

## Light and Darkness have no communion

By Bill Johnson



We are living in a day of immense spiritual/moral confusion. What is right? What is wrong? Does it really matter? Yes, it really matters.

An old saint of God stated in a prayer meeting several years ago, *"Spiritual warfare begins right as I get out of bed in the morning and doesn't end until I fall asleep."* He continued, *"I really question how any person who is saved cannot see that being a Christian involves spiritual warfare!"*

The older that I get, I agree with him even more as I see the difference between those who are grounded in the Christian faith and those who are not!

In all reality though, all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:24) as the Bible makes clear.

We see the fall of Adam and Eve, the killing of Abel by Cain, the deceit of Jacob and Rebekah in stealing the birthright from Esau, David (the man after God's own heart) committing adultery with Bathsheba, Jonah running against the will of God, Peter denying his relationship with Christ three times, etc.

But God forgives and leads us day by day. There is repentance and sanctification. Through failures of sin, trials, and tribulations, God uses all of this to draw a repentant Christian closer to Him - that by His grace the true believer increasingly desires to be like Christ.

As a result, we are saddened by our sin: our anger, lying, half-truths, failure to

love, impatience, etc. We become disgusted with our failure to live for Christ; which shows that God is at work!

*"He who has begun a good work within you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Philippians 1:6)

If you are in Christ, He is at work within you. Convicting, drawing you to Himself, reminding you, urging you on. That is a major part of the Christian life. God is at work in those He loves.

As He works within us, increasingly we desire to please, honor, and obey Him.

As Christians, too, whatever we do *"in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."* (Colossians 3:17) That includes discerning those who most clearly not only represent Biblical views in word, but also in deed!

Is it difficult? Absolutely! Certain things come to mind.

Should we be able to know the difference between a liar, schmoozer, deceiver, phony and those who are truly committed to Godly principles? Should we allow ourselves to be fooled by an individual or individuals who say they are Christians as, for example, President Barack Obama who throughout his leadership has supported abortion and Planned Parenthood?

What should our response be to a person like Donald Trump when he says that he has never asked God for forgiveness? He says he just tries to be good.

Does it matter that Trump has donated to individuals such as Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi? Does it matter that Donald Trump in earlier years has said that he was pro-abortion?

When individuals say they are Christian or pro-life or against same-sex marriage yet their vote on such matters runs counter to their voice, shouldn't that matter?

It is important to know the difference between candidates who are campaigning for your vote. As citizens of these United States, it is a privilege and responsibility to be informed voters and to vote with understanding - especially with informed spiritual decision making.

***" ... Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them, let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines, or deceits of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest, and bold in their Lord's work, leaving the works of darkness to those who shall dwell in it for ever. Our Churches should by discipline divide the light from the darkness, and we should by our distinct separation from the world do the same. In judgment, in action, in hearing, in teaching, in association, we must discern between the precious and the vile, and maintain the great distinction which the Lord made upon the world's first day. O Lord Jesus, be thou our light throughout the whole of this day, for thy light is the light of men.***

~ C.H. Spurgeon, Morning by Morning



From the desk of Bill Johnson

### Does it matter? It matters!

You've heard the conversations. "Nah. I don't pay any attention to politics. They are just that - politics. They're all the same."

So little to no attention is paid to who will one day be President and Commander-in-Chief of the country in which they live. Seemingly oblivious to decisions that will ultimately affect their children, grandchildren, and generations to come. Such matters regarding abortion, marriage, security, military, borders, our societal response to terrorism, questions regarding the freedom of speech, religion, etc. just don't matter much.

So when the election season comes and all the aggressive political ads inundate the TV screen and radio, they are even more turned off or perhaps more swayed to the clever ad, the creative ad, the candidate with the most gravitas, who is the most entertaining, or commanding.

Voting day approaches and there is very little to no attention paid to matters of truth, principle, voting record, character, family life, heritage, belief system.

There is very little thought about the possibility that some of these politicians, though engaging, are liars.

There is little thought to the possibility that among these candidates there might very well be an individual or two actually worthy of their vote.

This is particularly scary if this scenario describes millions upon millions of United States citizens.

**Sadly, I submit that this is not only probable but the reality.**

Make no mistake. If we are able to look through fogged over eyes and deadened sensibilities, we see trouble exemplified by the relative silence as same-sex marriage and homosexuality, just as one example of many, are shoved down our throats lubricated by propaganda filled sitcoms and clever advertisements.

The late Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer prophetically wrote in his last book shortly before his death in 1984 "The Great Evangelical Disaster":

*In the last sixty years that consensus upon which our culture was built has shifted from one that was largely Christian (though we must say immediately it was far from perfect) to a consensus growing out of the Enlightenment: that is, to a consensus that stands in total antithesis to Christian truth at every point - including the denial of the supernatural; belief in the all sufficiency of human reason; the rejection of the fall; denial of the deity of Christ and his resurrection; belief in the perfectibility of Man; and the destruction of the Bible. And with this has come a nearly total moral breakdown. There is no way to make a synthesis of these ideas and Christian truth. They stand in total antithesis.*

As Schaeffer said in a Christian Manifesto:

*... the problems we face today have come about due to a shift in worldview - that is, through a fundamental change in the overall way people think and view the world and life as a whole. This shift has been away from the world view that was at least vaguely Christian in people's memory (even if they were not individually Christian) toward something completely different - toward a worldview based upon the idea that the final reality is impersonal matter or energy shaped ... by impersonal chance.*

*And if we hold this world view we live in a universe ... with no basis for law and morality, with no concept of what it means to be human and of the value of human life. All is relative and arbitrary. And so modern man is left with nothing to fill the void but hedonism or materialism or whatever other "ism" may be blowing in the wind.*

Does it matter? Does it matter if we increasingly see Islamic attacks like

that in San Bernardino (December 2, 2015) where 14 people were killed and 22 were seriously injured?

Does it matter as we see government leaders opening our borders to unvetted immigrants as chaos erupts in the streets of small and larger cities in Europe where raping and brutality is becoming an epidemic as a result of the stupid, wicked public policy of their governmental leadership - just a few months/years ahead of us?

Schaeffer's words:

*If we truly love our Lord and if we truly loved our neighbor, we will ache with compassion for humanity today in our own country and across the world. We must do all we can to help people see the truth of Christianity and accept Christ as Savior. And, we must not allow the Bible to be weakened by any compromise in its authority, no matter how subtle the means. This is especially so when those doing this call themselves "evangelical". But we must stand equally against the spirit of our age in the breakdown of morality and the terrible loss of humanness that it has brought. It will mean especially standing for human life and showing by our actions that every life is sacred and worthwhile in itself - not only to us as human beings, but precious also to God. Every person is worth fighting for, regardless of whether he is young or old, sick or well, child or adult, born or unborn, or brown, red, yellow, black, or white.*

*It is God's life changing power that is able to touch every individual, who then has the responsibility to touch the world around him with the absolutes found in the Bible. In the end we must realize that the spirit of the age - with all the loss of truth and beauty, and the loss of compassion and humanness that it has brought - is not merely a cultural ill. It is a spiritual ill that the truth given us in the Bible and Christ alone can cure.*

# Free Financial Issues Seminar with Dan Celia

March 22 & 24, 2016



Finances affect each one of us. Whether we need more or want to know wisely how to use what we have, we are affected. Something about religion, politics, and money seems to stir us; and **Dan Celia isn't afraid to boldly and directly tackle these issues from a Christian and conservative view.**

American Decency Association is excited to bring Dan to two West Michigan locations that Jesus might be glorified in even our finances.

Who is Dan Celia? Dan is a financial advisor who always packs the room out and packs his seminars with great information. "Dan has worked for 35 years as an entrepreneur and businessman, as owner of his own businesses for 25 years, and at one time managing over 600 million dollars. Dan has developed and uses a biblically-responsible system of financial management with great success.... Dan is now on over 300 stations across the nation. He is a conference speaker, author of six books and publishes a weekly newsletter." (taken from his webpage)

What does he believe? As stated on his web site; "... I believe that before we consider our financial stewardship, we must first come to the realization that God calls us, as believers, to be stewards first of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ... One of the ways in which I believe that God has entrusted us to do this is through the giving of our financial resources. ... Our goal in this ministry is to help people make good financial decisions. After all, God does own all of it – not just what we give to Him, but He owns the rest as well. We are expected to be responsible in our investments. This ministry exists so that we can help you to make good decisions with what God has blessed you. The idea is that if we can help you to be

comfortable in your investment strategies and decisions, then you will be more comfortable in your giving. (Hopefully, you will also have more to give in the long run.)... My hope is that I can help you to think biblically about your finances; that your investments would be honoring and pleasing to God, and that you will make conservative and sound decisions. My prayer is that through our radio ministry, ... we can educate people with wise counsel, providing a place for God's people to come to get their questions answered from a biblical perspective – without any strings attached."

Financial Matters takes a true conservative and strong stand when it comes to their own values and the values they'd like to see take place in our country. I'd encourage you to go to <https://www.financialissues.org/what-we-believe/what-we-believe-about-our-country> and read through their list of "What We Believe About Our Country".

To learn more about Dan Celia go to his information-packed website at [www.financialissues.org](http://www.financialissues.org). One of the many things you'll find there is a good selection of resources and tools. You can also listen to present or archived programs of his radio broadcast "Financial Issues" or catch him on the radio. He can be heard on AFR, 91.7 FM, from 9:00 – 11 AM, Monday through Friday; or listen Saturdays at 11 AM. For other locations, go to [www.afr.net](http://www.afr.net) to find a station in your listening area.

When and where can I see Dan? The American Decency Association is bringing Dan Celia to two West Michigan locations. On **Tuesday, March 22, 2016**, he will be at the **Shoreline Inn & Conference Center** located at 750 Terrace Point Blvd ~ Muskegon, MI from 6:30 - 9:00 pm. And on **Thursday, March 24, 2016**, he will be at the **Harvest OP Church** located at 930 52nd Street SW ~ Wyoming, MI from 6:30 - 9:00 pm.

**This is FREE and there is NO reservation required.**

We here at the ADA are excited to make this great opportunity available to you. Come and eagerly listen to Dan answer these and

other questions:

- What are the Biblical principles of sound stewardship?
- How do we as Christians manage in this economy?
- Do politics matter in your stewardship?
- Are Christians responsible to vote?
- How do we choose our leaders?

There will also be an opportunity to ask your own questions at the end. **Come expecting great things.**



**Friday, February 19** Showing the movie "War Room" at 1 PM and 7 PM at the ADA headquarters, 203 E Main St., Fremont, MI.

**March 22 & 24** Dan Celia at two locations in Michigan. Dan heads Financial Issues with Dan Celia, on American Family Radio's Talk Network, which airs each weekday starting at 9 AM EST and Saturdays at 11 AM EST.

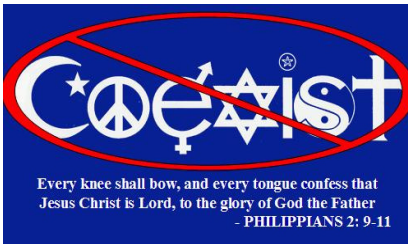
**Friday-Saturday, June 3-5** ADA Spring Conference at the Shack in Jugville, Michigan. With speakers to be announced, which will include **Rev. Ken Smith**, Head of Biblical Counseling Center, Jenison, Michigan; **Don Wildmon**, and **Buddy Smith** of AFA.

**Friday, July 22** ADA Summer Conference at Harvest OP Church located at 930 52nd Street SW ~ Wyoming, MI with speakers: **Dr. Joel Beeke**, A minister of the Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation and President and Founder of Puritan Theological Seminary, Grand Rapid, Michigan, and **Curtis Bowers**, former Idaho State Representative, creator of the award winning movie "Agenda: Grinding America Down" and more recently "Agenda 2: Masters of Deceit".



# Interfaith Dialogue: SHAM

by Steve Huston



There was a time when Christians shunned the idea of a one-world government and the one-world religion which would accompany it. They were careful to guard their doctrine and their relationship with Jesus; they'd point to the Bible as their authority and be wary of those who promoted a "different gospel." Now, too many people are looking for peace in wrong places, looking for it in interfaith dialogs, tolerance, and cooperation, regardless of what that might mean to the doctrines of Jesus; doctrines they once held dearly.

Cooperation sounds great; it is, until cooperation means I must put my belief in the exclusivity of Jesus in my back pocket, not sharing Him with others. The exclusivity of Jesus Christ doesn't keep me from loving, showing compassion, or working alongside someone of another faith in an effort to help my fellow man; in fact, it enhances it. If cooperation was all these interfaith dialogs were about, I'd have little problem with it. However, that's not the case and there's great danger as these smooth talkers and charismatic leaders blur the lines of faith, often trying to meld their doctrines, beliefs, and accounts into one with ours. These speakers are rarely from the Christian faith, and their key word is service. So it's usually Christianity that's made to give ground, while the Islamic faith is hailed and lifted up. It blurs the lines and is very dangerous! It's not a matter of service; it's a matter of faith.

When I look at the religion page of the newspaper, it appears that most articles are aimed at an interfaith acceptance and blending of religions. In both of our local papers, there's a weekly article put out by the Kaufman Interfaith Institute entitled Interfaith Insight. Some of their recent articles include, *Interpreting Scriptures: The Problem of Exclusivity and Dealing With Difficult texts in Various Faith Traditions.*

As the lines are blurred, the religions interwoven, and the focus is on service rather than salvation, perhaps the biggest danger is best described by another of their articles: *Putting God Second? Is That the Answer to Religious Violence?* For both the Jew and the Christian, that idea should be blasphemous as we're called to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." God always comes first and that naturally leads to loving service.

It's even more concerning when the Kaufman Interfaith Institute and Calvin College - a "Christian" College - bring in the same Muslim speaker to teach interfaith cooperation. Eboo Patel was given the platform at Calvin, with no rebuttal or Christian doctrinal clarification as he listed Adam as the first prophet of Islam and moved through Noah, Abraham, Jesus, and finally Mohammad as the prophets of Allah. This speaker skillfully wove a speech that tied the Koran to the Bible, used Muslim stories to show that Islam and Christianity have been friendly with one another from the beginning, and used the Christian's holy book, the Bible, to misinterpret that correct ethics are more important than correct doctrine. He presented Muslims as reaching across religious lines to show solidarity while making most Christians seem fearful, hateful, and uncompassionate.

To this group of Christian college students, Mr. Patel used the Bible to present the way to eternal life thusly: *"We attain eternal life by way of this story [The Good Samaritan] by occasionally following the better behavior of the person with the wrong doctrine. We are awake to their holiness, to their sacredness, to their being made in the image of God, to them carrying out the work of mercy sometimes in ways that we wish we had ourselves."* Instead of someone standing up and speaking truth to this abomination, he received a standing ovation at the end of his lecture.

**Christians cannot accept Mr. Patel's way of attaining eternal life.** Jesus, the Son of the Living God, states his exclusivity: "I

am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Instead of following someone with the wrong doctrine who seems to have better ethics, we must follow the Bible and its doctrines correctly.

**Jesus is not "the slave of God and His messenger" as the Koran claims. He is the only begotten Son of God (also denied by the Koran). Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior, the ONLY way to God the Father. These truths are often ignored during such interfaith discussions.**

The teachings of Mr. Patel are an abomination as he blurs the lines of truth. Equally troubling are Christians, both young and old, who are abandoning God's Truth for the goal of achieving peace with men. We are called to guard the sacred and precious treasure of the Word of God; we are to stand firmly upon it. These are dangerous times we live in; the claim of Allah as god and the exclusivity of Christ are at odds with one another. They are like oil and water; they do not mix - although many would like to see them become a blended substance that can nicely and smoothly spread across all humanity.

We cannot ignore the exclusivity of Jesus; we must do all for His glory. We are called to proclaim and teach the doctrines of Jesus to a hurting world whose only hope for salvation is in Him.

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## New York / American Values?

by Lisa Van Houten



In a recent Republican debate, the most memorable phrase coming out of the GOP slugfest was “New York Values.” Senator Ted Cruz used the line to demonstrate that the values Donald Trump had long espoused were not the values of millions of Americans living between the two coasts. Trump responded with a verbal parry referencing the heroic acts of 9-11 that he said were symbolic of New York values.

What was missed by most in the hoopla that followed was that the phrase about New York values was generated by comments made by Donald Trump himself. In a 1999 interview with Tim Russert on NBC’s Meet the Press, Trump stated this:

Russert: How about gays serving in the military?

**Trump: It would not disturb me. I lived in New York City, in Manhattan all my life. My views are a little bit different if I had lived in Iowa perhaps, but it is not something that would disturb me.**

Russert: Partial birth abortion – the eliminating of abortion in the third trimester, big issue in Washington. Would President Trump ban partial birth abortion?

**Trump: I am very pro-choice and again maybe it’s a little bit of a New York background because there is some different attitude in different parts of the country and I was again raised in New York, grew up and worked and everything else in New York City.**

Russert: But you would not ban it.

**Trump: No**

Russert: Or ban partial birth abortion.

**Trump: No – I am pro-choice in every**

**respect and as far as it goes ...**

It is not my intention to delve into a political debate, or even a regional one, however the values held by others potentially impacts us all. One only has to look at how a minuscule portion of the population led to the imposition of homosexual marriage upon the nation to prove that fact.

So it is right to ask, what and whose values do we want to govern us? Is there a difference in values between metropolitan cities such as New York and Los Angeles and those who live in middle America, (what is derisively referred to as the “fly over states”)? Or have “New York values” already become American values?

Theologian and commentator Doug Wilson wrote: *“this is not a debate about heroism. Cruz was critiquing particular policies which are, even as we speak, in the process of wrecking New York, and he was saying that we ought not adopt those policies on a larger scale. We will almost certainly get the same results if we do.”*

So what are some of the policies and values that could be exported from New York? Just in the last few weeks I’ve come across several examples of worms in the Big Apple that could easily become a national infestation.

Example 1: A sex toy company in New York has opened what is being called the first ever masturbation booth in the heart of New York City to, as a company spokesperson told the NY Daily News, “take this habit out of the office and into a more suitable environment designed to give the busy Manhattan man the privacy, and the high-speed Internet connection, he deserves.” The booth, called GuyFi, features free wi-fi internet and therefore anonymous access to online porn.

Example 2: Under Mayor de Blasio, the discrimination laws of New York have been recently changed to impose a whopping \$125,000 fine upon employers for using the wrong pronoun to describe a transgendered person under their employ. The fine goes up to \$250,000 for violations that are the result

of willful, wanton, or malicious conduct.”

The New York City law requires employers to use an individual’s preferred name, pronoun and title regardless of the individual’s sex at birth, anatomy, gender, medical history, appearance, or the sex indicated on the individual’s identification. Other violations of the law include refusing to allow individuals to use single-sex facilities such as bathrooms that are “consistent with their gender identity,” failing to provide employee health benefits for “gender-affirming care” and “imposing different uniforms or grooming standards based on sex or gender.”

Example 3: The New York Police Department has been ordered by a U.S. District Court to stop using a report vital to the NYPD in thwarting Islamic terrorism. Bowing to politically correct pressure, the NYPD must delete from their database and vow not to refer to the document, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” produced by the police department’s intelligence division to determine how radicalized individuals carry out terror attacks.

This is but a brief listing. However, these so-called “New York values” don’t emanate from one city; they emanate from the hearts of sinful men and women. And what might be referred to as traditional American values didn’t originate in Iowa or in the U.S. Constitution, but come from God’s Word, whose precepts were the foundation of our nation’s laws.

What are the values we as followers of Christ will show forth in our lives? What are the values we will vote for in a candidate?

We are called to mark the difference between the holy and the profane. And that is what we at American Decency strive do. We as individuals and the church must be vigilant in striving to think and live - **and vote** - biblically.

Will our values be rooted in the Word of God, or will we allow the fallen culture to dictate them?

# Refugees and Religious Realities

by Chris Johnson



The problem with a label like “conservative Christian” is that it represents a spectrum. On one side, there are those who perhaps were raised in a Christian home or under Christian values, but their passion for limited government burns far brighter than their passion for the Great Commission. On the other side, where I hope to be, are those whose recognized purpose is to “glorify God and enjoy Him forever” and who believe that the ideals of conservatism reflect that best. The passions for God and country exist at both ends, but each end prioritizes them differently.

I have great respect for the former, less religious, Conservative ideologues. They have often been the ones making those political and philosophical arguments in the public square and have been the engines behind positive political change.

Yet, I believe, without the emphasis on glorifying God over promoting a political viewpoint, it can be easy to send out that vibe of “don’t care a whit about the poor but talk a really good line,” as I’ve heard one hostile critic of conservative Christians say.

In fact, I once saw a comment on an article by a woman with a picture of Jesus on her profile rejoicing in the death of a young man because he was trying to cross the desert and enter the US illegally.

I think to some very limited extent, if we’re humble enough, that we can take comments like the one above as a reminder.

We are more than representatives of a political ideology. Christians are representatives of the Living God who is passionate about justice and about caring for the outcasts and the downtrodden and banishment of evil from the world, and where popular conservative thought drops

the ball on those issues, it’s the duty of the Christian to pick it up.

A Conservative can argue pragmatically for why illegal immigration and the acceptance of refugees is bad for national security, but a Christian who is conservative has to take into account the Image of God in every soul turned away from the safety of American borders. If we cannot hold God’s standard up to conservatism on that or any issue and walk away a Christian Conservative, we had better just walk away a Christian.

All that is a very long introduction to the question which has been placed before me: What do I see as the correct Christian position on allowing Syrian refugees into the United States? Given my long-winded intro, you’ll likely find my answer paradoxical: **I do not think Syrian refugees should be allowed to enter the country on any kind of mass scale.**

So how can I hold up the danger in which we are allowing Syrian civilians to remain to the intrinsic value of their lives as Image-bearers, and turn them away from our own relative safety?

**It’s because Americans are Image-bearers too.** When Christians argue for harboring refugees from the breeding grounds of ISIS, the argument you often hear is that we are commanded to “love your neighbors as your selves.” In the parable of the Good Samaritan, when Jesus was asked, “who is my neighbor?,” He gives an example of a man helping someone in his immediate vicinity. It could be argued that the priest and the Levite who passed by the victim were likely on their way to “help” people through their respective roles in worship ceremonies, but the Samaritan helped the person right next to him, and he is held up as an example.

I take this to mean we have a responsibility to especially love the people around us, which means watching out for their wellbeing.

Realistically, living in a rural farm town, my chance of being the victim of a terrorist attack is probably pretty slim, but the risk

to my countrymen in bigger population centers is what worries me more.

But really, what you or I would do is a moot point. We have heads of State who make that decision and these officials are charged with keeping their constituents safe. It is their responsibility to put the safety of American citizens before the needs of citizens of foreign countries. When America helps threatened peoples and keep her citizens safe I’m all in favor of that, but history and the experiences of other countries has shown that that is not the case here.

Certainly, they talk a good game - listing the databases that names are run through, and that the process is the most secure form of immigration - but what is not explained is why they would expect terrorists or terrorist sympathizers to show up in their databases. **We don’t even know of all the radicals in our own country, let alone Syria!**

Farm boys from Syrian fields may not show up in a State Department database, but that doesn’t mean they don’t have ISIS propaganda on their phone and ISIS propaganda, for whatever disgusting reason, appeals to at least some Syrians.

The Daily Caller cites a study from the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies which finds that 13% percent of Syrians have a “positive to some extent” view of ISIS. Encouragingly, the very vast majority view them negatively and support us bombing the tar out of them, but consider the idea that one out of ten refugees can kinda see where ISIS is coming from - but there’s no way to leave out the one and bring in the 9. With the President planning to allow 10,000 refugees into the states, that would make around 1,000 of them potential radicals, or at least vulnerable to radicalization, and most of the big headline attacks have been perpetrated by teams of less than ten.

So, in short, I don’t favor harboring refugees from Syria because I love my neighbor and I do not want to put them at risk.

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# Refugees and Religious Realities

by Chris Johnson

[Continued from Page 6]

**That's not to say we shouldn't love refugees! Do your research and find a respectable organization that you can donate to that provides humanitarian aid to displaced Syrian families. Save the Children claims to have helped 2.3 million people inside Syria and other organizations are doing noble work there as well.**

However, it seems that the decision makers in our country do not agree with me, and that America will welcome at least those 10,000 refugees.

At that point they are not only our neighbors in the global way that every person is our neighbor, but they will literally be our neighbors, working and playing side-by-side with us, and if I over analyzed the parable of the Good Samaritan, the moral is at least this: when you come across someone who needs help, help them.

A Biblical Counselor that spoke at our marriage conference made a point that has stuck with me. He said something like, "God calls us to love our wives as Christ loves the church, but if we cannot love them as our wives, He calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and, if we cannot love them as our neighbors, God still calls us to love our enemies."

Apart from the wife bit, obviously, that applies in this situation too. Is it possible that out of the 10,000 Syrians that come to this country, some of them will be hostile to the American way of life, maybe even outright enemies. Yes, I'd say it's likely.

But we are told to love our enemies. This article was originally supposed to be an answer to a piece published by Desiring God, entitled, "Eight Words from Jesus in a World with Refugees," which argues that Jesus would have Western nations accept Syrians with open arms. But that article mainly just quotes Jesus, and how can I argue with Him? I cannot, so I make only this point: The words from Jesus are not commands on how to run a nation, they

are commands on how to live our lives for Him.

**They do not change a government's responsibility to protect the wellbeing of its citizens.**

But, as the author notes, Christians are not called to a life of safety, but of self-sacrifice - of being willing to lose our own lives for the advancement of the Gospel.

May it be that our government leaders do what they have been called to do - defend and protect their citizens from the very real threat of radical Islam. But in the event that our leaders fail to keep their oath, God calls us to show the love of Christ and share the gospel with those who not only are our enemies, but who also are at enmity with God.

## THE PURSUIT of HOLINESS Conference



Snow may be in the air, but it's time to start making plans for the spring. Regardless of how cold it may be right now, thoughts of our spring conference—The Pursuit of Holiness—will be sure to warm your heart. **What could possibly be warmer than thoughts of the holiness of Jesus and His warm, transforming work in our own lives?**

A time of blessing is sure to be had by all who join us at "The Shack" in Jugville, MI, this coming **June 3-5, 2016**. Add into the mix some of this year's speakers and our beloved friends: Don Wildmon (Founder of AFA), Buddy Smith (Senior Vice-President of AFA), Bill Johnson (Founder of ADA), and Rev. Ken Smith (Christian Counselor).

In the past, we've felt the Spirit's presence as Buddy Smith and Bob Azkoul led us in a time of worshipful music. They'll be joining us again this year!

The only thing that could possibly add to this splendid time in the Lord is the beautiful and serene setting in which it will be held. The grounds of "The Shack" are inviting and offer a wonderful place for reflection on what you've learned and for meeting with the Lord. There'll be time for walking around the grounds, looking out over the lake, or just relaxing in one of the spacious guest rooms.

If you've joined us before, you know how good the food is! Not only are the meals wonderful, but the banana split and fellowship time each evening is really something to look forward to!

**Please join us June 3-5, 2016 for what promises to be a powerful weekend of timely information, fellowship, and spiritual challenge! There are only 55 rooms available for this retreat, so call The Shack Country Inn at 231-924-6683 to reserve yours today. After reserving your room, please call the ADA at 231-924-4050 to let us know you'll be attending.**

The conference is still free and the room rates are the same as last year.

**[Here are the Shack's Reservation Details:](#)**

### **Room rates: 2 Nights Lodging**

- Back view Rooms  
- \$240.00 (2 Persons per room)
- Lake view Rooms  
- \$260.00 (2 Persons per room)
- Hot Tub Rooms  
- \$300.00 (2 Persons per room)

Extra person - \$60.00

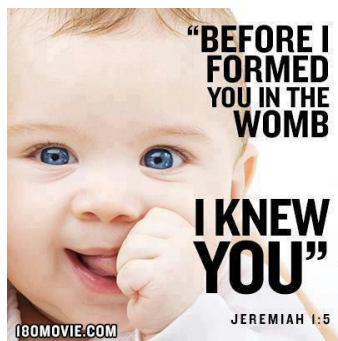
### **Rates include:**

- Friday Dinner - Banana Splits
- Saturday Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Banana Split
- Sunday Breakfast

**Please call the Shack Country Inn at 231-924-6683 to reserve your room and please call ADA at 231-924-4050 to let us know you'll be attending.**

# The Voice of the Church

by R.C. Sproul - Ligonier Ministries



When Planned Parenthood adopted a strategy to win the debate on abortion and establish the legal right for women to have abortions on demand, it asked a strategic question: “From where will our strongest opposition come?” The organization anticipated that opposition would come most fiercely from the Roman Catholic Church. In order to offset the impact of the Roman community, Planned Parenthood adopted a strategy to encourage Protestant churches to support a woman’s right to abortion on demand. It encouraged the use of the mantras “A woman’s right to choose” and “A woman’s right over her own body.” A further part of the strategy was to use the slogan “prochoice” rather than “pro-abortion.” In other words, the effort to legalize abortion on demand was wrapped in the flag of personal liberty.

The Planned Parenthood strategy was eminently successful. For the most part, the mainline liberal churches backed the feminist crusade in favor of “choice.” What was most distressing was the silence of evangelical churches, churches committed to the authority of the Bible and the classical Christian faith. It took many years for the evangelical church to come to a consensus on the evil of abortion but, more tragically, many evangelical churches still refuse to speak out against the destruction of babies made in the image of God.

Several years ago, I produced a series of video lectures, out of which emerged my book on abortion. We made an effort to get these educational materials to evangelical churches, to help them instruct their members concerning this profoundly serious ethical issue. I was saddened to receive the same response over and over

again. Innumerable evangelical pastors told me they could not use our materials in their churches because the issue of abortion is so controversial. If they took a stand against abortion on demand, they said, they would divide their churches. What? Divide these churches? What could be a greater evil than such a division? The answer is this: Remaining silent on the most serious ethical issue that the United States has ever faced.

If the slaughter of millions of unborn babies is to stop, the church must once again become the church. Those who hide behind the idea that the church should never speak to political issues have missed the scriptural accounts of what we would call prophetic criticism. It may have been politically incorrect for Nathan to confront David over his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah (2 Sam. 12:1–15a). It may have been politically incorrect for Elijah to confront Ahab for his sinful confiscation of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21). It may have been politically incorrect for John the Baptist to challenge Herod the Tetrarch’s illicit marriage (Matt. 14). In these and other examples from sacred Scripture, we see representatives of the church not trying to become the state but offering prophetic criticism to the state—despite the potential consequences. The church is not the state, but it is the conscience of the state, and it is a conscience that cannot afford to become seared and silent.

The state is an instrument ordained by God. It is also governed by God. The church does not need to be the state, but it must remind the state of its God-given duty. The principal reason for the existence of any government is to maintain, sustain, and protect the sanctity of human life. When the state fails to do that, it has become demonized. And it is the sacred duty of the church and of every Christian to voice opposition to it.

The evangelical church’s chief strategies to end abortion have been to put pressure on abortion clinics and on elected officials. There is nothing wrong with these strategies; however, one strategy that has

not been used or adopted widely is that of protesting those churches that support the ghastly murder of unborn babies. It is time for Christians to give prophetic criticism to the church, specifically to those churches that support abortion on demand or remain silent on this major issue.

In my own city, one of the largest evangelical churches has publicly welcomed the woman in America who is the most visible and vocal supporter of partial-birth abortions. That’s a scandal to the Christian community. It’s a scandal to the cause of Jesus Christ. That church needs to be called to account.

It is time for churches that see the evil of abortion to stand up and be counted—no matter the risk or the cost. When the church is silent in the midst of a holocaust, she ceases to be a real church. Wherever human dignity is under attack, it is the duty of the church and of the Christian to rise up in protest against it. This is not a political matter, and neither is it a temporary matter. It is not a matter over which Christians may disagree. It is a matter of life and death, the results of which will count forever.

[Used with permission from Ligonier Ministries, April 2013]

*They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.*

**Psalm 106:38-39**