

## Truths We Believe about God 4

### A Biblical & Theological Refutation of Wm. Paul Young's book, "Lies We Believe About God" (*Fourth in a series.*)

"My people know not the judgment of the Lord. How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? . . . *the pen of the scribes is in vain.* The wise men . . . have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them? . . . from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For *they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly*, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."

—Emphasis added, Jeremiah 8:7-11

### A Review of the Book's Chapters (*continued*)

#### Chapters 15-19

##### Chapter 15

"*Hell is separation from God.*"

- Young: "Anyone who speaks of separation from God assumes that a person can exist while separated—as if our life is not contingent upon the presence of God, who is Life. . . . *I propose the possibility that hell is not separation from Jesus . . .*" (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 136-137)
- Jesus Christ: "And then will I [Jesus] profess unto them [professing Christians who prophesied and worked miracles in Jesus' name], *I never knew you: depart from me*, ye that work iniquity." (Emphasis added, Matthew 7:23) [Reader, do you think Jesus' judgment "depart from me" means *separate from Me?* Ed.]
- Jesus Christ: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:41, 45-46) [The immediate interpretation involves how Gentiles treat the Jews, Jesus' brethren. But this interpretation does not mean Jesus' words do not possess wider social applications, ed.]
- Jesus Christ: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." (Luke 16:22-23) [In difference to those who want to reduce Jesus' insight about the afterlife to be metaphorical, His story does introduce readers to the reality of the afterlife as He understood it, ed.]
- The Apostle Paul: "[Those] that know not God . . . shall be punished with everlasting destruction *from the presence of the Lord.*" (Emphasis added, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

**Comments:** To many, the sense of the word hell is confusing. I shall try to unpack the meanings of the word hell in the Bible. Translating three different Greek words (*gehenna*, 12 times; *hades*, 10 times; and *tartaros*, 1 time) the English word "hell" occurs twenty-three times in the New Testament. Exclusively Jesus uses the *first* Greek word hell-*gehenna* to picture after-death judgment to be like ancient Jerusalem's city dump, as *a place of defilement* for castaways "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48); as *a sphere of*

*darkness* (“outer darkness,” Matthew 22:13; 25:30); and as a *state of depression* in which human souls experience emotional extremes of sorrow and anger (“weeping and gnashing of teeth,” Luke 13:28). The *second* Greek word, *hell-hades* (the equivalent to the Old Testament *hell-sheol*, which can refer to the ground-grave) describes the after-life reality temporally inhabited by the living dead who exist in separation from God and Paradise (Luke 16:23). The *third* Greek word used by Peter, *hell-tartaros* or “chains of darkness,” describes the place where disobedient angels are currently confined as they await their future and final judgment (Compare 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; and Revelation 20:10). In the span of history, all of the above spheres of judgment, *hell-gehenna-hades-tartaros*, are temporary, and as such, might be compared to the confinement of convicted criminals in a city jail until they are transported to serve out their life sentences in a state or federal prison.

The final destination-prison for which unrepentant God-defying humans and spirit beings are headed is the place the Apostle John calls the *Lake of Fire* (Revelation 20:10, 14). At the end of the age, Jesus (John 5:27) will cast the following into the *Lake of Fire*: **1.** “the beast and the false prophet” (Revelation 20:10); **2.** “the devil” along with his rebel angels (Revelation 20:10; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6); **3.** anyone whose “name was not found written in the book of life” (Revelation 20:15); and **4.** the temporary holding cells of “death and Hades” (Revelation 20:14).

Many, even Christians, reject the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles regarding the eternal punishment of the wicked. They point out that no biblical word expresses the concept of “eternity,” but only “a long period” or “remotest time” (Hebrew *‘olam*) or “age” (Greek *aion*). They argue that because of these words’ multifaceted meanings there is no word in Scripture expressing a forever category of time. Therefore it is presumptuous for anyone to think hell will never end. But the Apostle John describes the state of being consigned to the *Lake of Fire* as one of being “tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). The time frame expressed is in multiples of forever-s, one of ages of ages. These multiples of ages is the longest concept of time the Greek language, or perhaps any language, can express (Greek plurals, *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, Revelation 20:10). Combined with “day and night” (Greek, *hemeras kai nyktos*), “for ever and ever” nuances a timeless existence in which 24/7, for ages of ages, the unholy trinity—the beast, the false prophet, the devil—and others will be confined. Together, the clauses express the “the unbroken continuity of their torment” in perpetuity. **[33]**

Yet Young’s imaginary worldview, where in relationship to the Trinity everyone’s a “beloved insider” (**LWBAG**, 55), does not allow for the existence of two separate after-life realities (heaven and hell). To him there’s only one reality, that would be in the heaven of being inside an eternal Jesus-Trinity in a loving and dancing relationship. So there’s no way for anyone, no matter what they do, to become separated from God. Young’s worldview will not tolerate belief of any separation from God either immediate in this life or ultimate in the next life, and this contradicts what Jesus Christ and His Apostles taught. Rather Young might join John Lennon (1940-1980) and sing,

Imagine there’s no heaven  
 It’s easy if you try  
 No hell below us

Above us, only sky  
Imagine . . .  
And no religion too

You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world will be as one [34]

We should observe that such an imaginary cosmic reality postulated by the human mind, where in oneness everyone and everything's inside God, is idolatrous. "Because that, when they knew God," wrote the Apostle Paul, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations (Greek *dialogismois*, "the reasoning process within the human mind), and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:21). The text teaches *four stages* to developing a pagan mindset: *First*, humans do not glorify or honor God as God. They reduce Him from who He is into who/what they willfully want or emotionally need him, her, or it to be; *Second*, they become unthankful. Life and all that it consists of is ours as much or more than His. It's all about us, about me . . . I want . . . I want . . . I need . . . I need; *Third*, in their own minds they speculate about who God is and in the process of trying to comprehend Him let their imaginings (*dialogismois*) run wild; and *Fourth*, amidst their intellectual sophistry their hearts do not become enlightened as they arrogantly claim, but darkened. The God they design becomes ordinary and tame and eclipses any fear they might have of Him. (See Psalm 36:1; Compare Romans 1:18.)

The universalism that reduces the *Lake of Fire* into non-existence destroys ultimate moral accountability in the universe. Perhaps that's why Paul Young proposes that it's only possible that hell is "separation from Jesus." Maybe he doesn't know what to do with Muslim jihadists who in their depravity (Young does not like this word, **LWBAG**, 29-36.) believe that killing infidels in the name of Allah will land them in Paradise where seventy virgins await their arrival. But terrorism is an obnoxious affront to belief in universal salvation. There just something about the belief that everybody's saved . . . it offends the human conscience and therefore doesn't seem right (Romans 2:15). Better the biblical perspective of Franklin Graham who remarked after the terror attack in Manchester by Salman Abedi and fellow terrorist conspirators, "I've got news for them: Hell awaits, with real flames and real fire." [35] All of which begs the question: How does one explain evil's existence in the world? In a veiled way, Young touches upon the issue in the next chapter.

## Chapter 16

"God is not good."

•Young: "The existence of evil is a wrenching question, but the greater philosophical/theological question is why any Good exists at all. God, who alone is the source of Good, is Light in Whom there is no darkness. If God is not Good all the time, then trust is a delusion, and we are truly left alone in a world of hurt. Our pains and losses can blind us to the Good that surrounds us—the grace that is constantly poured out and the life and light that push away *the illusion of darkness*." (Emphasis added, **LWBAB**, 145-146)

•The Apostle Paul: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Romans 8:18-22)

**Comments:** In this chapter, Young deals with the age-old theological question (called a theodicy), how can a good God have an evil world? Evil’s existence (Young calls it “darkness.”) polarizes one’s understanding of God in two directions: either God is not good because He allows evil and suffering, or God is impotent because He can’t control evil and suffering (He’s not all powerful.). Either way, God loses. So opting out of calling evil for what it is, like a Christian Scientist or eastern mystic Young euphemistically calls “our pains and losses [that] can blind us . . . *the illusion of darkness* [i.e., a mistaken perception of reality, ed.]” (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 146.)

The Bible on the other hand, presents evil and darkness as real not illusory —“the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22; Compare Genesis 3:16-19.). In our present reality suffering and death are no deceptions. The Bible explains that while evil had a beginning on earth (Genesis 3:16-19) it will end in “the day of God” (2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17; Romans 8:21). Meanwhile, Christian believers await their deliverance, “the redemption of our body” and the promised “restoration of all things” (Romans 8:23; Acts 3:21). Referring to real pains and losses of life as “the illusion of darkness” contradicts the heart-wrenching suffering of real people in the real world. Jesus’ disciples asked: “Master, who did sin, this [blind] man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:2-3). When tragedy strikes many victims ask, why me God? (I myself had a serious heart attack in Hungary in 2006, defibrillated seven times during an hour and a half ride to the hospital, and after returning from ministry in Africa have recently struggled with a severe sciatic nerve problem and cancer.) But when suffering strikes us in the gut of life, perhaps the question might be, why not me? Am I so exceptional and insulated from the world around me that bad things should not happen to me? Oh, by the way, if we ask the “why-me-question” when bad things happen to us in life, perhaps we ought also ask the same question when good things come our way. One day the Bible promises that the sovereign and good God by resurrecting the body and restoring of all things, will end life’s messiness and suffering in the world for Christian believers.

## Chapter 17

*“The Cross was God’s idea.”*

- Young: “Who originated the Cross? If God did, then we worship a *cosmic abuser* . . . The alternative is that the Cross originated with us human beings. This deviant device is the iconic [people wear crosses, ed.] manifestation of our blind commitment to darkness.” (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 149)
- The Apostle Peter: You were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.*” (Emphasis added, 1 Peter 1:19-20; Compare Revelation 13:8, “the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world*”). **Note:** Jesus, God’s Lamb, was slain *before the foundation of the*

*world*. This pre-temporal reference indicates God originated the Cross.

**Comments:** In a typical emergent-church way of speaking, Young raises the accusation that if Christians believe that God originated the plan of salvation involving Jesus' death on the cross, then they are worshipping a "cosmic abuser." Such an inflammatory and defamatory accusation and ones like it are not new from the mouths and pens of Christian critics in the modern era. During the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s-1930s, Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) derogated the penal substitutionary atonement by categorizing it as "slaughter house religion." [36] Years ago another liberal churchman, Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam (1891-1963), described the God of the Bible as "a dirty bully" for demanding any sacrifice. [37] In their book, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, authors Green and Baker mention how some contemporary feminist and liberal theologians refer to Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins as "divine child-abuse." [38] In a book endorsed by emergent church leader Brian D. McLaren, another churchman wrote: "The Church's fixation on the death of Jesus as the universal saving act must end, and the place of the cross must be reimagined in the Christian faith. Why? Because of the cult of suffering and the vindictive God behind it." [39] What aspect of the Christian faith needs reimagining? In a following chapter Alan Jones added, "Penal substitution was the name of this vile doctrine," the teaching which suggests that Jesus' sacrifice was to appease an angry God. [40] In their evaluation of Christ's death these Christian critics elevate God's righteous wrath against sin above and against the unity of the other divine attributes involved in Jesus' death—God's love (John 3:16), righteousness (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21) and justice (Romans 3:26). It's as if for the sake of argument, these atonement antagonists construct "a straw man," or should I say, "a straw god"? Granted, for a generation hooked on "touchy-feely" love, the "tough love" of a penal substitutionary atonement can be offensive. If it is so repulsive then reject it, but quit trying to redefine God and stop pretending to be a Christian. In casting aspersion upon the penal substitution atonement know that the heart of the Christian Gospel—"that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"—is being rejected (1 Corinthians 15:3). The correlation between "touchy feely" Christianity seems to me to run like this: even as professing Christians, evangelical and otherwise, overestimate God's wrath they underestimate man's sin. Instead of primarily seeing sin as rebellion against God and breaking God's Law they euphemistically call it darkness, dysfunction, mistakes or whatever (1 John 3:4). In the mix of God's sovereignty and human responsibility, better is the perspective of Peter when he preached, "[Jesus of Nazareth], being *delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Emphasis added, Acts 2:23) God originated the Cross. Thus, Bible believers can agree with Mark Baker who stated: "To be 'anti-cross' is to be anti-Christ." [41]

## Chapter 18

*"That was just a coincidence."*

- Young: "God is an expert at language. In fact, the entire cosmos was created by a single Word. But rather than demanding that we understand God's language, God comes to us and speaks ours. Even more specifically God speaks yours. . . . I sometimes think that we all expect to hear God speak to us in a language that belongs to someone else, and we discount the possibility that God knows ours. . . . I believe that we are surrounded by the language of coincidence . . ." (LWBAG, 157-158, 159)
- The Prophets: "Hear *the word of the Lord*, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our

God, ye people of Gomorrah,” (Isaiah 1:10); “Then *the word of the Lord* came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations,” (Jeremiah 1:4-5); “*The word of the Lord* came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest . . . and the hand of the Lord was there upon him,” (Ezekiel 1:3); “I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof *the word of the Lord* came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem,” (Daniel 9:2); All emphases added.

• The Book of Hebrews: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . .” (Hebrews 11:1-2)

**Comments:** Young believes that God speaks in “coincidences,” or happenstances of life. “One of my mantras is” he writes, “Coincidence Has a Name!” (LWBAG, 159) In a meditation-mantra-mystical-magical-metaphorical-metanarrative-moment, God condescends to speak to our hearts in language tailored to the coincidences of our experiences. Laugh . . . but this is how emergent Christianity proposes that God’s Word arrives in the human soul. This is how God speaks. [42] Whatever the personalized language might be, God suits the language to you! In that all humans dwell in the Jesus-Trinity, God’s communications might be called “insider speak.” Young’s belief that God-speaks amidst tragic coincidences may explain why Mack received this note from God in *The Shack* (p. 8). “Mackenzie, It’s been a while. I’ve missed you. I’ll be back at the shack next weekend if you want to get together.—Papa” Of course, the question becomes, in the midst of life’s sufferings, what about poor souls who don’t get special notes from God, or feel His mystical presence and affirmation of them amidst the coincidences of agonizing circumstances? The movie *Silence* recounts how amidst the direst of circumstances, two Jesuit priests sought to hear God speak but did not. [43]

The expression “the word of the Lord” occurs hundreds of times in the Bible. Though this Word can become personal (The Holy Spirit can apply it to our hurts bodies and hearts.), it’s generally public before it becomes personal. Tell me, does the “word of the Lord” come to us in His language or ours-yours? To this point, care must be exercised to protect the original languages of the canon of Scripture through which the recorded spoken and/or written words of God came to us (i.e., Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek).

Never mind that God publicly spoke His language to Israel through the prophets, i.e., “the word of the Lord”; never mind that God publicly spoke His language to the early church through His Apostle-Prophets, communication which the Holy Spirit continues to bear witness to (John 14:26). God’s word transcends time (Psalm 119:89; Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:25). The Spirit who co-groans with us amidst life’s sufferings, applies God’s inspired Scriptures to our hearts.

Further, did *Elohim* create the cosmos by a single Word? Yes, the Word-Jesus, who was in the beginning with God, created all things (John 1:1-3). But the Genesis account narrates how God created the cosmos in six days. The phrase “Then God said” occurs eight times in the opening of the Book of Beginnings. Though some may attempt to reduce the opening of Genesis to metaphor or myth, the account, as authenticated by Jesus (Matthew 19:3-6), remains literal and public. Be careful of words used by teachers including me. Test them against Scripture, what is written (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 3:2, 16). Writers can play around with words and their concepts.

This is something Paul Young admits he's clever at and confesses that as a youth he both argued with and hid behind words. (**LWBAG**, 17)

## Chapter 19

*"God requires child sacrifice."*

- Young: "One of the narratives about God is that because of sin, *God required child sacrifice to appease a sense of righteous indignation and the fury of holiness*—Jesus being the ultimate child sacrifice. Well, if God is like that, then doesn't it make sense that we should follow in God's footsteps? But we know intuitively that such a thought is wrong, desperately wrong." (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 169)

- The Law of Leviticus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Again [See Leviticus 18:21], thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed ["children," ESV] unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man . . . because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name." (Leviticus 20:1-3)

**Comment 1:** Young writes about "Abraham and the almost-sacrifice of his son Isaac." (**LWBAG**, 170) The main takeaway from this incident is that God does not, in conformity to His own Law and in contrast to the pagan systems of sacrifice that surrounded ancient Israel, require ritual sacrifice of children to appease His anger. By sacrificing babies pagans thought they could appease angry gods or persuade them to act favorably toward them. Throughout the Old Testament infant sacrifice to Molech, a god of the Ammonites, is condemned as a capital crime punishable by death (Leviticus 20:2-4). Despite this plain prohibition, Israel sacrificed to Molech anyway (1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:10). For incorporating the abomination of Molech worship into their national religious life, the Lord severely judged Israel (Jeremiah 32:35). True. *Yahweh* did not require infant sacrifice!

The take-a-way from the Genesis narrative of Abraham and Isaac is that contrary to the surrounding nations and as practiced by devil-worshipping groups today, the Lord never demanded to be appeased by child sacrifice. By His self-initiative, He provided His Lamb. As regards Jesus' death on the cross, the Son's death (By the way, Jesus was not a child but a responsible male adult.) for our sins was personal, voluntary and substitutionary (John 10:14-18). Jesus died on the cross, not because of it. Actively, He gave up His spirit (Matthew 27:50). *Note:* Readers might refer to my previous comments on Chapter 17, "The Cross Was God's Idea." There the penal substitutionary atonement is discussed, a doctrine which Paul Young rejects because in his mind it invokes an image of God to be a "cosmic abuser . . . very cruel and monstrous . . . Better no god at all, than this one." (**LWBAG**, 149)

**Comment 2:** Paul Young's chapter title "God requires child sacrifice." derives from two perspectives: *first* his negative experience as an Missionary Kid (MK) where for the sake of evangelizing tribal peoples on the island West Papua, the western half of New Guinea which lies just above north-east Australia, his parents sent him away to boarding school, "sacrificing" him "on the altar of spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus" (**LWBAG**, 166, 167). Young's friend Kruger tells about the tragic story behind the story of *The Shack*, how "By the time Paul was six years old, he had been emotionally abandoned, physically and verbally beaten, and sexually abused—repeatedly." [44] The author's personal tragedies, about which

all of us can feel deep sorrow and empathy for, seem to explain part of the backdrop against which Young created the story of *The Shack*. Then *second*, against this heart rending backdrop Young translates his feelings and experiences into his understanding of the sacrificial and atoning death of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

From the perspective of personal friendships and acquaintances with two missionary families who with their children also ministered in New Guinea during the same general era as Young's parents, I can somewhat understand and sympathize with Young's feelings about what happened to him, how for "The good ends of salvation" his and other missionary-parents reckoned the losses of their children as "necessary costs for the 'greater good'." (**LWBAG**, 167) During seven years of ministry in metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri (1979-1986), I became friends with a career missionary and his wife, Bill and Mary Widbin, who served with Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU) for four decades, beginning when the island was called Dutch New Guinea (from 1949-1962). My missionary friend related to me instances when he felt his life had been threatened, especially once when they were building an airstrip and unknowingly disturbed sacred tribal ground.

Bill worked with the Australian Stan Dale (d. 1968) and American Phil Masters (d. 1968) who were killed and cannibalized by members of the Yali tribe whom they were attempting to evangelize. Roberta Schenk relates that in New Guinea the Masters family, "learned about blood feuds, human sacrifices to evil spirits, fetishes—everyday objects that housed evil spirits—and the gut-wrenching fear of the spirits that overshadowed everything." **[45]** But of their call to New Guinea, Phyliss, Peter's wife, related that, "We went because we knew that was what God wanted us to do." **[46]** One of their children, Crissie Masters Rask said "that each one in the family knew exactly why he or she was there. The overarching theme of my parents' lives was telling people about Jesus," she said and, "That was true before we moved to Indonesia, as well as while we were there. We understood that, and we loved our lives there." **[47]**

This brings me back to my friend. He related how as father and mother, he and his wife also sent their two sons off to boarding school. (There was no home schooling in those days.) One of this couple's sons, the eldest whom I later came to know during ministry in Indianapolis, Indiana, related to me the heart rending story of when as young boys they first departed for school to be separated from their parents. His father and mother, feeling deep sadness, with forlorn faces and tears in their eyes, stood together, watched their sons board the plane, and saw and heard the plane's door shut. As the sons looked out the window during preparation for take off, they saw their parents watching, crying and waving goodbye trying to get one last glimpse of their plane before it disappeared from sight. From the father, mother and their son's perspective, this too was a heart rending story of sacrifice. Eventually, the mission recognized the error of the policy and changed it. They did not separate missionaries from their kids for them to go to school.

Another missionary couple, Larry Rascher and Shirley Rascher, I was also privileged to become acquainted with while ministering in the St. Louis area during the early 80s. Their story is told in the book *Incessant Drumbeat*. **[48]** (Read it and weep. I did.) The book tells the traumatic and heartbreaking story of sacrifice—their "great-great" tragedy—when they lost two young children,



Greg and Karen, in boating accident when a sudden storm with 10-15 foot waves overwhelmed and capsized the boat they were traveling in on a trip between islands. The pain of this loss stayed with this godly missionary couple the rest of their lives, especially Larry who felt responsible for his children's drowning. The book's chapter, *Grief Divided* (pp. 139-149), tells how Larry finally found some relief from blaming himself that he had caused his children's deaths. He explained to his missionary friend Cal Roesler (whom I once met), "I don't why Karen and Greg went with us,' said Larry, his voice rising. 'I don't know why we couldn't fly, or why the boat broke up. I don't know why the waves were so high. But if Jesus could trust His unknown into the Father's hands, so can I. Someday, when we're with Jesus too, then we'll understand.'" [49] After her husband died in 1992, and while at a conference together in Michigan in the mid-to-late 90s, Shirley gave me their book, *Incessant Drumbeat*, inscribed as follows: "Shirley for the Rascher Family, Ps. 73:26." The verse reads: "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

*To be continued . . .*

### Endnotes

[33] Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995): 427.

[34] John Lennon, "Imagine," AZ

*Lyrics.com* (<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnlennon/imagine.html>).

[35] Jack Davis, "Franklin Graham Condemns Islam, Terrorism In Wake of Manchester Attack," *WJ Western Journalism*, May 25, 2017 (<http://www.westernjournalism.com/franklin-graham-condemns-islam-terrorism-in-wake-of-manchester-attack/>).

[36] See Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone* (Silverton, OR: Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 2007). In chapter eleven, titled "A Slaughter House Religion," Oakland cites Beka Horton to be the source of Fosdick's inflammatory phrase. See *Church History and Things to Come* (Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Christian College, 1997): 156. In Israel's sacrificial system of communal offerings to God, the priest was allowed to eat part of the Peace Offering with his family and the offerer part of it with his family (Leviticus 7:15-17, 31-32). Here in Indianapolis we have a famous steakhouse called St. Elmo's where when they are in town to play the Colts or Pacers, many professional players eat. Would we say St. Elmo's is "slaughter house" dining? Or is God the only object of such "slaughter house" ridicule? Bye the way, I wonder how many of these critics eat "slaughter house" meat . . . Where's the beef?

[37] Paul Enns, *Approaching God: Daily Readings in Systematic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991): February 25. Enns sources his quote to be from R. Laird Harris' book, *Inspiration and Canonicity*, page 40.

[38] Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011): 48, 158, 219.

[39] Alan Jones, *Reimagining Christianity: Reconnect Your Spirit without Disconnecting Your Mind* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005): 132. McLaren endorses Jones' the book on the dust jacket of the back cover, "Advance Praise."

[40] *Ibid*: 168.

[41] Mark Baker, "False Teachers And Sin: Clear And Present Danger," *Hope for Life: Biblical Counseling and Equipping*, March 26, 2017 (<http://www.hopeforlifeonline.com/2017/03/26/false->

teachers-sin/).

**[42]** Pastor Larry DeBruyn, “‘Deliteralizing’ the Bible: from Plato to Peterson: Scripture amidst the Shadows,” *Herescope*, March 01, 2012

(<http://herescope.blogspot.com/2012/03/deliteralizing-bible-from-plato-to.html>).

**[43]** *Silence* (2016) is a drama film produced by Martin Scorsese. The plot involves two 17th century Jesuit priests who travel from Portugal to Japan to find their missing mentor and spread Catholic Christianity. In Japan they find that for reason of being viciously persecuted by Buddhist authorities, Christians have gone underground. As the persecutions unfold (beheadings, drownings, burnings, stabbings, etc.), the priests, even as they administer the sacraments to the people, begin to question over and over again why God allows it. Why doesn't God do something to stop the persecutions? The answer they get is “Silence.” Refusing to recant, one of the priests is drowned in the ocean with other Christians. While imprisoned, the other priest finally hears a voice approving him to step on the Jesus image. Before his captors the priest commits apostasy as he ceremonially steps on the Jesus icon. He converts to Buddhism. He marries. He moves to a remote village. He is never heard from again. There you have it: *The Shack* where God speaks and *Silence* where He does not.

**[44]** C. Baxter Kruger, *The Shack Revisited: There's More Going On Here than You Ever Dared to Dream* (New York, NY: FaithWords, Hachette Book Group, 2012): 5.

**[45]** Ruth Schenk, “Missionaries risk all to witness to cannibals” ([http://www.ib-emmanuel.org/clientimages/55879/mission\\_to\\_cannibals.pdf](http://www.ib-emmanuel.org/clientimages/55879/mission_to_cannibals.pdf)). The story of Dale, Masters and the Yali people is also told in Don Richardson's book, *Lords of the Earth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1977), and *To Perish for Their Saving* by Helen Manning (Bethany Fellowship, 1971).

**[46]** Ibid.

**[47]** Ibid.

**[48]** Mary Beth Langerborg, *Incessant Drumbeat: Trial and Triumph in Irian Jaya* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1992). This is the story of Larry and Shirley Rascher and their family, missionaries with The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM).

**[49]** Ibid: 144.