and doing missions at home.

North America is one of the few continents where biblical Christianity is not growing faster than the population. The current population in the USA is about 295,500,000 and growing at a net gain of 1 person every 11 seconds. In 1900 there were 27 churches for every 10,000 people. Today there are only 11 churches for every 10,000 people. Church attendance is declining, with actual church attendance at about only 20 percent of the population in the USA and 7 percent in Canada. At least half of all churches

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last year did not add one new member through conversion.

What must the true church of Christ begin to do? The church must be viewed as God’s people and not a place to go on Sunday. The church must “go into the world,” not sit and wait for the world to come to church. The church must be a people rich in cultural diversity and free of racial suspicion and segregation. The church must make biblical disciples, not just add members.

Finally, the church must commit itself to developing a reproducible system or method of church multiplication that is not primarily dependent on money, land, and buildings. The church, the body of Christ, must rediscover the divine DNA in the power of the Holy Spirit and build reproduction into the genetic code of every new Christian and church. The church must evaluate our North American ecclesiology, our assumptions about the nature of the church, our church practices, forms of worship, system of theological education, and over-dependence upon men, money, and methods. Every church should plant a church that plants a church.

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