

Light Brings Salt

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Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God
"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."



What About the Resurrection? Fact or Fiction?

Something crucial happened 2000 years ago, something that had such an impact it changed the course of history from B.C. (Before Christ) to A.D. (the Latin Anno Domini--the year of our Lord). That "something" was so dramatic it completely changed 11 men's lives, so that all but one died a martyr's death.

That something was an empty tomb? An empty tomb that just a short 15-minute walk from the center of Jerusalem would have confirmed or disproved. But even after 2,000 more years of history, a portion of mankind hasn't forgotten that empty tomb and the historical record of the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ.

"If you wish to rationalize away the events surrounding Christ and His resurrection, you must deal with certain imponderables."
(McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, p. 64)

By imponderables, McDowell is talking about historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The body of evidence is so great it has led millions throughout history to put their trust in Jesus Christ, many of whom were skilled in evaluating historical evidence. We make this emphasis because many theories have been advanced that attempt to show the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a fraud or nothing but a myth concocted many years later.

McDowell writes: "I believe that many of the people who came up with these theories must have had two brains--one lost, and the other one out looking for it. Historians have to become anti-historical to invent some of their ideas." (p. 76)

With this in mind, let's consider the testimony of a few outstanding historians. These are testimonies of men who are some of the greatest minds of history, men who were specialists in

gathering and evaluating historical evidence. Note the following six testimonies from *The Resurrection Factor*, pages 10-12:

1. Roman history scholar: I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.

2. Textual critic Brooke Foss Wescott, an English scholar, said, "Taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it."

3. Professor of ancient history Dr. Paul L. Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, concluded that, "If all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable, according to the canons of historical research, to conclude that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy or archaeology that would disprove this statement."

4. Legal authority: One man who was highly skilled at dealing with evidence was Dr. Simon Greenleaf. He was the famous Royal Professor of Law at Harvard University and succeeded Justice Joseph Story as the Dane Professor of Law in the same university. The rise of Harvard law School to its eminent position among the legal schools of the United States is to be ascribed to the efforts of these two men. Greenleaf produced his famous three-volume work, *A Treatise on the Law of*

Evidence, which still is considered one of the greatest single authorities on this subject in the entire literature of legal procedure.

Greenleaf examined the value of the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ to ascertain the truth. He applied the principles contained in his three-volume treatise on evidence. His findings were recorded in his book, *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice*.

Greenleaf came to the conclusion that, according to the laws of legal evidence used in courts of law, there is more evidence for the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than for just about any other event in history.

5. Attorney general: An Englishman, John Singleton Copley, better known as Lord Lyndhurst, is recognized as one of the greatest legal minds in British history.

Upon Copley's death, among his personal papers were found his comments concerning the resurrection in the light of legal evidence and why he became a Christian: "I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet."

Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Darling, once said that "no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true."

6. Rationalistic lawyer: Dr. Frank Morrison, a lawyer who had been brought up in a rationalistic environment, had come to the opinion that the resurrection was nothing but a fairy-tale happy ending which spoiled the matchless story of Jesus. He felt that he owed it to himself and others to write a book that would present the truth about Jesus and dispel the mythical story of the resurrection.

Upon studying the facts, however, he, too, came to a different conclusion. The sheer weight of the evidence compelled him to conclude that Jesus actually did rise from the dead. Morrison wrote his book--but not the one he had planned. It is titled, *Who Moved the Stone?* The first chapter, very significantly, is, "The Book That Refused to Be Written."

An outstanding book on the evidences for the resurrection is Josh McDowell's book, *The Resurrection Factor*. He also covers this in his

book, *Evidence That Demand's A Verdict*. There are many others as well.

All this wonderful evidence exists in spite of the security precautions taken by both the Jews and the Romans to make sure Jesus was dead and remained in the tomb. These included things like the Roman seal that was broken, the heavy stone that covered the door but was removed, and the Roman guard of soldiers who were there to guard the tomb. All this makes the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus that much more remarkable.

Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:17 "*and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*"

Some Doctrinal Issues Involved

1. Declared that Jesus Christ is God's Son. Rom. 1:4
2. It verifies the truth of Scripture.
Both in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus, His resurrection is clearly taught.
If Jesus had not come out of the tomb, then these Scriptures would not be true.
3. It indicated the completion and acceptance of His provision of justification. Rom. 4:25
4. It is the visible proof to us that His work on the cross satisfied the righteousness of God the Father.
5. It assures our own future resurrection. Because Jesus died and rose again, we shall one day be raised to be like Him (1 Thes. 4:13-18).
6. If we do away with His resurrection, we have no hope.
7. It is related to the power for Christian living. We cannot live for God by our own strength. It is only as His resurrection power works in and through us that we can do His will and glorify His name (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:18-20).
8. It is the basis of our confidence in the future. Because we have a living hope in a living Savior we are able to live confidently. 1 Peter 1:3-5
9. Whenever God's people gather on the first day of the week they bear witness to the fact that Jesus is alive and that the church has been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY SAYS WE SHOULD FORGET ABOUT "ABOUT BEING RIGHT" AND INSTEAD PURSUE CATHOLIC MYSTICISM

Everywhere we look evangelicals are turning to Roman Catholic styles of contemplative spirituality (which in most cases were borrowed from pagan sources), such as ritualistic rote prayers, chanting, mindless repetition, meditation, non-thinking centering prayer, the use of prayer beads, the Stations of the Cross, lectio divina, and labyrinths. The cover story for the February 2008 issue of Christianity Today was "The Future Lies in the Past: Why Evangelicals Are Connecting with the Early Church as They Move into the 21st Century." It describes the "lost secrets of the ancient church" that are being rediscovered by evangelicals. The ancient church in question happens to be Rome.

The article observes that many young evangelicals dislike "traditional" Christianity," which is described as too focused on "being right," too much into "Bible studies" and "apologetics materials." Instead, these evangelicals want "a renewed encounter with a God" that goes beyond "doctrinal definitions."

This, of course, is a description of mysticism, which seeks to experience God beyond the boundaries of Scripture. Christianity Today recommends that evangelicals "stop debating" and just "embody Christianity," towards which end they should "embrace symbols and sacraments" and dialogue with "Catholicism and Orthodoxy"; they should "break out the candles and incense," pray the "lectio divina," and learn the Catholic "ascetic disciplines" from "practicing monks and nuns."

Christianity Today says that this "search for historic roots" will lead "to a deepening ecumenical conversation, and a recognition by evangelicals that the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are fellow Christians with much to teach us." The article ends with these

amazing words: "This is the road to maturity. That more and more evangelicals have set out upon it is reason for hope for the future of gospel Christianity.

That they are receiving good guidance on this road from wise teachers is reason to believe that Christ is guiding the process. And THAT THEY ARE MEETING AND LEARNING FROM FELLOW CHRISTIANS IN THE OTHER TWO GREAT CONFESSIONS, ROMAN CATHOLIC AND EASTERN ORTHODOX, IS REASON TO REJOICE IN THE POWER OF LOVE."

This is a no holds barred invitation to Catholic mysticism, and it will not lead to light but to the same darkness that has characterized Rome throughout its history, and it will lead beyond Rome to the paganism from which Rome originally borrowed its practices. Behold the "mystery of iniquity" that has been leavening "the church" for 2,000 years.

Note: *Christianity Today* originally was started by some good theologians years ago to be the counterpoint to Newsweek or Time. Over the years it has degenerated into a liberal socialistic apologetic, not Biblically based at all. Totally human viewpoint.

The Roots Of Black Anger

By INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY
Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Race: Barack Obama says black "anger is real, and to simply wish it away without understanding its roots only serves to widen the chasm." He's right. So let's examine these bitter roots.

We saw last week just how real that anger is from the video clips of his preacher's shocking sermons. They jarred America's white majority, which had no idea the hostility in the black community was so fevered that it spews from pulpits by men of the cloth at America's largest black churches each Sunday.

Will he address ignorance on all sides?

In his speech, Obama rationalized that "the history of racial injustice in this country" gives rise to the kind of anger that fueled Rev. Jeremiah Wright's anti-white rants. He ticked off slavery, Jim Crow laws, school segregation and job bias, and maintained that discrimination still is holding back African-Americans.

While these racist crimes of the past still sting, Obama is wrong to suggest that legalized discrimination still exists today. There is no conspiracy of racism in America.

The harsh truth is, much of the anger he speaks of is based on paranoia manifesting in urban legends about whites creating AIDS to kill blacks or crack cocaine to lock them up. Wright spreads these pernicious lies in Obama's church, and Obama has rewarded him with \$23,000 a year in donations, if not his own hallelujahs.

Intellectually honest blacks, such as Shelby Steele, will tell you that racism is such a distant memory that racial victimologists like Wright are now left with concocting wild-eyed conspiracy theories to maintain their power.

They see their power slipping, so "they rub racism in the face of whites," said Steele, who like Wright and Obama hails from Chicago's South Side.

It's self-serving black leaders such as Wright who hold back blacks today. In fact, Steele says their victim-focused, racial-identity politics has stifled black advancement more than racism itself.

"The No. 1 black problem is not racism," Steele says, it's groupism and a desperate clinging to the black power movement of the '60s. Obama's church requires members to pledge allegiance to this movement, recast as the "Black Value System."

"The pursuit of black power is the worst thing we can do," Steele said. "It's the kiss of death," because it falsely convinces blacks they can't succeed on their own as individuals in "racist white America," a mantra at Obama's church of hate.

The ignorance and paranoia is bred by something called "black liberation theology," preached by Wright and his own mentor, Rev. James H. Cone. This theology is the core of the "black experience" and "black perspective" and "legacy of the African-American church" that whites are told they wouldn't understand.

Now that Obama has opened the dialogue about race in America, we need to talk frankly about what this "theology" means to blacks.

According to Cone's writings and lectures, it teaches them that Jesus was black and blacks are the chosen people, and that the white man is "the devil."

It also teaches that black values are superior to American values, and as Cone himself has said, "all white men are responsible for white oppression" and will be held accountable and unforgiven until blacks are "completely emancipated" from white society.

We need to take these beliefs out of the shadows, because unless and until we do, this ignorance will breed more paranoia, which will just continue to fester into the kind of misplaced anger that ignites more Juneteenth violence, or worse, another South Central-scale riot.

Without elaborating, Obama conceded that some of the "ignorance" in the black church is "shocking." He has a duty to lead blacks out of that ignorance and heal the racial scab Wright and other race hustlers keep infecting with such belligerent bacteria. As a new generation of black leader, Obama must disabuse blacks of Wright's crazy talk, family friend or not.

Our racial problem stems from ignorance on both sides. It's not just the David Dukes spreading racist garbage; it also is the Jeremiah Wrights. If Obama is a leader worthy of the White House, he would lead us all out of that ignorance, blacks included, and not simply try to make excuses for it.