

DAVE HUNT'S BEREAN CALL MINISTRY NEWS LETTER

March 15, 2004

Note from Pastor Kevin: Dave Hunt is coming to our area on April 17 and 18. I pray you will all come to hear his gift of teaching and warning.

Mel's Passion

A Marian Movie?

Extremely ecumenical and very pro-Catholic "Christianity Today" (many of the leading signers and promoters of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" are "CT" editors and contributors) supplied the following:

Mel Gibson told "CT": "I've been actually amazed at the way I would say the evangelical audience has--hands down--responded to this film more than any other Christian group." What makes it so amazing, he says, "is that the film is so Marian."

Gibson knows that Protestants don't regard Mary in the way Catholics do. And Gibson goes beyond many Catholics when he calls her "a tremendous co-redemptrix and mediatrix."

"This evangelical enthusiasm for 'The Passion of the Christ' may seem a little surprising, in that the movie was shaped from start to finish by a devout Roman Catholic and by an almost medieval Catholic vision. But evangelicals have not found that a problem because, overall, the theology of the film articulates very powerful themes that have been important to all classical Christians." (quotations from "Christianity Today," 3/04 pp. 34, 30)

T.A. McMahon

Note from Pastor Kevin: Some may wonder why I am making the above part of this handout when our church used the Passion Movie as an outreach. The reasons are twofold. One, the above is the truth, the concerns are real. Two, even though Mel believes Mary to be the co-redemptrix (meaning she played a part in redeeming us to

God), which is a heresy, this belief of his does not come out in this movie. In addition, we were able to give a ten-minute gospel message at the end of the movie. Without this time, I would not have felt right about getting people to go. The movie itself does not make it clear why Jesus suffered and died. Therefore, I would encourage you to also explain the gospel message to your friends, neighbors, etc who go to the movie. Otherwise, they may fall into some of the traps (Mary adoration, stations of the cross, etc.) that are subtle in the script.

Oh, baby!

Some will say that there is no human being until "sometime during infancy," since that is the first point at which there is self-consciousness. But adults can lose consciousness--not to mention self-consciousness--and we don't say they are no longer human beings.

Others will say that we have a human being "once birth takes place," since at that point the baby is no longer connected to and totally dependent on something or someone else. But adults can become connected to and totally dependent on a ventilator to breathe for them in the same way--and we don't say they are no longer human beings.

Still others will say that we become human beings "before birth, at the point of viability," since that by definition is when the fetus is capable of living independently should birth take place. But conjoined twins or adults dependent on pacemakers are not capable of living independently in that way--yet we don't say they are not human beings.

Many have said that a human being is present at the point "when the fetus shows movement," traditionally measured by when the mother feels the fetus move. But adults can become paralyzed, and we don't say they are no longer human beings.

More recently, some have said that we have a human being about six weeks after fertilization, "when brain activity is detectable," since that is when the potential for self-consciousness is present. But when adults lose consciousness, they can also lose the potential for self-consciousness--yet we don't say they are no longer human beings.

Even more recently, others have begun saying that a human being is first present "when the embryo attaches to the wall of a mother's uterus" (the point of implantation," since without that attachment the embryo cannot live. But when adults lose the capacity to breathe on their own and are in desperate need of being attached to a ventilator in order to live, we don't say

they are no longer human beings until they are attached.

In other words, there is no point later than fertilization after which an embryo, fetus, or child gains something that an adult has, which is essential in order to be a human being. There is no capability or potential that makes something more definitively a human being than what genetics has already established at fertilization.

Still God's Word?

Magazine Hopes to Lure Teen Boys into Bible Reading Religion News Service Volume 2, Number 10 - March 12, 2004

By Amanda Mantone.

Sex advice, music reviews and tips on looking good ... no, it's not the latest issue of GQ or Maxim. It's the Bible -- for the mind of a teenage guy. "Refuel" is the New Testament that looks like an entertainment magazine, and it hits secular and religious bookstores in April. Featuring quizzes and dating hints alongside the Word of God, Refuel caters to young Christian men who aren't otherwise reading Scripture. "It really was birthed from research we did that said teens don't read the Bible because it's too big and too intimidating," said Laurie Whaley, a spokesperson for Thomas Nelson Inc., the publisher of "Refuel." "We removed the intimidation factor, so it's fun -- and it's a Bible." "Refuel" is written in a modern and easy-to-read translation, and is priced for a teen's budget at \$16.99. It features recommendations for Christian pop CDs and columns such as "Inside Her Head: Real Girls Give Their Opinions."

Note from Pastor Kevin: The increasing number of Bible versions is a curse to our country. I urge those who want to understand the Bible as it was inspired by God to use the New King James or New American standard Bible translations. All others are paraphrase versions which depart (in various degrees) from what God inspired the prophets and apostles to write.

Man Says... God Says...

Man Says: God called me to sit at this typewriter and pour forth VINEGAR, ACID, VITRIOL, AND CLEANING FLUID on the leading conservative and fundamental scholars of 1900 through 1990. ... God is in charge. He ... destines me to sit at this typewriter and LAMBAST, SCALD AND

RIDICULE these Bible rejecting fundamentalists who `believe the Bible is the Word of God,' ... (The Bible Believers Bulletin, Dec. 1985).

God Says: Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers (Ephesians 4:29).

Be Not Conformed to This World

Our culture is riddled with a poisonous spirit of entitlement. We always think we deserve more. We're disappointed with our family, neighbors, church, the waitress, the sales clerk, and the department of motor vehicles. Ultimately we're disappointed with God. He hasn't given us everything we want.

What madness! If only we could see our situation clearly--even for a moment. We deserved expulsion; He gives us a diploma. We deserved the electric chair; He gives us a parade. Anything less than overwhelming gratitude should be unthinkable. He owes us nothing. We owe Him everything. When you realize you deserve nothing better than hell, it puts a "bad day" in perspective, doesn't it?

Christians in Sudan--who've suffered unspeakably for their faith--are deeply grateful for God's daily blessings. But us? We whine and pout.

Thankfulness should draw a clear line between us and a Christless world. If the same spirit of entitlement and ingratitude that characterizes our culture characterizes us, what do we have to offer?

If I grasp that I deserve hell, I'll be filled with gratitude not only for God's huge blessings--including my redemption and home in heaven--but also for His smaller blessings: sun, rain, a beating heart, eyes that see, legs that walk, a mind that thinks....And because Christ allowed Himself to be crushed under the weight of my sin, I'll enjoy forever a clear mind and perfect body....Never believe anything about yourself or God that makes His grace to you seem anything less than astonishing. Because that's exactly what it is.

Randy Alcorn, "The Grace and Truth Paradox," Multnomah Publishers 2003, pp. 33-35

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